

SOME BRIEF

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS

Preparatory for

COMMUNION

AT THE

Great Ordinance

OF THE

S U P P E R.



By the late REVEREND

Samuel Willard, M. A.

Vice-President of *Harvard-College*, and Pastor of a
Church in BOSTON.



Pfal. civ. 34. *My Meditation of him shall be sweet.*

Pfal. xxxix. 3. *While I was musing the Fire burned.*



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TO THE
 READER.

13-17-41 - Kenneth W. Rokey '16 - Friend - Gift



DIVINE Meditation is a Religious Exercise of great account in the School of CHRIST; and will be the Employment of serious Souls, that value their Proficiency in Christianity. The very Power and Capacity for it argues the Dignity of humane Nature; and the right Exercise of it will advance the Soul to a divine and angelick Perfection. This Duty will afford the most agreeable Employment, and pleasing Entertainment to our Thoughts, in their largest Compass, and closest Collection: It will exalt the most noble Powers of the Soul to satisfying Converses with God the first Truth, and the supreme Good: And hence must be Perfective of the Soul in Knowledge and Holiness.

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By Meditation the Mind comes to take a steady View of divine Truths in their Reality, Excellency, and important Aspect upon the Soul. It chases away those Clouds that Veil the Face of divine Objects, that they may appear in their native Beauty. There are indeed many times sudden Flashes of Light breaking into the Soul by transient Thoughts; which may afford Hints, which, if improved and follow'd, would lead to many surprizing and profitable Discoveries of Truth: Yet this sudden Blaze of Thought, tho' never so bright, will not lay open the hidden Mysteries of divine Things to our View, unless the Mind be brought by Meditation to an holy Praise upon them. These Beams of Truth may with their superficial Touches for a Moment lightly gild the Mind; but not afford a steady Light, or lasting Impression; unless by deep and close Musing, thoughts be fired and inflamed; which will not barely amuse but better the Mind. For hereby the Soul will be led to new discoveries of spiritual Things, to a more full Apprehension of Truths already known, and known Truths will leave more of a transforming Power upon all the Faculties of the Soul.

Meditation is therefore a Duty of vast Consequence to the Christian, in that it tends to advance his Improvement in the Graces of the divine Nature, and in the Duties of the divine Life. This gives Life and Strength to *Faith*: For herein the devout Believer takes a View of the Fullness and Stability of the Promises, and the unalterable Fidelity of the Promiser; and can triumph in this, That he knows in whom he has believed. Hereby *Hope* is made more sure and steady; and its purifying and refreshing Vertue

Vertue strengthen'd. It brings Food to gratify and nourish
 the most rais'd Hope: For in devout Meditation the Soul
 stands with *Moses* on *Mount Pisgah*, and surveys the good
 Land of Promise; herein it is taken as the three favorite
 Disciples into the Mount of Transfiguration, where it is
 incircled with some Beams of heavenly Glory; herein it
 receives some Fore-tastes of the Joys of the coming World,
 some Pledges and Earnests of the expected Inheritance in
 Light: Whereby the Christian comes to know by happy
 Experience, in some good Measure, what is the Hope of
 the Calling of GOD, and what the Riches of the Glory of
 his Inheritance in the Saints. Hereby divine *Love* in the
 Soul is maintained and cherished: It blows up the hea-
 venly Spark into an holy Flame; and brings new Fuel
 to preserve, and increase its Power and Brightness. Here-
 by the *Spirit* of true *Devotion* is warmed and rais'd. It
 disengages the Mind from those Things below that do damp
 the Force and Heat of the Spirit in its holy Aspirations,
 and Ascents to GOD. It gives both Fixation and Flame
 to the Soul in its divine Musings. While the Psalmist was
 Musing, the Fire burned, and his Heart was hot within
 him.

Again,

Meditation tends to make Providences more instructive
 in Duty, and impressivè of the Obligations 'to it on the
 Heart. Hereby divine Ordinances will be made more
 mighty thro' GOD, to turn the Sinner from the Error of
 his Ways to the Wisdom of the Just; and to make the
 Man of GOD more perfect in Grace, rich in Comfort,
 and ripe for Glory.

Sure I am, Holy Meditation can never be more seasonable, than when we make our solemn Approaches to the Table of the Lord. Meditation should be our Preparation for it, our Entertainment at it, and the Conclusion of this spiritual Banquet. And were this Duty more exercised, we should attend this Ordinance with greater Awe and Solemnity of Spirit, with keener Appetites after those spiritual Dainties there set before us; and go away from it more strengthened with the Bread of Life, and more refreshed with the Wine of Consolation. And have the Evidence of it by being less slothful in Business, and more fervent in Spirit serving the Lord.

Now to promote this good Design, it has been thought proper to publish this Manual of select *Sacramental Meditations*, which are some of the genuine Remains of an holy Man of GOD, who was a few Years since taken to the Refreshments of the heavenly Paradise.

These Meditations were at first penned for the Authors own Use, and are evident Arguments of his deep Judgment, and high Devotion; but yet they are admirably accommodated to the Service of every serious Soul. And if rightly improved will be a mighty Help against that Levity of Spirit, that Barrenness, and Confusion of Thought, which are the complaint of so many serious Souls, and which are great Impediments to the due Exercise of holy Meditation, and most unfriendly to the Life of Devotion. Here is a rich Treasury of holy Matter to be meditated on, which may enrich the barren Mind, and render it fruitful, and withal give Solidity and Weight to Thoughts,

to

to check its Levity. Here the Mind, that is ready to loose itself in a Confusion of Thought, may be led into the right Method of ordering them; for here we have the best Rules and Method of Meditation exemplified, and reduced to Practice.

The bright Character of the Author, whose Name will be always mentioned with Honour in these Churches, and the Excellency of the Work and Design, will be a sufficient Recommendation. Tho' it may be thought that these Meditations would have appeared with greater Advantage, had they been published by the Author himself in his Life-Time; yet as now published, without the least Alteration from the original Copy, they will appear Worthy the Author, from whom nothing Unworthy the publick View, could be expected. The Subjects seem to be well chosen, and well fitted to advance Devotion in general, and to the Nature and Design of the Sacrament in particular. The divine Articles here meditated on, are illustrated with great Propriety and Perspicuity of Thought quickned with the true Spirit of Devotion. And it is the peculiar Excellency of these Meditations, that they are full both of divine Light and Heat; and so wisely fitted to make the Christian wiser and better. By their Light the Reader may become better instructed in the Nature and Design of the *Lord's Supper*; and know more of the glorious Mysteries of Religion therein contained: And this Light is in these Meditations applyed to the Soul with so strong a Reflection, that may well put the coldest Affections into an holy Flame. And if these Meditations may but be serviceable to promote our better Preparation

For, and more profitable Entertainment at this heavenly Feast ; if they may so lead and direct our Meditation, that in this Ordinance we may have clearer Discoveries of divine Light, and fuller Enjoyments of the Graces and Comforts of divine Love ; they will add to the Author's Crown and Joy, and not be our Loss, but infinite Gain, in the Day of CHRIST. For which End it is now commended to the divine Blessing,

By your Servant,

In the Service, and

Hope of the Gospel,

E. Pemberton.





SOME BRIEF

Sacramental Meditations.



MEDITATION I.

On the Good-Will of CHRIST in leaving us this Sacrament.



H.E. *unparallel'd, incomprehensible Love* of CHRIST to Men, firstly and most illustriously declared it self, in his giving himself for them, Gal. 2. 20. This Love had no Beginning, and therefore can never have an End. It was at work for us, and laid the *Foundation* of our everlasting Blessedness, before the

World was: It *secured* our Salvation in a firm and inviolable Covenant, when this glorious Person, who is God blessed for ever, undertook to be and to do all that should be

be necessary to bring us to Glory. But then it most *signally broke forth*, when he came in our Nature, to accomplish this Redemption for us; when he veiled his Glory, and took on him the Form of a Servant: When, in his State of Humiliation, he made full Satisfaction to the incensed Justice of God, and bought us with a Price. And the most *celebrious Article* in this, was his *curst Death*, in which he bare our Iniquities on him, and suffered the whole Weight of divine Displeasure, and in which he finished that great Undertaking, *John 18. 30.*

And is this Love ever to be forgotten? Shall I not remember it more than Wine? Had he not thus loved me, what had become of me? Was I not a Child of Wrath even as Others by Nature? Was I not under a Law-Sentence, binding me over to suffer everlasting Miseries, which could not be repealed, nor could any other Surety be accepted? **Hither** I owe all my **Hopes** of being delivered from Wrath to come, and being possessed of the incorruptible Inheritance. And have I any well grounded **Hopes** of this? How came I by them? Had I ever heard of this Saviour, if God had not revealed him? Had I ever known of the new and living Way, if he had not opened it? Could the light of Nature ever have given me any Intimations of it? Or, who should ever have told me, how I should come to him so as to obtain Life by him, had he not opened the Terms to me? Or had I ever believed in him, had not his almighty Power wrought it in me? And shall I not celebrate this Love of his with a perpetual Remembrance? Shall not he be to me the Chief of Ten Thousands, and altogether lovely? Shall I not always be pointing to him, and saying, *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!* But Oh! this dead, dull forgetful Heart! What narrow Conceptions

ceptions have I of this Love, whose Length, Breadth, Height, Depth transcend Knowledge? How many Diversions are drawing my Thoughts off from him?

How kind then was his Care, & how great his Wisdom, in that, when he was about to leave this World as to his bodily Presence, he laid in for his People, an Ordinance so suited, & every way fitted to help their Faith & Love, in their present imperfect State; that they might not forget him when gone; that they might have Communion with him in his Death, so long after it was accomplished; that they may have their whole Man, Soul & Body, suited with Objects to affect them, and employ them in the Contemplation of his great Work, and the precious Benefits flowing from it to his People; and so may be drawing Nourishment and Strength from him continually? He remembered this Frame of ours; He knew how much we were imprisoned under Sense, and therefore shews himself to us, according to our Manner. And as he appointed this Ordinance to maintain Familiarity between him and his Children here; so, to seal up and ratify all the Blessings of the everlasting Covenant to them; and to be a Token to them, of their having Communion with him in the Kingdom of Glory, *Matt. 26. 29.* How great a Testimony then of his good Will to his Church, hath Christ herein given? Here he comes and exhibits himself in his Passion, shews us his Hands and his Feet, and bids us put our Hands into his Side; here he makes us a Feast of fat Things, and of Wines on the Lees; gives us of his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink, and himself comes in the midst of us, and saith, *Eat O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O well Beloved:* Here he pourtrays before us, and gives us a lively Representation of the whole Mystery of the Gospel: Here he
comes

comes to give us the Caresses of his Love, and lay us in his Bosom and Embraces.

And now, Oh my Soul ! Hast thou ever experienced the Love of a Saviour ? Hast thou ever tasted that he is gracious ? Hast thou made him thy Life ? And canst thou live contentedly without his Company ? Dost thou not long to meet with him ? to hear his pleasant Voice, and see his lovely Countenance ? Art thou not enquiring where thou mayst find him, and how thou mayst come at him ! Wilt thou go to the third Heaven to be with him there ? That Time is not yet come : And is there no coming at him till then ? Oh ! there is. Up and go to his House ; go to his Table ; Sit under his Shadow with Delight, and let his Fruit be sweet to thy Taste. Thou hast found no Rest, no Satisfaction any where else ; make haste to him. Blessed Jesus ! Behold I come ; thou hast invited me ; Oh shew thy self to me ; Oh lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon me ; Open my Mouth wide for me, and fill it ; let my Soul be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness ; so shalt thou put Gladness in my Heart, more than in the Day when their Corn, and their new Wine increaseth.



MEDITATION,



MEDITATION, II.

On the Elements chosen by CHRIST, to be used in the Sacrament.

HOW worthily are the Gospel-Entertainments, which are provided by God for sinful Men, resembled by a plentiful Feast, where they may take the greatest Satisfaction? *Isai. 25. 6.* And where is this Feast represented more lively, than at the Sacrament of the Supper? where there is a Table spread and furnished, the Guests invited to sit down and satiate themselves, with the choicest Viands. And never was there so costly Preparation, or such rich Entertainment heard of at all the Feasts in the World, which have been so much celebrated for their Splendour. God hath here provided, not only for our Necessity, but greatest Delight, and compleatest Satisfaction. Of this therefore could the longing Psalmist conclude; *Psal. 63. 5. My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness.*

But because we live so much by Sense, and are for the present, so little able to understand spiritual Things in their own Language; but must have heavenly Truths cloathed in earthly Expressions; therefore our tender and compassionate Saviour, hath condescended to our Infirmitie, not only to speak Gospel-Mysteries in Words borrowed from humane Dialect, and accommodated to our Way of Reasoning; but also to make choice of Things that are most vulgar to us, to be the sacramental Signs of

6 *Sacramental Meditations.*

the choicest and most precious Benefits that are to be had from him: And for that Reason, hath appointed the Materials or Elements of this Sacrament to be *Bread* and *Wine*. These we commonly put the Name of Elements upon, as they are made Use of in this Ordinance: These and no other, having been sequestred by Christ himself to be improved in the first Celebration of it with his Disciples, and commended both to them and us, both by his Example and Authority in the Institution. And tho' I am not to question his Authority, or suspect his Wisdom in the selecting and appointing of these, and no more for Number, nor any other in Kind, but to rest satisfied in his Determination, whose both Love to, & Care for his Redeemed was incomparable, and who best understood what was most accommodable to his Purposes: Yet, out of Doubt, there is enough to satisfy me in this Choice of his.

My blessed Saviour would herein let me see the Fullness, Suitableness, and Satisfactoriness there is in him, for the Souls that trust on him: The absolute Necessity that I stand in of him: That he is the alone Life of my Soul, and that all my Consolations must flow from him: That there is substantial Livelihood to be had in him, and that nothing can be wanting to those that place their Reliance upon him: That there is no living without him, and that there is all Life to be had with him: *That his Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed;* That if I may but have him to live upon, I shall live richly, and fare delicately at all Times, nor need I to go any whither else for any Supply of my Wants.

Remember then, O my Soul! That thou art now going to a full Table, to a glorious Feast, which the Lord of Glory hath provided for thee: And canst thou choose but
rejoice

rejoice at the Thoughts of this? Hast thou not been feeding on Husks, till they have starved thee? Hast thou not felt the Famine raging in this far Country? Are there not those Hungrings and Thirstings in thee, which have not been able to find any safety in all created Objects? And art not thou restless till thou canst meet with something that will fill thee? Come then with all thy Longings unto him; open thy Mouth wide, and he will fill it: Bring thy famishing Self hither, and see if thou canst not find that here, which thou hast been in vain knocking for, and asking after at every other Door: Be not doubting but believe: here is all to be had that thou canst rationally crave; there is more than thou art able to ask or think, in this *one Christ*. Here is *Wisdom*, and *Righteousness*, *Sanctification* and *Redemption*, and what more is requisite to make thee compleatly blessed? He is set on the Table to let thee know that he is prepared for thee, and that thou mayst be welcome to take thy fill of him.

(Lord, dispose my Soul to come aright, that I may find this Saviour to be that to me, that he is in himself. Let me come with an humble Confidence, expecting to be satisfied in him, and let me find that Satisfaction, which shall be so far from coming short of, that it may out-bid my Expectation; and I may be forced on Experience to say, That the one Half of it was not told me, of what I really find to be in him.) I indeed am a poor unworthy Creature, but Oh do thou make me welcome; and let me leave all my carnal Desires and Delights behind me, when I come to feed upon these thy Dainties: Empty my Heart, of all that East-Wind that blows it up, and makes it unfit to receive this spiritual Nourishment, that so I may be replenished with this celestial Provision, which thou

thou hast, according to the State of a King, so royally laid in for me, and that, finding experimentally that thou art all in all, I may be firmly built and established on my only Saviour, that I may dwell at this Well-Head of Grace and Glory, and live upon this Fountain of living Waters, and never more, so long as I live in this World, wander to seek any Relief from those broken Cisterns which can hold no Water.



M E D I T A T I O N, III.

Particularly on the Bread.

MAN is a dependant Creature; as he hath his Being from out of himself, so the Preservation and Continuance of it, must be from abroad, without which he must starve and dye. Man consists of two constituent Parts, Soul and Body; nor is this Dependance the Bodies Condition only, but the Souls too; that can no more live without something to sustain it, than can the other. There is a *spiritual* as well as a *temporal* Death to be avoided, and Life to be sought after. Yea, it ought to be the great Care of all the Children of Men, altho' there be but few that regard it, and hence they labour for the Meat that perisheth, and neglect that which endureth to everlasting Life. Now, as God hath provided and appointed the *Creatures* to be the mediate Supporters of the *Bodily Life*; so he hath declared *himself* to be the only immediate, adequate, and sufficient Object of the Life and Happiness of the Soul: Nor can a whole World

World supply the Want of him, or save a Soul from Perdition, *Matth.* 16. 26. The Communion with God which Man was made for, and in which his Blessedness did consist, was broken off by the Fall of our first Parents, and thereupon he lost his Life. Rich Grace hath restored Man again to this Communion by a Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, *in whom it hath pleased the Father that all Fullness should dwell*, and thro' whom it shall derive to us; and for that Reason he is called *our Life*, *Col.* 3. 4. And because we are best acquainted with those Things that are adapted to the Life of the Body, he hath chosen to exhibit himself to us under the Shadow of such Things. Thus hath he represented himself in this Sacrament, under the Resemblance of *Bread*.

But *why*, since there are so many Things that go in to the Supply of Man's Livelihood, did he make choice of *Bread*, rather than any other Thing, to express his Suitableness and Sufficiency to us by? Tho' his *good Pleasure* ought to satisfy my Curiosity in this Point, yet have I abundant Occasion to contemplate his *Wisdom* and *Kindness* in this Regard. Lose thy self then, Oh my Soul! in the unriddling of this Element, and the View of the glorious Excellencies of thy Saviour that are shadowed under it. Was it not to encourage needy Sinners to come to him, when he declared, *Joh.* 6. 48. *I am that Bread of Life?*

Bread! It is the *Staff and Stay of Man's Life*; who can live without Bread? And how can't thou do to make a Living without Jesus Christ? Sad and miserable is the Condition of that People that have no Bread; and are not they far more forlorn, who are without *Christ*, or any Means to come by him? Do not they sit in the Re-

gion of the Shadow of Death? What encouraged the poor Prodigal to return from his far Country, wherein he was famishing, to his Father's House, *but because there was Bread enough and to spare?* Luke 15. 17. And did not this draw thee out of thy natural and sinful State, to seek after Christ, because he was the Store-house of Life for thee, who was perishing for want? The most richly furnished Table in the World, will not content, if there be not *Bread* there, this is the standing Provision; and, could'st thou enjoy all the Delights which the World pretends to, what can they be to thee without *Christ*, who alone can sweeten every other Thing? There is no Fear of his starving, who hath Bread enough to live on; and how can that Soul do amiss, that hath a Christ to go to always by Faith, and supply it self from him? Bread is, in holy Writ, put for *all Manner of needful Provision for the Body*, because it is, *instar omnium*; and if thou hast Christ, thou hast all that is needful to keep thee from perishing, and make thee compleatly happy. What said Paul? 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I determine to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*: And what Need of more, because *He is all*? Bread being a *common Blessing*, is apt to be *despised and undervalued*; but Scarcity will enhance the Worth of it: What will those that are ready to famish give for Bread? And Oh my Soul! How many Times hast thou lost the present Taste of the incomparable Excellency of Christ? And alas! how much is he disregarded, by those to whom he is every Day offered? But what should I do, if I should lose this Benefit of Communion with him? Men will *part with every Thing*, Money, Plate, Jewels, Garments, all that they best esteem, that they may have *Bread to keep them from starving and dying*:

ing: And what wouldst thou have once given for a Christ, when the Sense of Misery, and Emptiness, and utter Insufficiency of every Thing in this World to relieve thee, brought thee to the Brink of Despair? Yea, hast thou not forgone all for him? Bread is not made without *Grinding* of the Grain to Dust, and being prepared with *Water* and *Fire*; and Christ became Food for Souls to live on, by being bruised for our Sins, and scorched in the Fire of God's Wrath, and so he is made fit for us to feed upon. Bread is *sweet* to him that is *hungry*, and he feeds on it with great Content. And if thou longest after spiritual Relief, and feelest thine own Emptiness, how sweet will a Christ be to thee? With what Delight wilt thou feed upon him? Bread is a *wholesome Food*, whereas many other Things that Men eat are pernicious: Jesus Christ is suited for the Soul, and can do it no Hurt. Bread is *very nourishing*, and gives Strength to them that feed heartily upon it; and the more that we fetch in from Christ by Faith, the more able shall we be to do the Work of our Generation.

Come, then, Oh my Soul! to this Table, for this *living Bread*; whither wilt thou go else? Where wilt thou find that which may answer it? Hast thou no Longings, no Faintings? Dost thou feel no Emptiness? Are there no Cravings stirred in thee? Up then, and get to thy Saviour; get where he is *dish'd* out and set before thee: Oh make Bread of him, by deriving Nourishment to thy self in feeding on him by Faith; and so fetch in Strength for all the Business thou art called to. Come joyfully to such a Saviour, and say with the Psalmist, Psal. 63. 5. *My Soul shall be satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatness.* Resolve to take up with him, and to go no whither else:

Say, and resolve, Here is enough : Lord, open thou my Mouth wide for me, and fill me with this Bread, that so I may hunger no more.



MEDITATION IV.

On the Wine.




 S, to the *bodily* Nourishment, there is required,



 A




 put into the natural Appetite, not only hun-
 gring, but also thirsting. In like Manner, the
Soul hath its Appetites and Cravings ; and as there are
 many Things required to the filling of it, so it cannot
 rest satisfied without the filling of them. Jesus Christ
 therefore, to express the universal Fulness there is in
 him, to satisfy, yea, to happiness the Souls of his People,
 hath resembled his *Body* to *Meat*, and his *Blood* to *Drink* ;
 and those such as are really suited to the Ends which are
 designed by this Similitude : He therefore saith, John 6.
 55. *My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink in-
 deed.* Not as if there were a *separate* Vertue or Efficacy
 in his Body, and in his Blood, for it is *one whole* Christ
 that we must entirely live upon, and receive our whole
 Repast from : And yet we may and ought to entertain
 ourselves with a *distinct* Consideration of the several Passages
 wherein our precious Saviour accomplished the Work of
 Redemption for us. And there are *two* more peculiarly
 celebrated in the Gospel, referring to his passive Obe-
 dience,

dience, *viz.* the *Crucifixion* of his *Body*, and the *Shedding* of his *Blood*. As in the *Oblation* of the *Burnt-Offerings* of old, wherein *Christ's* expiatory *Sacrifice* was shadowed; the *Body* was cut in *Pieces*, and laid in order on the *Altar*; or sometimes laid on whole and burnt, and the *Blood* partly sprinkled, and the *Remainder* poured out at the *Bottom* of the *Altar*: Accordingly hath *Christ*, in this sacred *Remembrance* of him, appointed, as *Bread* to represent his *Body*, so the *Wine* to be a *Symbol* of his *Blood*.

And why *Wine* rather than any other *Liquor*? Say, Oh my *Soul*! was it *meer Sovereignty*? Or did not his *Wisdom* also display it self in this *Choice*, to afford thee *Matter* of *Enlargement* in the *Contemplation* of the wondrous *Excellency* of this *Redeemer*? *Wine is the Fruit of the Vine*, *Matth. 26. 29.* *Jesus Christ* is the *true Vine*, *John 15. 1.* And as the *Vine* yields its own *Sap*, for the producing of the *Wine*; so all the *Satisfaction* of the thirsty *Soul* proceeds from *Christ* himself; it is *Vertue* that comes out from him. *Wine is the Blood of the Grape*, which is first trodden in *Vat*, and then is pressed out in the *Wine-press*, in order to its being fit to drink. *Jesus Christ* was trodden upon by the *Wrath* of *God*, and suffered himself to be oppressed in the *Wine-press* of his *Fury*, and this to render him able to save *Sinners* to the uttermost. The *Uses* of *Wines* are several; and more, and more precious are the *Benefits* of the *Blood* of *Christ*. *Wine* is used in some *Countries* for their *Drink*; and it was more especially, liberally made use of at their *Festivals*, *Weddings*, and more *free Entertainments*, being accounted the more *noble* Sort of *Drink*: Hence we read of *Banquets of Wine*, *Ezther 7. 2.* And of *drinking Wine*, intending *Feasting*.

Feasting, *Job* 1. 13. And what can refresh the thirsty Soul, or be more delightful to it, than the spiritual Application of the Blood of Christ, in which is the Expression of this incomparable Love! *Cant.* 1. 3. It was one of the Excellencies of the Land of *Canaan*, that it was a Land of *Vineyards*, *Deut.* 8. 8. And how great a Privilege is it to enjoy the *Gospel*, because there is the true Vine, whence we may fetch this Wine? Wine is *Cordial*, it comforts the Heart, recruits the fainting Spirits, and greatly refresheth them that drink it, when labouring of Infirmities, *1 Tim.* 5. 23. And Oh the Comforts that derive to those, who by Faith discern the Blood of Christ applied to them? How doth the fainting Soul revive, and the Spirits come again, that were ready to fail? Wine is good to *drive away Sorrow*, and make the Man chearful: Hence that Advice. *Prov.* 31. 6. It makes a Man merry who was sorrowful, *Esther* 1. 10. *Psal.* 105. 15. And how can they rejoice that taste the Preciousness of the Blood of Christ? Wine puts *Boldness* and *Courage* into Persons, and drives away Fear, and this it doth by exciting the Spirits to Activity: And Oh how couragious in the Cause of Christ, doth the Application of this Blood by Faith, render the Souls of his People? The very Relish of it makes them to engage with greater Confidence in his Cause, against all the Violence and Rage of Earth & Hell. Wine will *open the Lips*, and make them that were silent to talk, *Cant.* 7. 9. And that Soul which hath tasted the Sweetness of Christ's Blood shed for it, cannot hold its Peace, but must sound his Praises. Wine is used in Chirurgery, to *cleanse* and *purge* the Wounds Men have gotten, *Luke* 10. 34. And there are not the greatest Wounds that a Sinner can receive,

receive, or a Child of God be hurt by, but the Application of Christ's Blood, will perfectly cleanse and heal them.

And now, my Soul ! is this Blood exhibited to thee, and thou art invited to make use of it, for all the Ends and Purposes that it was designed for : And is it not precious Blood indeed ? Take then this Cup of Salvation, receive the precious Cup of Consolation at his Hand : Dost thou not hear him say, *Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Well-beloved !* Cant. 5. 1. Drink, and drink again. What wouldest thou once have given for a Draught of this Wine, when thou wast ready to perish with Thirst, and all the Springs thou wentest to were empty ? Behold here is a *Fountain* of it ; the Gospel Conduits run with this Wine : Come then, and take thy Fill, why dost thou sit still and pine ? Why dost thou cry out of Thirst, and not open thy Mouth wide that he may fill it ? Hath he not invited thee to this Banquet of Wine ? And is there not enough set before thee ? Inebriate thy self then with these Rivers of his Pleasures. View all the Excellencies of this Wine, and receive it, believing them, and they are all thine. Come to his Table for it, where it is set on for thy welcome Entertainment, draw forth thy Faith into a lively Exercise, and so take in all the Virtue of it, for the reviving, quickening, and exhilarating of thee : Leave all broken Cisterns, and drink out of this Fountain, so shall all thy Cravings be answered, and thy Longings replenished.





MEDITATION, V.

*On the Sacramental Signification of
the Elements : Or the Union be-
tween CHRIST and them.*


 H A T is it that I see set on this Table ?
 A Morfel of Bread, and a Sip of Wine :
 And is this all ? How comes it then to be
 called a *Feast* : Yea, a *Feast of fat Things*,
 and of *Wines upon the Lees well refined* ?
 Surely then there is something else here
 to be met with, than the naked Elements ; and what is
 that but *Christ himself* ? His Body and Blood ? It is
 therefore called the *Communion of these*, 1 Cor. 10. 16.

But how, or after what Manner, shall I apprehend the
Presence of Christ, in and with these outward Elements ?
 Doubtless Christ is in some sort here according to his hu-
 mane Nature, else he would not have said, *This is my
 Body, and this is my Blood* : There must be some Union
 or other between him and these Things, how else are we
 said to *eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood*. Shall I believe
 that the same *real Humanity* of Christ, which was born of
 the Virgin, is so closely and *materially* united to the Ele-
 ments, that they are *transubstantiated* into his Body and
 Blood, retaining only the *Accidents* of Bread and Wine ?
 How can my *Sense* ? How can my *Reason* ? How can
 my *Faith* entertain such a gross Opinion as this is ? My
 Seeing,

Seeing, my Feeling, my Smelling, my Tasting, tell me, That after the Consecration, it is still *true Bread*, and *true Wine*: My Reason assures me, that tho' his Divinity is omnipresent, being infinite, yet his Humanity being a Creature, is finite, and cannot be in divers Places at once. My Faith confirms me in this, That tho' there be no possible Thing, but what is easy to the divine Omnipotency, yet there are some Things which God cannot do, not for Want of Power in him, but because of Contradiction in the Things. God therefore cannot make another God, nor can he bestow the divine Properties upon a Creature. A second Being must be a finite Being. My Reason tells me, That if Christ had but one humane Body and Soul, these cannot be multiplied, and so be many, and in many Places at once. And my Faith tells me, That he is, in his glorify'd Humanity in Heaven, at the right Hand of God, and therefore cannot, at the same Time, be so here in the Sacrament. And *Christ himself* hath told me, That it is not a *carnal*, but a *spiritual Feeding* on him, that he calls for, *John 6. 63.* Is it then merely a *metaphorical Union*? Only a Shadow and Comparison? Is there nothing here, but only a similitudinary Representation of Christ? Is this all that I have to do, only to consider what are the Natures and Vertues of the Bread and Wine, and so to apply them to Christ by Way of Resemblance? Not so neither, The Sacrament is a *Sign*, and that is more than a bare Similitude; and it is a *Seal*, and there is something that it must obsignate; yea, and it is an *Instrument* of my Communion with Christ, and therefore it must needs bring *Christ* and my *Soul* together: Else what Communion is this? I am indeed here to view the glorious Excellencies of Christ, darkly adumbrated

adumbrated in the Elements, that I may so be led to contemplate him : But I am to do something more ; I am to *feed upon Christ*, to live upon him, he is the Feast that is prepared for me, and I am to satiate my Soul with him.

There is then a *sacramental Union* between him & these Elements ; and Lord grant that I may have right Perception of this. There is a *real Presence* of the Man Christ, in and with this Ordinance, with all them that do rightly receive it : But it is not a carnal, but a *spiritual Presence* ; and it depends upon his Institution, and is influenced by his Spirit, and the Concomitancy of his Grace in and with it. He hath sequestered or set apart these Elements from the common Use, to one that is special and sacred : He hath put his Blessing upon them, and made precious Promises of his coming to us in and with them. There is therefore a divine Vertue that accompanies them, whereby there is derived to the believing Soul, the Efficacy of those Merits and Benefits that the Man Christ, by doing and suffering, in Obedience to the Law, which he subjected himself to, for our sakes, hath procured for his People, whereby their Souls are nourished unto eternal Life. So that, tho' his Body be in Heaven, there to remain till the Restitution of all Things, yet the saving Vertue of his Obedience is in the Sacrament, and there is none that participates worthily at that Ordinance, but receives the Influence thereof, to his real and everlasting Advantage.

This is a great Mystery, and none can have a clear Apprehension of it, but those that have the experimental Tastes of the Reality of it in their Participation. This is indeed exhibited and offered in the Ordinance to all that are admitted thereunto ; but this Presence is separable from

from the Elements, so that all that come to this Ordinance, do not thus receive Christ in it; but it is inseparable from it, in all those that do rightly receive it. Lord grant me a right Discovery of this blessed and mysterious Union, take off these Mists from my Eyes that becloud them, remove from me all carnal Arguings; suffer me not to be led away with gross and sensual Conceptions of these Things: Captivate my Faith in this Respect, that I may be able to exercise it without wavering or doubting; let me have such a Frame of Heart put into me, that when I come to this blessed Table, I may come for something more than my Senses can apprehend or testify unto. Let me here be able to discover this glorious Union, and be made to find this real Satisfaction at this Feast, that can be experienced by none but those who find Christ himself at his Table, and have a gracious Participation of his Body and Blood. Let me see that which shall satisfy me, that here is a Feast indeed: And, tho' the visible or outward Preparation which is made at it, be mean and slender, that yet it is an Entertainment full and satisfying, and such as, compared to which, the most royal Provisions that ever I saw, read or heard of, are truly contemptible, and of no Value, that my Soul may be ravished at, and satisfied with it.

MEDITATION,



MEDITATION, VI.

On the Danger of receiving only the Elements and not CHRIST in them.


I AM now going to the Lord's Table, to participate in this sacred Ordinance; but what do I come for? Is it only for a Taste of Bread, and a Sip of Wine? Will this satisfy me? Or is it not for Christ himself? Will it content me to go without him, and not refresh my self with him? And is there such an Union between the Sign and the Thing signified, that if I partake in the One, I must needs receive the Other? And is there nothing for me to do, but to come and eat and drink; and will that make me a Partaker in the Body and Blood of Christ? Doth every one that doth the former do the latter too? If it were so, the solemn Cautions given by the Apostle, *1 Cor. 11.* not meerly about coming, but about *so* coming, would have been superfluous, nor would there be such Danger of eating and drinking unworthily. And sure, all are not saved that have come to this Table, and outwardly participated in this Ordinance. The old Sacraments given to the Jewish Nation, were of the same Nature and Vertue with this, and yet how many of them perished, notwithstanding they had been Partakers of them? *1 Cor. 10. begin.* If I do not partake in Christ, how should he profit me? And if he profit me not, what Good can I get at a Sacrament? And whence is it that any miss of Christ, and are

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put off with carnal Things in their Communion? Christ is exhibited in this Ordinance to every one; there is a Representation of him unto them, for it is a Sign, and it is *He* who is signified by it. The Invitation given to all, is to take him, and live upon him.

But the Misery is, there are *too many* who take the Sign, and let *Him* alone: And the Reason is, because they look no further than the Sign, and use nothing but their bodily Senses in this Affair: They are either altogether Strangers to those spiritual Actions that are here necessary, or else they are careless to themselves, and bring a formal Frame of Spirit with them, and so all issues in a meer bodily Exercise, which profits not. And am I out of the Reach of this Danger? May not I as well as another, come and go, and yet miss of Christ thro' mine own Folly? Say, I am a Believer in him; say, I have those spiritual Graces, which are the proper Organs with which he is to be received and lived upon; may I not, for all this, miss of the present Benefit? Are there none but Unbelievers that lie open unto this Hazard? Did not the Spouse truly call him her Beloved? And yet did she not lose his Company and Fellowship, when he came to entertain her with the Feast of his Familiarity? *Cant. 5. beg.* And what was it that caused this, but an Indisposition that had crept upon her, and put her out of Frame for such precious Communion? And what am I better, or wherein am I more secure? I have a corrupt carnal Part within me, that is always setting itself against every Thing which is good; I have by reason of this, a woful Proneness to fall into a dead, and indisposed Frame, to be overtaken with Formality, and to take up with the Carcass of Duties, not taking heed to the Life and Spirit of them. Satan

tan also will without Doubt be as busy with me as with another, and if he can lull me into a secure Slumber, and steal away from me the Profit of every Ordinance that I come to. If then, I omit my Watch, and become heedless to my self, how shall I escape? Yea, hath it never been thus with me? Can I not remember, Ah, too often, when I have gone to the Lord's Table, and come away again, and have not brought away with me, the lively Apprehensions, of having met with the Lord Jesus Christ there, and enjoying of sweet Communion with him; yea, it may be, have been more stupid and insensible then before I came there? And if it hath ever been so heretofore, may it not be so again, if I look not the more carefully to my self? And shall I count it to be a Matter of Indifferency, whether it be so or otherwise? Do I make no great Difference, between Participation in a *meer* Ordinance and the *Fruition of Christ* in it? Must I not lose the whole Good of the Ordinance, if he do not come and apply himself to my Soul in and by it? And will not my Soul grow lean and starve if it be so? Can I endure to live without Christ, and yet presume that I am one of his? And where shall I have him, and enjoy him, if not there where he hath bidden me to come and meet him? Nay, is there not great Peril in this? Surely, this is to abuse, instead of using an Ordinance: It is to put an Affront upon the great Saviour, and to give him just and great Provocation: He must needs be highly incensed with it, and I must expect to smart severely at his Hands for it. If I can thus serve him at his Table, it is very likely that he will withdraw himself from me, and he will deal very righteously by me, if he so doth: And then I may go again and again till my Heart akes, and seek for him, but not

not find him, though I should use all earnest Importunity in quest of him.

Be then serious, Oh my Soul! Consider what thou dost; do not run rashly and inconsiderately to this Table; beware of vain & carnal Confidence; do not trust to thine own Purposes & Resolutions; have a Care of Presumption; Watch against a careless & a sleepy Frame; rest not in the Ordinance it self; count it to be a Medium of thy Communion with thy Lord, and for *that* Reason set an high Value upon it; but do not look upon it to be unto thee in the Room of Christ, or a sufficient Evidence of thy Happiness without him. See then that thou hast those Graces in thee without which there is no feeding on the Bread of Life or drinking of these living Waters: And rest not there neither; remembering that these may be in thee, and yet under Indispositions and that will be enough to hinder actual Fellowship. There is a Work to be done in quickning, exciting, and getting of these into a right Frame, that so I may apprehend Christ, and feed upon him, suck Sweetness out of him, and find Reviving and Strength coming out of him unto me. Lord! help me, influence me, afford me the Assistance of thy holy Spirit, who only can dispose me aright: And thou Lord Jesus! Come thy self; and mix thy self spiritually with these Elements, and apply to this Soul of mine all that Vertue which derives from thee alone, whereby I may fetch in Life from them, and being nourished and strengthened, be so enabled to be more and more to the Glory and Praise of thy great Name.



MEDITATION, VII.

On the discerning of the Lord's Body.

* * * * * LL that come to this holy Ordinance, do not
 * * * * * receive the spiritual and saving Good of it :
 * * * * * A * * * * * And it is a dangerous Thing to come and miss of
 * * * * * that. That we may avoid our so doing, it is
 necessary that we *discern the Lord's Body* at his Table : The
 not so doing is of evil Consequence, 1 *Cor.* II. 29. How
 then shall I address my self to this sacred Ordinance, so as
 to have this Discerning ? What am I to understand by the
 Lord's Body, but the whole mystical Meaning of the
 Sacrament ? Or all that which is in it represented to me ?
 The Body and Blood of Christ are not separated, both of
 them therefore are to be discerned ; and under these Christ
 himself is exhibited, with all the glorious Benefits that he
 hath purchased for, and doth apply to his Redeemed ; and
 are therefore here to be received by Faith : And if I discern
 them not, how shall I understandingly partake in them ?
 I then discern a Thing, when I make a particular and
 distinct Judgment of it. It is Christ that is set before me
 at this Table ; and do I look at nothing else but the
 sacramental Elements, and count them but as ordinary
 Things, and so make no other Use of them, than of the
 Meat and Drink at my ordinary Table ?

What have I now to do, but to understand and con-
 template, and exercise my Meditation upon the great
 Work of Redemption, accomplished by Jesus Christ in his
 Death

Death and Sufferings ; as represented lively to me, that so I may apply this Death to my self for my Help to grow in Grace ? But alas ! My Ignorance ! How little do I understand of the Nature of a Sacrament, and what is the spiritual Application of these visible Things ? How little do I distinguish between the Sign and the Thing signified in it, and the spiritual Resemblances there are between the one and the other ? And hence, how little am I instructed in the great Work of Redemption, and the great Love of Christ expressed in dying for me, and the excellent Use of his Death, for the nourishing of me unto eternal Life ? And if I am unacquainted with these Things; how shall I feed upon Christ here ? Nay, in the Things that I have some literal Knowledge of, how negligent and inadvertant am I ? How backward in improving my spiritual Faculties when I came hither, so as to make a Soul-satisfying Feast of this Ordinance ? How dull am I in the Application of these Things, where are my Tho'ts ? Whether is this unstable Heart of mine frayed ? What is my Meditation exercised about ? Where is the distinguishing and particular Application of these Things which I ought now to make ? How little do I pursue this Business to Purpose, and in good earnest ?

Rouse up then, thou dull and sluggish Heart of mine ; cry aloud to the Lord to enlighten thine Eyes, that thou maist see the Beauty and Glory of a crucified Saviour, here exhibited to thee ; that thou maist be rightly informed in the mystical Union, between Christ and these Elements, that thou maist see him thro' them, and have a proper Conception of the close Connection between them. Whether wanderest thou ? Where would'st thou be ? Am I not come hither to meet with my Saviour ? To
C participate

participate in his glorious Benefits? And shall I not now feed on him by Faith, and make a Soul-refreshing Meal of him? And how shall I so do, if I apprehend him not? Look then, see and believe; this Bread is Christ; this Wine is Christ; here is a precious Redeemer, set upon this Table before me: Here is a crucified Saviour prepared for me; his Body is broken, his Blood is poured out for me to live upon, and fetch in Life and Strength from. Look on him then, take him, eat and drink him, live upon him, fetch in all Grace and Strength from him.

O that I may find and experience that it is Christ indeed, that I may discern him by his precious and Soul-reviving Fruits in me, and those such as none else but he can produce. Let me find that Vertue deriving from him to my Soul, for the nourishing, quickening, fortifying of every Grace in me, that may give me the assured Experience, that it is he indeed, and no other. If I feed upon Christ indeed, will it not be spiritual Life to and in me? Shall I come to this Banquet, and go away again, and be nothing revived, nothing strengthened, find no Recruits in my Soul, no Progress in Grace, no Vigour added? And yet shall I be so impudent as to say that I have sat at the Table with him, and have eat of his Fruits? How can this be? Lord! Open these dim Eyes of mine that I may see, fix this Heart, engage my Tho'ts, enlarge my Meditations, raise up my Affections, put my whole Soul into a right Posture: Let me see and embrace my Saviour, and so derive from him all that Vertue, which shall give a new Resurrection to all my fainting Graces; and put me into a more spiritual and lively Frame, that so I may carry away such an evidencing Experience with me, as shall make me able to say, with Comfort and Confidence,

Confidence, That when I came thus to his Table, to meet with him in this holy Ordinance of his, *He brought me into his Banqueting-House, and his Banner over me was Love.*



MEDITATION, VIII.

*On sacramental and spiritual eating
and drinking.*

WHAT a well-furnished Table am I now sat down at? What glorious Viands are there here prepared for me? How every Way capable of giving me compleat Satisfaction? And do I not hear my Lord himself chearfully inviting of his Guests, and saying, *Eat O Friends, and drink, yea, drink abundantly O Beloved!* Cant. 5. 1. Is not here enough, and more than enough to replenish the most hungry and thirsty Soul? But I must *eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood* of the Son of God, if ever I hope to be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness. What Good will the richest Dainties do me, if I feed not on them, if I digest them not? I may rise as empty, and go away as unsatisfied as I came.

But how shall I do this? Will the eating a Morfel of Bread, and the drinking a Sip of Wine suffice? Is it eno^r to *look on* these outward Elements, and only apply my *bodily Organs* to receive them? To take them into my Hand, to put them into my Mouth, to recieve them into my Stomach,

Stomach, and afford them a natural Digestion? Ah no; this is not to feed upon Christ, and to be nourished by him. Is it not Christ himself, that I am come to receive in and with these Elements! And, if it be a sacramental and spiritual Union that there is between him and them, such also must be my feeding on him. I come hither, not to nourish my Body, but my Soul; and must not then my eating and drinking hold Correspondence with such a Thing? It is true, it is a Sacrament that I am at; and all sacramental Actions are accordingly required of me. Here is Bread and Wine set before me; these therefore I must eat and drink, else I do not celebrate a Sacrament: And being *sacramental*, they do therefore signify and exhibit something *spiritual*, which is represented by them, which if I do not receive with them, I shall mutilate the Sacrament, and lose the whole Benefit of it. Yea, the very Actions of eating and drinking at this Ordinance are sacramental, and therefore must be attended with spiritual Actions analogous: If I do not receive Christ, and live upon Christ now, I am not profited.

But where are mine *Eyes* to discern him here? My bodily Eyes will shew me the Elements; but Lord, give an *Eye of Faith*, to see Christ sacramentally united to them. Where is my *Appetite*, which may carry me out after Christ, with longing Desires to be filled with him? I feel a natural Appetite to bodily Nourishment, and can apprehend a Suitableness in these Things for it's Relief; but, Lord, for thy Spirit to enkindle and enflame my Desires after Communion with Christ now, by setting before me, and giving me a View of his wondrous Suitableness to answer all the Wants of this necessitous Soul of mine. Where is mine *Hand* to receive him as he is offered un-

to

to me ? I have an Hand to receive those visible Things that are presented unto me ; but how shall I now take Christ ? Lord ! for that *Hand of Faith*, by which I may receive him as my Lord, and my God, and appropriate him to my self, as my Life. Where is that *Mouth* which may take him in, and feed upon him ? I have a Mouth to receive these corporeal Things, and that can chew them, and swallow them ; Lord, give me the Exercise of a *lively Faith*, whereby I may apply Christ to myself, in the whole Vertue of his Death. Where is the *digestive Faculty*, whereby I may be nourished and strengthened by Christ, unto all that Life and Exercise of Grace, whereby I may be to the Glory and Praise of God ? I can digest and receive Strength and Revival in my Body by these earthly Things ; Lord, give me thy Spirit that may help me, by a gracious *Meditation*, and *renewed Exercise of Faith* on Christ, in all his Fullness, to find the Renewals of Strength, and fresh Vigour in my Soul, to enable it to be more lively and resolute in the whole Work that I am called unto.

And inasmuch as thou hast appointed these corporeal Things to be Means of helping my Soul in spiritual Communion with thee, grant the Efficacy of thy Spirit, to enable me to receive this Benefit by them, that so I may be helped by the sacramental Actions ; and, whiles some despise these Things because they are mean in themselves, having no Vertue of their own to communicate savingly to them, and so pretend to a spiritual Living on Christ, as more pure and exalted : And whiles others pretending an Esteem for this Ordinance, content themselves with the Out-side and bodily Actions of it, and so find no Relief in it, I may, by thy Grace be helped, whiles in Obedience

more

to thy Command, and waiting for thy Vertue to come in with thine own Institution, I carefully attend upon it, find it indeed a glorious Entertainment, and be more and more filled with Christ, and those wondrous Vertues that derive from him, to all those whose entire Dependence is upon him for all the Supplies of Maintenance unto their spiritual Life.



MEDITATION, IX.

On the New-Covenant, whereof the Sacrament is a Seal.

AND what is here to be seen? What am I to entertain my Tho'ts and Speculations about? What! nothing but a Ceremony? Nothing but a meer historical Representation of the Death of Christ? Oh no! It is a Sacrament that I am come to the Celebration of: And a Sacrament is not only a *Sign* to represent, but a *Seal* also to confirm: And doth a Seal use to be set to a *Blank*? No; the very Customs of Men will tell me, That where such a Solemnity is used, there is some Deed, Conveyance, or Covenant to be ratified by it: And I am told concerning *Circumcision*, which was one of the Old-testament Sacraments, That it was a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, Rom. 4. 11. i. e. Of that Covenant wherein this Righteousness is exhibited: And for that Reason God himself calls it, *the Covenant*, Gen. 17. 10. inasmuch as the Covenant was ratified by it. Which Covenant was the same in Substance with this that is revealed in the Gospel, tho' under a more obscure Dispensation. And my Saviour himself, when he instituted

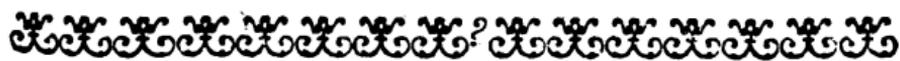
instituted this very Sacrament, tells us, that it is the *New-Testament*, Luke 22. 20. *i. e.* It is the Confirmation of his *last Will*, in which he bequeaths himself, and all the Fruits and Benefits of his Redemption to every Believer. The Blood of Christ is on this Account, called the *Blood of the Covenant*, Heb. 10. 29. because it was by his Death that he confirmed it; typified by the Blood which *Moses* used in solemnizing the Covenant between God and Israel of old, mentioned, *Exod* 24. 8.

Come then, Oh my Soul! and suffer not thy self to be confined in looking upon the *Seal*, but look over it, and read over the precious *Instrument* to which it is annexed. Christ gives thee here a Seal to confirm thy Faith; but take a thoro' View of what it is that thy Faith is now to strengthen it self in. Up, and sit thou no longer still, but walk thro' the Land of Promise, and take an Account of it in the Length and Breadth thereof, and be not doubting but believe. Come and behold what great Things God hath done for thee. Read over all the glorious Benefits that Christ hath purchased by his Righteousness for his Redeemed, and behold them all put down in the new-covenant Promise, and made over to be thine. Behold, here is *Grace and Glory, and all that is good*; all the Merits, and the whole Satisfaction of Christ is here given thee, and thou maist challenge it for thine own. See here, that God hath made him to be unto thee, *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*. See here, the Death of Christ made thy Life, his Satisfaction thy Discharge, his being made Sin, thy being made the Righteousness of God thro' him; His being made a Curse, procuring the Blessing of *Abraham* to descend upon thee. Behold, in this thou art of an Enemy made a Friend, of a Stranger

Stranger a Child ; God himself is reconciled to thee, laying off all his Anger, and is become thy God and Father in Jesus Christ. Here is the Pardon of all thy Sins confirmed by Promise; and God tells thee, That he hath *blotted them out as a thick Cloud, and that he will remember them no more.* The Sentence of Condemnation is taken off, *God sees no Perverseness nor Iniquity in thee* ; he hath bestowed on thee, the white Robe of his Son's Righteousness, and given the Spirit of Adoption to dwell in thee ; he hath given thee perfect Peace. All the Grace whereby thou maist serve him acceptably is secured unto thee, and thou maist boldly go to the Throne of Grace for it at all Times. He will shew thee a Father's Pity under all thy Follies and Infirmities, and will never leave thee nor forsake thee. He will make all thy Sorrow tend to thy Rejoycing, and the bitterest Troubles thou meetest withal, to do thee Good. He will keep thee from the Power of thy Soul's Enemies, that they shall not harm thee ; he will lay thee in his Bosom, and tender thee as the Apple of his Eye ; he will never suffer thee so to fall, but that everlasting Arms shall be underneath to lift thee up again : He will keep thee by his Power thro' Faith unto Salvation : *He will guide thee by Counsel, and bring thee to Glory* : He will unstring Death, and make thy Grave a Bed of Rest ; and when thou hast served thy Generation by his Will, he shall then send his holy Angels, to guard thy Soul to the highest Heavens, and lodge it in the Arms of thy Redeemer ; and preserve thy Dust, as a precious Relick to be raised up at last in Glory, and fill thee with the Fulness of those Joys that are in his Presence, and make thee to drink of the Rivers of those Pleasures, that are at his right Hand for ever more. This and more than

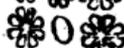
than thou canst ask or think, is prefixed to, and confirmed by this Seal. Only remember that it is a Covenant, and he expects that thou *give up thy self to him everlastingly to be his; and that thou be for him, and for no other.*

Oh my Soul then! Now repeat this Covenant-Obligation of thine, and say, *Lord! Thou knowest that I love thee, and am thine; now establish mine Heart on thy Promises, and make me glad in the Lord my Saviour.* And, Oh my Soul! How low, how vile, should this make thee in thine own Eyes? Wonder, but be not unbelieving. Lie in the Dust, and adore this free Grace of God that hath entertained such Tho'ts for thee as these, who art not only Dust and Ashes, but a vile Sinner by Nature, and worthy to be cast off for ever. Let this Love ravish thee, and rest satisfied in this thy Portion. And Oh prize this precious Saviour, who hath procured all this for thee; and be ravished with the Fulness of this Feast, which hath provided such royal Dainties for thee to feed thy self in the Contemplation of, and invites thee to come that they may be a-new sealed up unto thee at this happy Interview.



MEDITATION, X.

On the sealing of the Covenant in the Sacrament.

H the ineffable Kindness and Condescendency of my God and Saviour, that he should not only open to me, and entertain me in a Covenant of Peace, stored with sure Mercies, and everlasting Felicities, but also, to ratify my Faith, set *his Seal*

34. *Sacramental Meditations.*

to it: And why seal it? But that it should be established immutably and eternally: And what Need of a Seal? May I not take him at his Word? Is it not settled in Heaven for ever? Can there be any Thing more firm than the *Promise* given by a faithful God, with whom it is impossible that he should lie? True; but herein he hath stooped to the Weakness of my Faith. The Blessings that are laid up in this Covenant, are so unconceivably great, and my sinful Unworthiness so amazing, that I am ready to doubt whether such a Thing as this can be; whether I may, without arrogant Presumption, entertain the Promise, as made unto me. He hath therefore added this Seal to establish *my trembling Faith*, and give it the faster Hold on him. Thus doth he relieve mine Infirmities; and shall I not praise him?

But what Need is there of *so often Sealing*? Was not this done unchangeably in the *Day of Espousals*, when he put his Spirit in me, made himself over to me, and drew from me the free Consent of my Soul to give up my self to him to be his for ever? Was I not then sealed to the Day of Redemption? And can ten thousand new Seals make the Covenant more firm or sure? Alas! How weakly and ignorantly do I argue? How often do I find this Faith of mine wounded and weakned? How often is it assaulted and battered, and so needs to be a-new confirmed and strengthened? How many Advantages do I too often give to Satan to puzzle and perplex me with Doubts about my Interest, and how ready is this misgiving Heart of mine to entertain them? How many Follies have I been guilty of since the last Sealing? How have I provoked Christ by coy and wanton Carriages, to withdraw, and hide the Light of his Countenance from me? And I begin

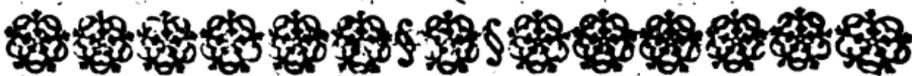
begin to call in Question the Promise and Covenant-Faithfulness of God, and how ready am I to sink into Despair upon it? How sensible am I of my unkind and false Dealings with my Beloved? Shall I not then wonder and admire at this free Favour, that he will come again to me, and, when I cannot read or discern the former Sealings, to put all out of Doubt by a new Obligation? That now all Distances may be removed, all Breaches be made up, and I may have a new Evidence and Testimony that my Beloved is mine, and I am his: That I stand right in his Favour, and that all the Sins that I have grieved him with, since the last solemn Transaction between him and me, are freely forgiven me, and he gives me all the Assurances that can be, that he loves me with an everlasting Love? And what greater Testimony can I here expect, of the endearing Love and Pity of my precious Saviour to me? What, on this Side of Glory, can carry more of inward Consolation in it?

But is this witnessed to and in every one that comes to this Table, and partakes in the Elements that are there presented? May I conclude because I eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, that I shall certainly inherit all the Blessings of the New-Covenant? Let me not thus deceive my self: They are only the *worthy* Receivers to whom this Ordinance becomes such a Seal; and all are not such. There are those to whom this Ordinance may become a Seal of their Damnation. Let me then entertain this as a Caution; and a Quickning, but not as a Discouragement.

See then, my Soul, to the Truth in the inward Parts, which Christ looks for. Be sure, when thou comest hither, to seek after Christ, that thou maist meet with him, and

and enjoy the Fellowship of him ; that thou discern his Body, and participate in his Blood ; that thou exercise Faith in him ; and come to him, repenting of all thy Follies, renewedly giving thy self up to him, with more firm and inviolable Purposes to be faithful to him ; strengthening and establishing thy Faith on him, in Dependance for all that Help, Assistance, Strength, whereby thou maist pay thy Vows, and be to his Glory more than ever ; wait for, and observe the Motions and Touches of his Spirit for those lively Impressions of his Grace, whereby thou maist be confirmed in the Apprehension of his Love, by these precious Fruits of it ; and take these as the Ratification of his Covenant with thee, and improve them accordingly, and so let the outward Signs be improved by thee as Helps to corroborate thy Faith and Joy.

And now looking on this Seal, and being confirmed by it, lose thy self in the Contemplation of all these everlasting Mercies, which are the Fruits of the Purchase of Christ's Death and Obedience, and live upon them : Make them thine own, suck the Sweet out of them, & be thus satisfied, as with Marrow and Fatness. Let thy Doubts and Fears be here silenced ; resolve that Christ with all his Benefits, is thine, and shall be so for ever ; and let this fill thee with holy Joy, the Ravishings whereof may make thee to say, *A Day in thy Courts is better than a Thousand.*



MEDITATION,



MEDITATION, XI.

On the remembring of CHRIST in the Sacrament.

O great and astonishing was the Love of Christ, express'd in his voluntary dying for miserable Sinners, who could in no other way have been delivered from everlasting Sorrows, that it deserves a perpetual Record. Angels themselves cannot withhold from gazing upon it with surprizing Admiration: Those Cherubims have their Eyes ever fixed on the Mercy-Seat. But alas! Such is the Pride and Folly of sinful Men, that they too readily forget, or lose the Imperfections of the most obliging Favours bestowed upon them; and had need therefore of something to revive the Remembrance of them. And because there never was such Love and obliging Kindness so much as heard of, as is this of Christ to us; this is by himself declared to be one great Design of his instituting of this Ordinance; this therefore is commanded us in the Institution, *Luk. 22. 19.* And again repeated by the Apostle in the Rehearſal of it, *1 Cor. 11. 25.* This Sacrament is as it were a Pillar erected to put us in mind of this great Benefit. When God brought his People out of Egypt, and spared their first-born, when he slew those of the Egyptians, he ordained the Passover to be a perpetual Monitor of it: And this also was typical of Christ and his Redemption. But when Christ actually went through this Work, he gave us this Ordinance to be

be a Memorial of it, that the People of God might be called on, till he comes to celebrate his Love to them in this. For which End it is a standing Ordinance, until Christ's second coming, and is to be often celebrated. And a great Kindness it is to us; whose Memories are so slippery and treacherous on this Account.

But *what is that Remembrance of him that he expects of me, and of all that love him, and hope to live by his dying?* Surely the Mystery of it is not swallowed in a bare Memorial of his Death and Sufferings *historically*, as Men in some Places do keep some observable Days, in Remembrance of earthly Princes, or great Benefactors, as an *Honorarium* to celebrate their Beneficence: But the very Nature of this Ordinance, well considered of, will point me to some farther Design in the instituting of it, than this. Christ gave it to his Church to be a *spiritual Help*; for their Nourishment, and Growth in Grace. It is therefore to be used for the *strengthening of Faith*, and of every other Grace in us. I am therefore in it, to remember Christ, as he is the Object of my Faith, and therefore, by this Commemoration to promote my Faith in him. It is such a Remembrance, as I am by it to shew forth his Death.

Here then, in the first Place, I am to look on this Ordinance with such a Consideration, as to be put in Mind of Christ, as he is the *Object* of my Faith, and to take a View of him in his *Suitableness* to be so. I must not then forget his *active Obedience*, in which he merited eternal Life for me; though I am more demonstratively pointed to his *Passive*, in which there is a peculiar Discovery of his unparalell'd Love to me.

Look

Look then, my Soul ! and contemplate, *What a Death* thy dear Lord underwent, suffering of his Body to be broken, and his Blood to be poured out at the Altar of divine Revenge : How he yielded himself to be a Sacrifice to appease the Wrath of God ; and herein read a Lecture of his admirable Love. Dwell then here, and observe how much he suffered, and that, not only from Men and Devils, but from God himself : How he was made a Prey to Justice it self, bearing the Extent of the Curse of the Law, the Essence of the Punishment of the first and second Death : Smitten and forsaken of God. And forget not that *All this was for thee* ; that this Lamb of God was slain, not for his *Own*, but for *thy Sins*. He was holy, harmless undefiled, but *Thou* wert the Sinner for whom he gave himself in exchange.

And now look upon the *glorious Fruits and Benefits*, which thou art made to partake in, by vertue of these Sufferings of his, Pardon of Sin, Peace with God, Grace and Glory. And now labour to apply this Recongnition to the strengthening of thy Faith in him. Read therefore here the Sufficiency of this Saviour, and the Value of this Sacrifice to procure all this Good for thee, and let this lead thee forth to take fresh Hold of it with the Hand of Faith. Say now, This is he who loved me, and gave himself for me ; and accordingly wait upon him for the Sealing up of all this Good to thee by this Ordinance ; and accordingly, see where is the Ground of all thy Hope and Expectation of eternal Salvation, even in the Death of Christ : And let it point thee whether to go for all the Supply thou wantest.

And now stir up thy self, to pay to him all Praise and Thanksgiving for this unspeakable Favour. Be enflamed, and

and even ravished with inexpressible Admiration at the wonderful Love herein expressed to thee, & come to this Ordinance, tarry not from it. Art thou not sensible of thy own Dulness, Deadness, Coldness, Forgetfulness? Warm, revive, quicken thy self then at this Representation of Christ: And be sure to set thy self to call to Mind the great Work of Redemption.

Follow Christ now from the Garden to his Cross, and and then to his Sepulchre; View him in all his Agonies, see his great Love to thee in all. And now let it carry thee on the Wings of Love, into the Embraces of the dear Redeemer; breathe out thy self into his Bosome who bled to Death for thee; get here deeper and deeper imprinted Apprehensions of his Love; see a glorious Beauty in those bitter Sufferings of his; look therefore upon him with this Commemoration: Say, What if others see nothing in a bleeding, dying crucified Christ, but what moves Prejudices in them? Yet, Oh my Soul! See here a Mirrour of infinite Compassion. This, this is he, whose Body was broken, and whose Blood was poured out on my Account; this is he who hath spent his dearest and most precious Life for my sake; that went thro' all Shame, Disgrace, Misery, Death, to free me from all these. And shall I ever forget this Kindness? No, let my right Hand sooner forget its Cunning, than I lose the warm and Heart-affecting Remembrance of him, who died that I might live thro' him, and escape the endless Miseries which Sin made my deserved Portion from the Hands of God.

MEDITATION,



MEDITATION, XII.

On eating and drinking unworthily.

*** ORD! Thou hast made it my Duty to come
*** L to this Table, to celebrate this Ordinance in
*** Remembrance of thee: And how can I say
*** that I love thee, if I do not faithfully and cheer-
fully keep up this sacred Commemoration of thy incom-
parable and unconceivable Love to poor Sinners, in dying
for them? But behold, here is a Cherubim, with a *flaming*
Sword brandished, to keep the Way of this Tree of Life:
A terrible Caution which chills my Soul at the very Tho'ts
of it: A fearful Doom against unworthy Communicants,
1 Cor. 11. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily,*
eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself. And who am I?
The vilest and most unworthy Wretch that treads on thy
Earth; a chief Sinner; one that hath not only been born
in Sin, and for that deserved to be banished everlastingly
from thy Presence, but who have lived in Sin, and that
under the precious Gospel of Grace; who have polluted
my self with abominable Iniquities, have sinned against
Light, against Calls, and Counsels, and Warnings; have
neglected a Day of Grace, despised a precious Saviour,
made light of offered Salvation, many a Time said to
Christ, Depart from me; and preferred lying Vanities
before everlasting Mercies; once and again unaccountably
quenched the Spirit, and stifled those Motions and Stir-
ings in me, which have been urgent upon me to forsake
D my

my Sins, and fly to a Redeemer : And am I worthy ?
What shall I then do ?

How shall I escape this Danger ? Shall I tarry away, and turn my Back upon this precious Ordinance ? Will that save me from Guilt ? Or shall I by so doing give Honour to Jesus Christ ? Ah no : I shall hereby not only put a Slight upon Christ's express Command, but also offer Contempt to his Person, and manifest a low Account of his Love. Shall I then come unworthy as I am, and so run the Risque of mine own Damnation ? Not so neither : That would be neither to glorify God, nor to have any Regard for mine own Soul. Lord, lead me through this Labyrinth, and guide my Steps in it, that I may not err. I find, and thanks be to the Grace of God for it, that the Gospel unriddles this Paradox, and that I may be most unworthy *in my self*, and yet at the same Time be accounted worthy *in Christ* ; that, *though I am most unworthy, yet I may partake worthily*, and most so, when I labour under the deepest Sense of my own Unworthiness, and that I shall never find better Welcome with my Saviour, than when, in deepest Sense of mine own Vileness, I place my single and entire Dependance upon his Merits alone.

But what is this unworthy receiving that I am so to dread and avoid ? Doubtless there are *more Ways than one* whereby I may be thus guilty, if I take not the more Heed to my self. If I do not partake in this Ordinance, according to the Nature, Worth, Dignity, and Excellency of it, I shall so far bring my self under this Guilt : And how many Ways may I thus do ? What Watchfulness then, and what Care had I need to use in this Regard ? If I am not in Christ by a true and living Faith, I must inevitably

evitably partake unworthily. This Ordinance is a Seal of the Covenant, and if I am not in Covenant with God, what Right have I to the Seal of it? In this Ordinance I am to receive Christ himself, with all his Benefits, and apply all his Merits to my self, which how can I possibly do, without the Exercise of Faith? And how can I exercise it, if I have it not? This Feast is Spiritual, the Food that is here set before me, is Soul-Nourishment, Meat for eternal Life; such then must be the Organ that receives it, and that cannot be without *Faith*. If I have not Faith, I cannot please God in any Thing that I do, *Heb. 11. 6.* Am I then an Unbeliever? How dare I to come? I may indeed receive this as an outward Seal of the Gospel-Covenant: But how doth that run? What Relief will that give unto me? Why, the Tenour of that is, *He that believes not shall be damned*, *Mark 16. 16.* And shall I be so mad, as to run to this Ordinance there to obtain a Seal for mine own Damnation?

See then, Oh my Soul! that *thy Faith be, though weak, yet sincere*, that thou be, at least able truly to say with him, *Mark 9. 24. Lord I believe, help mine Unbelief.*

But suppose I am a true Believer, am I now secure? Is there no other Danger of my partaking unworthily? Is this all that is required of me, that I be in a State of Grace; by no Means: A true Believer may, by his own Neglect, bring a great deal of this Guilt upon himself: And I know none more likely to do so than I am, whose Heart is so horribly deceitful, whose Corruptions are so many and so strong. The Grace of God is put into us for Exercise, in which only doth it attain its End, and when shall I exercise my Graces, if not when I draw near to Christ in the Duties of closest Communion with him?

When should my Spikenard give its Smell, if not at such Time as the King sits at his Table? And it is no small Matter to get Grace lively and active. If I have wounded my Conscience with any known Sin, and have not duly and deeply repented of it, how can I expect that Christ will bid me welcome, and seal up his Love to me? If I have obstructed my spiritual Frame, by carnal and vain Tho'ts or Actions, and come rushing to this Ordinance without any Fore-preparation for it, how shall I shew that due Respect to Christ that I ought? And will not this be an unworthy Contempt cast upon this Ordinance? If I carry a wandering, dead indisposed Heart thither, and it accompany me to and through that Ordinance? I shall put an Affront upon Christ himself. If I carry with me any malicious, revengeful Tho'ts against my Brother; or if I have done him any Wrong, and have not reconciled my self to him, I cannot justly expect to find Christ's Forgiveness applied to me. Oh! How many Ways may I thus come unworthily?

And will there *no Harm* come to me by it? Alas *very much*: There is *Judgment* that is procured by it, it eat and drunk by it: This is the Way to turn the very Sacrament itself, which is ordained for Edification, to become hurtful, and very detrimental. If I am an Unbeliever, so many Sacraments as I receive, so many new Seals I have of my Damnation, if I repent not. And tho' I am a Believer, yet if I carry it any Way unworthily, thro' Neglect, I expose my self to some fearful Judgment or other, 1 *Cor.* 11. 32.

I come then with Fear and Trembling: Oh Lord save me from being such an unworthy Communicant; let me be found in Christ, let me find him at his Table; forgive

all my former Neglects of this Kind ; give me more Grace ; put me into a due Posture for this Ordinance ; maintain it in me, that so I may every Way express a due Regard to my Lord Jesus Christ, and receive from him the gracious Fruits and Evidences of my being accepted with him, that so I may be enabled to eat and drink mine own Salvation.



MEDITATION XIII.

On Self-Examination.

AND have I duly considered what a fearful Thing it is to approach to this Table, to eat this Bread, and drink this Cup unworthily ? And is there no Danger of *my* so doing ? Are there not a great many that so do ? And do I know a more vile and deceitful Heart in the World than mine is ? How many thousand Times hath it imposed on me in Things of the greatest Moment ? And why may it not do so in this ? And what shall I do that I may escape this woeful Hazard, and so come that Christ may account me, and accept of me as worthy, according to the gracious Respect which he bears to his own, in the New-Covenant ? Hath not Christ himself, by his Apostle, given me a precious Direction for my Help in this Affair ? 1 Cor. 11, 28. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.*

Ah! The Rashness, the Precipitancy, the indeliberate Rushing to the Table of the Lord! How perilous, how mischievous do I find it to be? And yet how backward, how indisposed am I to, how confused am I in, this Work? I am very apt, and, I fear too uncharitably to judge of others; I can make critical Remarks upon them, and can spy a Mote in my Brother's Eye, and make a great Matter of it; but to bring my self to a thorough Trial, and to judge my self exactly, how hard? I cannot tell how to come to this Work: How loth am I to know my self, or be thoroughly acquainted with my own Heart?

How many hundreds of Excuses are ready to offer, to put it off, and lay it aside? to delay, to adjourn it, and by Degrees to throw it off, and wholly neglect it? This worldly Business, that unhappy Avocation, calls me away, and pretends that it can give me no Leisure for this great Work; as if any Thing could be of greater Weight, and more Importance. And when I set about it, What Distractions, what Wandrings of Heart, what foolish Parenthesis of vain Tho'ts crowd in to disturb and spoil the whole Business? How often is my Heart gone, and gotten into the Ends of the Earth, and my serious Thoughts confused, routed, lost with some impertinent Trifle or other? And when I am gotten into the Work, and hopefully engaged, what Darkness, Decëit, Delusion do I encounter? How involved and perplexed am I? How doth Sin that dwells in me, and Satan, who is always waiting to do me a Mischief, confound me in this Affair? So that I can scarce tarry out one Trial, or come to any determinate Conclusion about any Thing.

Sometimes

Sometimes I am pufft on to Presumption, and precipitated to give an easy Credit to every Thing, and so come to an haasty Resolve that all is well. I am willing to believe every Thing that makes a Shew, to be the Substance; to reckon every Conviction to be Conversion, to mistake a worldly for a godly Sorrow, to count a common for a saving Work, to repute a legal Operation to be evangelical, and every little Stirring or Motion in me, to be the right Frame in which I may come to this Ordinance, to put off Convictions that offer themselves, with the common Excuse, that Perfection is not here to be expected, but this I hope that I am sincere, and a little easy Trial shall serve the Turn.

At another Time, I am at a Loss about every Thing, my misgiving Heart dares believe nothing at all: Tho' I dare not deny, yet neither dare I to acknowledge the Grace of God; and, tho' I know that there are these and those Things in me, yet I am afraid to think that they are right: There is such a Resemblance in the Counterfeit of Grace, that I am ready to resolve that all in me is no better. I find Faith so weak, and Unbelief so powerful, that I doubt whether I have any Faith or no. I find such Stirrings and effecacious Actings of Corruption, that I vote my self graceless, and I have deadly Objections to make against every favourable Verdict which my Conscience brings in for me; and because I have not those sensible Sealings, and audible Testimonies of the Spirit to what I find in my self, I therefore conclude that I am false, a meer Hypocrite.

Lord! What shall I do? I dare not trust my self; I can do nothing of my self; I dare not neglect the putting my self on the Trial; but I know not how to manage it;

I know not how to rest in any Determination or Refusancy of it : I am so much a Stranger at home ; I am afraid of being deceived, and I am sure I shall be so, if I confide in my own Self-Examination. Lord, search me and try me, even my Heart and my Reins, and shew me if there be any evil Way in me, shew me my State, shew me my Frames, discover the Stirrings of Sin in me, if there be any Sincerity in me, bear Witness to it. Help me to do my Part in this great Work ; make me willing to know the worst by my self ; divide my Mind and my Tho'ts from vain Objects, fix my Heart on this Business, and keep me close to my Work, grant me thy Presence and Aid in it ; give me a right Understanding of the Rule according to which I am to try my self, and by which I shall be judged in the great Day ; shew me all the Windings and Turnings of my false Heart ; lead me into every secret Chamber of my Soul, and make me to know what is there : Make me rightly to distinguish between Appearances and Realities, suffer me not to mistake Things to my Hurt.

If I have deceived my self hitherto, let me do so no more ; if there be any Grace in me, let me know it, that I may praise thee, and let thy Spirit bear Witness to it, that I may be no longer at a Loss, and dishonour thee by Doubting. If I have fallen into any Iniquity, discover it to me in the Vileness of it, that I may repent in Dust and Ashes. If these Longings of my Soul after Jesus Christ, and Communion with him, be of the right Stamp, approve of them, and let me have that Approbation sealed up to me at thy Table, by thy gracious meeting of me there, visiting me with thy Favour, and communicating of thy Love to me. Lord, thou understandest what I am,
and

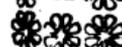
and how it is with me; tho' I may be mistaken; thou canst not, and thou canst keep me from being mistaken too; do it for thy Name sake is Jesus Christ. I go about this great and momentuous Duty, not in mine own Strength, but in thine: Do not fail me I humbly beseech thee, but in *thy Light let me see Light.*



M E D I T A T I O N, XIV.

On Examination of my State.




O W wonderfully happy are they who may come to the Mountain of the Lord, and be entertained at the Feast of fat Things prepared by God himself, and drink of the refined Wines, that are there to be had in Store? What a glorious Privilege is this, to have a Christ to live upon, in whom all Fulness dwells, while a starving World seek to fill themselves with Husks, and are not able? I am going to a Table that is richly furnished with all that is requisite to make me compleatly blessed, to satisfy me as with Marrow and Fatness; but my trembling Heart misgives me.

Will the Master of the Feast bid *me* welcome? Am I one of those Guests, over whom he will spread his Banner of Love? Oh my Soul, beware what thou attemptest, lest it repent thee. I know there is a general Invitation given in the Gospel, to all that are within the Sound of it, to come to Christ, and accept of him, with a Promise of Rest

Rest to them that so do. And I know that those that come to Christ, must seek after him, and after Rest in him, by Communion with him in this Life, in the Way of Ordinances, so long as our Fellowship with him is mediate. But I am assured that there is more in this Coming, than the most are aware of; And I know no Heart in the World that is more deceitful than mine is. This Ordinance I am going to is a sealing Ordinance, and there is something to be sealed in it; and what is that but the *everlasting Covenant* between God and me? But how can the Covenant be sealed, till it be *indented*? And what Evidence have I that this glorious Transaction hath ever passed? I find that when, upon the Gospel-Invitation to the great Supper, Guests crowded in boldly, there was one there without a *Wedding-Garment*, but the Lord of the Feast found him out, and he suffered dreadfully for his Presumption: And if I am such a one, and yet dare to adventure, can I promise my self to fare better? Have I not to do with him who searcheth Hearts, and trieth the Reins, and cannot be imposed upon? It is not all my fair outside Profession; it is not all the carnal Confidence that I arrogate to my self; it is not the good Esteem that I have gotten among Christians, that will stand me in stead, if I have not the *Truth in the inward Parts*; God will find me out, and put me to Shame.

Be serious then, Oh my Soul! It is of infinite Concernment for thee to be thorough and established in this Business. Call thy self to the most exact Scrutiny; lay off all Reluctancy; separate thy self to this great Enquiry; put thy self upon the Trial, I may come unworthily tho' I am in a safe Estate, but I cannot come worthily if my State be not safe. Can I then approach to this Table, and receive:
these

these Pledges of the Love of Christ, with any Quietness of Mind, if I am at an utter Loss in my self about this great Question, *Whether I am bro't into the Covenant of Peace, whether I am in Christ Jesus?* I was born in my natural State a Stranger unto this Covenant, an Enemy of God, a Child of Wrath, a Fire-brand of Hell, I was once in League with Hell, and in Covenant with Death; I was once playing the Harlot with other Lovers; Time was when I was going as fast from God as I could; and when I despised his Offers of Grace, refused his Invitations, said to the Almighty, Depart, embraced lying Vanities, and forsook my own Mercies; when I held fast Deceit, and would not let it go, when I would not part with my Lusts for a Saviour. And hath there been a *Change* wrought in me? Am I a *new Creature?* *Are all old Things past away, and all Things become new?* Not is it every Change that will witness my Conversion. There are that have great Alterations, but are not renewed in the Image of their Mind, and so do still remain in their Sins. It is one Thing to be *convinced*, and another to be *converted*. I may have been turned from Prophaneness to Civility; from a lewd Life to common Morality; from a Neglect of religious Duties, to a formal practising of them; from notorious Wickedness to Hypocrisy; from Unrighteousness to a legal Righteousness; and for all this be in the Gall of Bitterness. I find that many will make great Pleadings in the last Day, and yet be rejected, and declared Workers of Iniquity, *Matth. 7. 22, 23.* And if either a deceitful Heart or a cunning Devil can impose upon me in this Regard, they will lead me into a Fool's Paradise, and build me upon a Confidence that will prove my Bane.

Be

Be then thorough, Oh my Soul ! Be not afraid to know the worst by thy self ; count it thy Happiness to be now undeceived, pursue the Business home, bring thy self to the Light, and cover nothing from the Trial. Let the Word of God now determine this great Question, and let Conscience deal truly and faithfully in laying open thy State before it. Examine thy self, prove thy self, know thy self to the Bottom : If thou hast hitherto deceived thy self, and taken up with false Evidences, and presumed upon them, it is good now to know it, whiles there is a Time of seeking a Reparation, and a Day of Grace is continued to thee ; whereas, shouldst thou go on in such a Mistake till this Day be over, thou art ruined irreparably. If thou hast indeed the Root of the Matter in thee, and art past from Death to Life ; what Comfort canst thou have of it if thou knowest it not ? But how greatly wilt thou rejoice upon the Assurance of it ? Be not slighty then, as the Case is tremendous, so the Work is hard. There are a great many Mistakes, there is so much plausible Varnish in a legal Change ; an Hypocrite may go so far ; a temporary Believer may do so much, that without great Curiosity thou maist be imposed on,

Say then, hast thou felt the Wounds of Sin ? Hast thou been distressed with the Body of Death ? Hath it been an evil and bitter Thing to thee, that thou hast departed from the living God ? Hath Sin been made truly thy Burden ? Hast thou seen it in it's vile Nature, as well as it's bitter Fruits ? Hast thou been weary of it, and desired insatiably to be delivered both from the Guilt and the Dominion of it ? Hast thou found thy self without Righteousness and Strength of thine own ? Hast thou rejected all Reliance on it ? Hast thou seen the Rock of thy Salvation

vation to be higher than thou art? Hast thou been utterly lost in thy self? Hast thou acknowledged the Sovereignty of Grace, and been broken off, as from Self-sufficiency, so from Self-sovereignty, and lain at the Foot-stool of the Throne of God with a Resignation to him? Hast thou seen the Fulness of the Sufficiency in Christ to save thee? Hath he been made precious to thee, even the chief of ten thousands? Hast thou resolved to adventure thy self upon him? Hast thou been drawn out to reject all for him, and make an absolute Choice of him? Hath he thy Heart and Love?

What shall I say? I hope, I fear, I have a great deal to say *for*, and a great deal *against* my self in this Regard. I am afraid of deceiving my self. Lord I fly to thee; thou biddest me to search my self; I beseech thee to search and try me, prove my Heart and my Reins; open to me my true State; let me not be deceived, either in the Rule of my Trial, or in the comparing of the Estate of my Soul there-withall: I look up to thee for thy good Spirit, by whose Assistance alone I dare to proceed in this great Concern. O! fail me not, suffer me not to be deceived and ruined, for I hope in thy Grace.



MEDITATION,





MEDITATION, XV.

On the same by Faith.

THIS Heart of mine is deceitful above all Things, and how shall I know it? I would fain nourish in my self a Hope, that God hath by his Spirit laid in me a good Foundation for eternal Life: But I dread and tremble to think of being mistaken in this Hope, and found labouring of an undoing Presumption. What shall become of me thro' Eternity, if I have lived upon an Hope that will vanish when God requires my Soul?

When I consider what a great Change it is that is wrought in Conversion, in the passing from Death to Life, I am afraid whether all that I can say for my self will amount to that; and I feel Lust and Corruption so strong and active in me, that I am ready to say, *If the Lord be with me, why is it thus?* When I on the other Hand consider, That the Beginnings of Grace are weak, and that God will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax; and remember what bitter Complaints holy Men have made of themselves, I conceive some Hopes that that immortal Seed is sown in me.

As to those full Assurances, and ravishing extatical Joys arising there-from, which some of God's dear Children have experienced, tho' I long for them, and prefer them before all that is precious in this World, yet I cannot pretend to them. But I hope that I am not without
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the Testimony of the Spirit of God with mine, that I am a Child of God. I find that all my Evidences are beset with Objections ; yet I have some Satisfaction against these Doubts, in that I am inwardly perswaded to adventure my All upon Christ, and to wait for his Salvation ; and am thereby encouraged to seek him and serve him, and follow hard after him.

This I believe, that if my State be safe, I am changed from what I once was ; that I am broken off from Sin, and mine own Righteousness, and united to Christ by a living Faith. That if this be so, it is not a Work of mine own, but of the almighty Power of the Spirit of God in me. I believe that if I am in Christ by a sound Conversion, I have been made to see the Vileness of my Heart and Nature, the Guilt cleaving to me by Reason of Sin imputed and imparted, the Righteousness of God in condemning me, the Holiness of the Law, my own Inability to satisfy Justice, the Freeness of the Grace of the Gospel, the Fulness of Sufficiency in Christ to save me, my absolute Need of him, my utter Insufficiency of my self to believe on him ; and to experience the mighty Power of the Spirit, in lifting me up into the Rock that is higher than I : And now Christ is precious to me, and the Chief of ten thousands ; I have adventured my All upon him ; I have embraced him in the Promise, and accepted of him on the Terms of the New-Covenant ; I have taken him to be my Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption : And that, short of this, I have no Reason to think that I have a Title to him and his Benefits.

But, whether all this Work hath past on me to Effect, the Lord knows. I know there hath been *something like it,*

it, and I would not be mistaken about it for a World. I am sure it is otherwise with me than once it was. *Time was* when I said to Christ, Depart from me, and loathed the Ways of Holiness, when Sin was sweet to me, and more hard to part with than a right Hand, or right Eye; when I could not forgoe a Lust for a Saviour, when I was secure in my natural Estate, and felt no Evil in Sin, nor any Need of Salvation; when I relied on the Piety and Prayers, and Covenant of my Parents; and tho't their Faith should save me; when I had a Power of mine own, and did not doubt of my being able to do all that was required in order to Life; when I had a Righteousness of mine own, and hoped to get Heaven by it; when I made light of all Treaty and Offer of Grace. That it is *not so now*, Thanks be to God, and that I loath and abhor my self to think what I have been and done.

But there have been so many Essays, and Returns again, so many Beginnings in me that have been out-grown, that I am at a Loss, nor can I tell where to fix and determine; I had many strong and powerful Impressions on me in my Childhood, when under the careful Instruction of tender Parents; but they went off, and I dare not say, that it was a saving Work, tho' I think I never got off the Feelings of it at Times. I ran a Course of Vanity, and, tho' ever and anon I had Remorses and serious Reflections, yet the Power of Sin in me was awfully influential.

Yet I hope, thro' the Riches of Grace; that I have felt the Wounds of Sin, and valued the Excellency of a Saviour; I have been bro't into Straits and utmost Exigencies; I have an utter Abhorrence of my self, and can, with all my Heart, trample upon every Thing of my
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own, as Dirt and Dung for Christ. I have no Hope but in him ; and I have been encouraged by the Gospel-invitation, and the inward Perswasions of the Spirit, accompanying the same, to throw my self upon him. I have accepted him in all his Offices, and know that I need them all for the bringing about of my Salvation. I have hoped that I have seen him in his House, in his Ordinances, at his Table : I have had my Heart carried forth to him in secret Duties ; I have had Revivals from him in the Course of his Providence, I have a very high Esteem of the Way of Salvation by him. I have found my self utterly unable to believe in him ; I have cried, *I believe, Lord help my Unbelief* ; and have felt that inward Support upon it, by which my Soul hath been upheld. And tho' all of these Things are weak and faint in me, and I do many Times question whether they be any more than a Dream or Fancy, yet I am able thro' Grace, to say, that I am deeply concerned for Eternity. I am perswaded, that there is no other Name but that of Christ, by which I can be saved. I have felt a Call of God inviting me to run into that Name, and I have lost all Confidence in any other : Nor do I hope ever to appear before God, and hold up my Head, but in the Righteousness of Christ ; or to obtain eternal Life, but by the Conduct of his Spirit and Grace, in Reliance whereon is all my Hope and Support.

I do with my whole Heart and Soul, now offer this Request unto thee, who searchest the Hearts, and triest the Reins of the Children of Men, who knowest if I lie : Lord, lay me open to my self, shew me what is the Hope I am built upon ; if I have deluded my own Soul, do thou undeceive me, and make me to know the worst by
 E my self ;

my self ; if there be Truth, accept of it, and witness it to and in me ; if my Hope be false, make me to know it, and fire me out of it, and if my Hopes must perish, let it be now, whiles by Grace, I may seek a better Foundation. But if there be true and saving Faith in me, though it be but as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, let me now, in my drawing near to thee, have it nourished and strengthened, and if it may stand with thy good Pleasure, a-new sealed and witnessed in me.

MEDITATION, XVI.

On the same, by Repentance.

FAITH and Repentance are herein Companions, and are ever inseparable ; and so they do give mutual Evidence one to the other. But as there is a false Faith, that will leave the Man short of eternal Happiness, so there is an unsound Repentance, which will not prove unto Life. If then I have truly believed in Christ, I have also repented of Sin. As I have made God the Object of my Trust for all, so of my whole Service, and accordingly I have acknowledged him to be, as my first Cause, so my last End. If I have not repented, I have not believed, and then I cannot be saved. If I have not repented, I am an impenitent Sinner, and then I am sure I am in the Way to Perdition. There is a Way that leads unto Life, and a Way that leads to Perdition, if I am not gotten into that, I am certainly going in this.

This I am sure, that I came into the World, with my Back turned upon God, and my Face set towards lying Vanities, all the Faculties and Powers in me averse to Holiness, and enclined to Sin. If then I have repented, there hath been a wonderful Change wrought in me by almighty Power; I am a new Creature, all old Things are past away, and all Things are become new: I am turned from Sin unto God, and this Change is not only in my Actions, but in my whole Soul. And Oh let me not deceive my self in this Matter.

There is a great deal of *unprofitable Repentance*, that goes too current among Men, and cheats them into undoing Mistakes. Beware then, Oh deceitful Heart, of deceiving thy self on this Account. There is a legal as well as an evangelical Repentance, and it carrieth a plausible Shew in it, and how many there be that build a false Confidence on it, is hard to tell. There is a Repentance before Faith, which is only preparatory to Believing, and hath not Faith mixed in it. Nay, there is a Repentance that hinders Men from believing, and keeps them off from Christ, and they rely upon it as that which gives them Title and Evidence to Salvation, and so turn the Gospel-Covenant into a Covenant of Works. There is a Conviction of Sin, followed with the Terror of the Law, and an Apprehension of the Wrath of God, that makes Men's Sins to affright them, and tells them that if they go on they must die, and this drives them to abstain from them, and reform their Lives. Nay, there is a rational Conviction on Conscience, which on the awakening of the moral Principles in Men, maketh them to look upon these and those Sins to be brutish, and puts them upon rejecting them, and taking up of contrary Courses, and here they

they rest, never seeking to Christ for Strength, nor believing in him for that Grace whereby they may cordially turn from Sin to God, nor yet being ever acquainted with the desperate Wickedness there is in them. And if I have proceeded no further than this, let it be never so extensive, I am still in the Gall of Bitterness.

Be faithful then to thy self, Oh my Soul! Deal truly on this Account, and bring thy self to the Narrow, nor suffer thy self to be put off with an empty Noise. I know that I have Sin dwelling in me, and dare not hope to be rid of it, as long as I dwell in a mortal Body. I know that I have every Lust of Concupiscence stirring in me, ever prompting me to that which is evil, and not seldom too hard for me: But blessed be God thro' Christ, that there is an acceptable Repentance consistent with this: But whether I am Owner of it is another Question. I know that, as I must be the Believer, so I must be the Penitent: I must act and exercise this Grace; and therefore must have it inherent in me: But God must be the Author of it; it is Christ that must give Repentance to *Israel*. In Repentance there are two Terms; the Term *from* and *to* which the Man turns: And in both of these I am concerned to beware of a Mistake. The Term *from* which, is *Sin*, and that as it respects the End *I* was made for, *viz.* To serve and glorify God, of which *I* am fallen short by Sin.

And am *I* broken off from Sin? Is the League with it dissolved? Am *I* departed from Iniquity? Have *I* seen the Evil as well as the Bitterness of it? It was once my right Hand and my right Eye, have *I* cut it off and plucked it out? Once *I* loved it as my Life, do *I* now hate it with a deadly Hatred? Once *I* rejoiced in it, am *I* now

sorry

sorry for it, and do *I* truly mourn by Reason of it? Once *I* held it fast, and would not let it go, do *I* now insatiably long to be for ever rid of it? Once *I* tho't my self righteous, do *I* now find my self unclean? Once *I* tho't it Purity enough to abstain from the Act, do *I* now feel the evil Root of Bitterness, the desperate Malignity of original Sin in me?

And whence do these Things derive? What is the Spring of them? Do *I* hate Sin because of the vile Nature of it, its Odioufness in it self, because it is contrary to God? Or is it only because of the evil Fruits of it? Is it only this or that particular Sin that *I* hate, or is it all Sin, every false Way? And what maketh me to be grieved for my Sin, and long to be rid of it? Is it only because *I* am afraid of the Miseries that attend on it, or because it hurts my Soul, hindereth me from the Service of God, and makes me to live in vain?

And whither am *I* turned? True Repentance is a Turning unto God, and that as my last End: Not only as the Object on whom *I* trust for Salvation, but the God to whom *I* am devoted; and unto whose Service *I* am dedicated. And is there such a Turn as this produced in me? There are those who turn from one Sin to another, from Prophaneness to Hypocrisy, from open Impiety to carnal Formality: But am *I* turned to God? Have *I* seen a Beauty and incomparable Excellency in the Ways of God? Do *I* sincerely love his Law? Have *I* willingly submitted to him to be my Lord and Sovereign? Are his Laws written in my Heart? Do *I* prefer them to fine Gold, and taste them sweeter than the Honey-Comb? Can *I* say that *I* delight in his Law as to the inward Man? Are all his Commands precious? Are none of them grievous?

62 *Sacramental Meditations.*

grievous? Do those that most cross my corrupt Inclinations please me? Do I live in the Practice of Mortification of Sin and Pursuit of Holiness?

And in what or whose Strength do I do this? Was I ever perswaded that it was beyond my Power to turn my self, and accordingly have cried to God, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned?* Have I waited for this Grace from the Hands of Christ, and sought him as the Author of it? Hath Christ been the more precious to me, because he came to take away the Sins of his People, and is made of God to them their Sanctification?

Do the Remains of Sin in me grieve me, and make me cry out, *Oh wretched Man that I am! Who shall deliver me?* Am I groaning after more of Holiness, and, in Sense of my great Imperfection, reaching forward, and pressing hard to the Mark?

Is my Repentance a Concomitant of Faith, and not a Thing which I have introduced in Room of it? Do I, for all, expect my whole Acceptance thro' the Righteousness of Christ, yea, and depend on his free Grace for all that Influence whereby I may repent? And do I resolve all my Hopes into him, and not into my Repentance?

Is my Repentance a transient or an abiding Thing? Did I only repent so many Years ago, or do I pursue it every Day, and make it the Business of my whole Life? Deceive not thy self, thou hast to do with a God that is not mocked, that cannot be imposed on. If thou hopest to find Comfort in Christ's Body and Blood, and to derive Grace and Consolation from him at his Table, thou must come as a penitent Believer, else he will hold no Communion with thee.

Lord,

Lord, thou knowest how it is with me in this Regard, I hope, I fear: I find that I neither hate Sin, nor love Holiness so much as I should; I cannot be so deeply affected with my own Vileness, and the horrid Nature of Sin, as I desire to be; I am not so lively in this Work as I ought: But this is a Burden and Bitterness to me, and I am longing, and praying, and waiting for more of this, and do heartily esteem it a Mercy greater than to be made Owner of ten thousand Worlds.

Lord, let my Repentance be sincere, and give Encreases to it; yea, grant in thy rich Mercy, that now, in my coming to the View of the Sufferings of my dear Saviour, I may receive from him by it, the deeper Impressions of godly Sorrow, and Self-loathing, and be more endeared to thy Ways; that so, by the Efficacy of his Cross, I may find more and more of the precious Fruits of true Repentance in my Soul.



MEDITATION, XVII.

On the same, by New-Obedience.

THOUGH, if I am in the Faith, I am in a safe Estate; and if I am assured of it, I may be satisfied in this, yet it is not so easy a Matter to be well settled in this Conclusion: And if I mistake about my Faith, my Assurances will prove Dreams. As therefore my true Faith proves me to be in Christ, so there are the Things by which I am to prove that

that I am in the Faith; and they are the Things that accompany Salvation. Now as true Faith is inseparable from Repentance, so it will manifest it self in *New-Obedience*. *It worketh by Love*; and what is that Love but the Root and Spring of Obedience? In which, if it be sincere, it will operate.

If therefore I believe really in Christ, I shall be zealous in maintaining of good Works. There is a Faith that pleads high to Dependance on Christ for Salvation, but is abused to Neglect of Duty, a Slightness in the Conversation, yea, to Sin that Grace may abound. God deliver me from such a Faith. If I have known Christ and believed in him, and placed my whole Trust in him for Life, I cannot but love him, and if I indeed love him, I shall keep his Commandments. The same Faith that relies upon Christ for Righteousness, depends on him for Strength also, and will be fetching of continual Supplies of Grace from him, to live unto God. If I am in Christ, I am a new Creature, and then I shall lead a new Life, for hereunto am I called, *Not unto Uncleaness, but unto Holiness*. If I am of the Generation that shall be accounted to God for a Generation, I shall serve him. If I am bought with a Price, I shall devote my self to glorify God with my Soul and Body; and that can only be by an Endeavour to live and please him, which is alone by Conformity to his revealed Will. The Apostle therefore could say, *I will shew thee my Faith by my Works*. If I live a Life of Grace, I shall no longer live the rest of my Time to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God. *If I live in the Spirit, I shall walk in the Spirit*.

And can I stand this Trial? Or must I not fall before it? And Oh! What a Darkness and Difficulty do I find
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in wading thro' this Examen ? I find woful Imperfections cleaving to all that I do, and that, not only in Regard of the Duties themselves that I perform, or ought to do, but also in the Frame of my Spirit in them. How many Omissions of Duty, and how many Transgressions am I overtaken with in a Day ? And how little am I pleased with that which I do ? So dead and formal in Duty ; so easily discouraged from Duty ; so full of Excuses for any Neglect of Duty, so much of a legal Spirit, so many sinister Aims in all.

Sometimes I encourage my self with that, Psal. 130. 3, 4. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark Iniquity, who can stand ! But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* But then I am afraid that this is only to indulge Sin, and nourish carnal Confidence. Sometimes I cry out, *The Good that I would, I do not ; but the Evil that I would not, that I do :* But then I doubt this is but a Cover for Laziness. Sometimes I find an Heat, a Zeal kindled in me against Sin, and after the Ways of God : But I suspect that it is no more but the Stirrings of an enlightned and awakned Conscience, and anon this Zeal is cooled again, and I labour of Deadness and Indisposition ; and that makes me ready to conclude, that it was but a Pang of a legal Spirit, *and that my Goodness is but as a morning Cloud, and early Dew.* There are some Things that I am ready and forward in, but others about which I am dull, and hardly driven : And how can I say I have Respect to all God's Commands ? How ready am I to set about Duty in mine own Strength, as if I were sufficient of my self to do it ? And how is this consistent with gospel *Humility* ? If I am carried forth to do any Thing plausible, as I suppose, I am proud, and commend my self inwardly, as if I were

were Somebody? And how unlike is this to him who could say, *Not I, but the Grace of God that was with me?* How ready am I to think that God must needs own and accept of me, as if I had bro't him in Debt by my Service? And how unlike is this to confessing, *I am an unprofitable Servant?* I am too much carried out after the Commendation of Men, if they speak well of me, I am lifted up, if they despise me, I am cast down: And is not this to do my *Works to be seen of Men?* If I think this of that Duty, which my Conscience saith ought to be done, will procure me Ill-Will, hard Words, and the Persecution of the Tongue, I am discouraged: And if I were a *right hand for the Glory of God*, as I ought to be, would it be so? I am indeed sometimes perswaded to argue; these Things are indeed so, but I loath and abhor them, and my self for them, and would fain infer, that it is no longer I, but *Sin* that dwells in me.

I know that I must carry a *Body of Death* about with me as long as I live; that there is a Law in my Members, that sinful Concupiscence will be influencing and defiling all that I set about, that there is Dung cleaving to all my Sacrifices, that I can expect no Righteousness of mine own to bear the Trial of the Law of God; that if God enter into Judgment with me on the Account of it, I cannot be justified: But yet, if I do not love the Law now, if I do not delight in it after the inward Man, if I do not hate every false Way; if I do not cleanse my self from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of God; if I do not, with an upright Heart, study and practice Conformity to the Will of God; how shall I say that I belong to Christ, who hath bidden me to learn of him, who always did the Things that pleased the Father?

Father? Lord! Thou requirest Truth in the inward Parts, and if it be there, it will break out in the Life.

I know I have a World of *Hypocrisy* in me, but suffer me not to be an Hypocrite. I am a little acquainted with the Deceitfulness of this Heart of mine, so that I dare not trust it: And, if I know any Thing of my self, I heartily beg of thee to search and try me, and see if there be any evil Way in me. Lord! I am grieved, Oh that I were more so, when I see Men make void thy Law: I mourn, Oh increase it, that I walk no more evenly in the Way of thy Commandments; I am ashamed of my self, that I bring no more Glory to thy Name by any holy and exemplary Life: I am afraid of sinning against thee, not only in the Sight of Men, for fear of Reproach, but in the most secret Retirements, because I know thou seeest, and thy Spirit will be grieved: I approve of the Preciousness and Holiness of thy Law: I esteem thy Precepts concerning all Things to be right: I dare not to rely on my own Strength to do any Thing: I renounce all Confidence in the Flesh; I groan under the Captivity of Sin; I wait for thy Spirit to subdue all my Corruptions in me, to teach me thy Statutes, and lead me in the Way of thy Precepts: I come to Christ for all Help, and resolve by thy Grace, to improve it to thy Glory: I am restless till this Imperfection be done away, and I arrive at the State of Perfection, wherein I shall sin no more: Mean while, I utterly renounce all Dependance on mine own Righteousness, to procure me Acceptance with God, and rely on that of Christ: Yet help me in the mean while, that, in Testimony of Gratitude, I may be righteous before thee, *walking in all thy Commandments and Ordinances blameless.*

MEDITATION, XVIII.

On the same, by the spiritual Warfare


VERY regenerate Man is two Men, as could say, *It is I, and yet it is no more I.* The old Man is not so put off but that still the Members or Lusts of it remain in the belly this Life. The new Man is not so put off but that it may be *more so*. It is therefore every Christian's Duty to be daily renewing in the Image of his Master and will be in some Measure his Practice, if himself may not expect to be rid of this Body of Death, so long as I dwell in this clay Tabernacle. I am not therefore to conclude, from the Presence and Stirring of Sin in me that therefore I am none of Christ's; but I am further to enquire, Whether there be not a new Principle of sanctifying and saving Grace wrought in me. I find notoriously, that there is a Law in my Members, setting itself against the Law of God, and withstanding of every good Motion in me. Oh that I could with as clear Satisfaction say, *That with my Mind I serve the Law of God.*

But how shall I come to a firm Conclusion on this account? I am assured by the Word of God, that where there is Grace and Corruption lodged in the same Soul there will be a Warfare maintained between them. That there will be a mutual Lusting between the Flesh and the Spirit, and that the Contrariety between them will be irreconcilable, their Antipathies being rooted in their

our very Nature : And that they will ever be seeking
the Destruction each of the other. That Grace can no
more agree with Sin, than Light with Darkness, than
Fire with Water. No sooner is the new Nature put in-
to the Man, but from that Hour he is a Man of War,
and engaged in a Fight that will last till all Sin be done
away, and Grace becomes triumphant. Nor can there
be any Truce made, so long as one Lust dares to shew
its Head. I am well assured, that if there be such a War
maintained in me, I am a true Soldier of Jesus Christ ;
I am past from Death to Life : But how shall I come to
this Assurance ? I find as great a Danger of being deluded
in this Matter, as in any other. I dare not deny the
Grace of God, but am afraid of being put off with a Sha-
dow for the Substance.

If there were no inward Scuffle with Sin but what
Grace raiseth, I then might easily conclude for my self :
But alas ! it is far otherwise ; for, tho' reigning Sin in an
unregenerate Man, endeavours to maintain in him a deep
Security, yet there are the Things that hinder it, and
there are many Occasions of fierce Scuffles in him, altho'
Sin be his Lord. The principal of those are from the
stirrings of a *natural Conscience*, especially when God puts
Awakenings and Terrors into it. There are the Princi-
ples of Reason in Men, which tell them, this they ought
not to have done ; and at the same Time, there is the
Motion of some Lust, that urgeth hard to the doing of it :
Conscience saith, do it not, Concupiscence saith, I must
do it, I cannot be quiet till it be done : And sometimes
Reason in Conscience prevails, sometimes Concupiscence
is too hard : Reason tells the Man that he shall expose
himself to Shame and Reproach, and Lust pusheth for-
ward,

ward, and faith, I must be satisfied whatsoever comes of it: Sometimes after the Commission of Sin, Conscience tells the Man, Thou hast exposed thy self to the Wrath of God, and fills him with terrible Reflections; yea, in the very Hour of Temptation frights him with the Threatnings, so that either he dare not do the Thing, or he hath no Rest when it is done. A merely moral Man can tell how much ado he hath had within to suppress his carnal Inclination, and maintain a civil and sober Life.

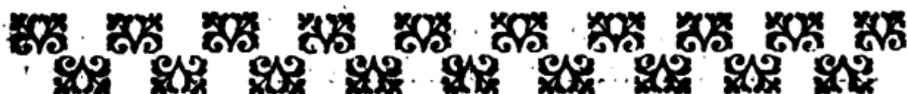
And am I able to produce any Thing more in me, that will amount to a better Evidence of the Truth of Grace in me? This I am sure, that my Skirmishings have often been very faint; Sin in me hath been too subtle and hard for me; it hath many a Time led me captive: How drowsy a Watch have I kept? How unwary have I been of the Adversary? How easily hath a Temptation born me down? How have I fought rather like one that beats the Air, than one that gives downright Blows in good earnest to his Adversary? How little a Provocation hath drawn out my unruly Passions? How easily have a few Flatteries drawn me into a carnal Compliance? Lord, thou knowest my Foolishness, and I do bewail it: Search me to the Bottom, and shew me how it is in this Regard: Let not my Heart deceive me. How shall I dare to approach before the Lord Jesus Christ, for the new Sealings of his Covenant, if I am not true to him?

Have I an Heart engaged against Sin, *because* it is the abominable Thing that God hates? Is it the *vile Nature* of it that makes me to withstand it? Are they only the gross and more scandalous Sins that I am engaged against, or do I hate *every vain Thought and idle Word*? Are they only *some* Sins that I guard against, or is it *every false Way*?

Why? Is it only my Endeavour to avoid *gross* and scandalous Sins, but am I afraid of *every secret Abomination*? Is it only the Avoidance of *actual* Transgressions that I am concerned about, or the Destruction of *original Sin* in me that I am in unwearied Pursuit after? Is it only *Fear of Wrath* that makes me to withstand Temptation, or the *Odiousness of Sin it self*? Is it only *now and then* that I am thus engaged, or do I maintain a *continued Watchfulness* and Opposition against my Corruptions? Is there no Lust that finds Harbour in me, and I hide it, or plead for it, and say, spare it, is it not a *little one*? Do I combat my Corruptions with *carnal or spiritual Weapons*? Can I be content to be in Captivity and lie still, or doth it make me sensibly to cry out, *Wretched Man, who shall deliver me*? Do I wrestle in mine own Strength, or am I thoro'ly sensible of mine Impotency, and therefore seek to be *strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*? Do I get any Ground at all of the Lusts that are in me? Have I more Acquaintance with the Deceitfulness of Sin? Is it more and more vile and odious to me? And am I made more watchful against it?

Lord! shew me to my self, and let me not be found an Hypocrite in this Matter. I confess I make miserable Work of it, I am ashamed of my self; I blush to think I have gained no greater a Conquest, that Sin is so strong, and Grace so weak in me. I trust, thro' the Grace of God, that I can truly say, that this very Thing is my Burden and Bitterness, and that there is nothing more grievous to me than the Presence and Stirring of Sin in me; or that I do equally desire to be delivered from, as this Body of Death. And I desire now, in my coming to the Lord Jesus Christ, and waiting on him at his Table, that

that he, who is the Captain of my Salvation, will grant me his helping Hand, and his powerful Influence, to assist me in this great affair, that being made more resolute and couragious, I may henceforward pursue this Warfare more strenuously; and being made faithful and valiant, may not cease, or lay down my Arms, till he hath bro't me by his msghty Power, to triumph for ever over Sin, and Satan, and all the Adversaries of my Soul.



M E D I T A T I O N, XIX.

On my present Frame.

WHAT tho' it be a great Consolation to be really assured of my good Estate, and my sure Interest in the everlasting Mercies of the New-Covenant? And Oh that I were more confirmed and established in this Assurance! Yet that is not enough to fit me immediately to come to this Table, and secure me that I shall enjoy Fellowship with him at it. True, I hereby know that all the Benefits of the Covenant, whereof this Sacrament is a Seal, do appertain unto me: Which carries no small Relief in it, against the Temptations of Discouragement, arising from Fear of eating and drinking of my own Damnation, in the rigorous Acceptation of it, since I am perswaded, that no true Believer in Christ shall be damned: But yet I am also acquainted, that one that is in Christ, may, thro' Folly and Inadvertancy,

tancy, eat and drink Judgment to himself, in the more restrained Sense of it, and that also must be very terrible. If I am a Believer, I have not only a visible but a spiritual Right to this Ordinance ; but still I am not out of the Danger of abusing it, of casting Contempt upon it, and thereupon of exposing my self to great Damage by my so doing.

There is not only an Unworthiness in the *State*, but also in the *Frame*, which latter, a Child of God, thro' sinful Neglect of himself may fall into, which will indispose him to the Duty, so that if in this Frame he attend on it, it will necessitate his abusing of it, & thereby the contracting of Guilt to himself. There is Corruption as well as Grace in the best ; now it is only in the *Exercise of Grace*, that Duty can be done acceptably to God, or profitably to the Believer. And sometimes this Corruption is so far prevailing over that Grace, that it unfits us for Duty, and spoils it in the Performance. And there are so many Temptations which the Adversary hath Advantage by, to put the Christian out of Order, that without great Circumspection, he is at a Loss before he thinks of it. And I am sure, that there is none hath a more deceitful Heart than mine is ; so false, so dead, so careless, and negligent, so ready to be drawn after, and entangled by carnal and vain Objects. And tho' it may flatter me, and tell me that all is right, yet I dare not believe it, I cannot trust it.

What am I now going about ? Is it not to have Communion with Christ ? Do I tarry at any lower Design than this ? How then am I prepared for this Communion ? Suppose I was heretofore right, and every Way in good Order, yet it may be otherwise with me at this

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Time.

Time. Come then thou Heart of mine, and put thy self upon a serious and thoro' Trial.

How stand Affairs betwixt *Christ* and thee? Hath there no Breach fallen out since last the Accounts were made up? Hast thou not wounded thy self with some Conscience-wasting Sin or other? And what hast thou done to get it healed? Hast thou in a renewed Repentance, mourned for, bewailed, confessed, and turned from it, and deeply loathing thy self for it, fled to the Blood of Sprinkling, and renewed thy Faith on the Lord Jesus Christ? Hath there no Estrangedness grown between Christ and thee, thro' thy carnal Neglects or dead Frames? And hast thou been sensible of it, and sought by all Means to get it removed? Hast not thou play'd the Wanton with some other Lover, and grown into an indifferent Frame as to Communion with Christ? And doth this Frame abide on thee still, or hast thou gotten it off? Hast thou not grown into some coy or idle Posture, so that the Caresses of thy Beloved have been irksome to thee, and thou hast been contented rather to let him withdraw and be gone, than to open to him? And hast thou been touch'd with it, and roused up to arise, and restlessly to follow after him, till thou hast found him again?

Hast thou entertained any Prejudices against thy *Brother*, and suffered Malice to get into thee, and carry thee forth against him in Bitterness and Rage? And doth this abide on thee? Or hast thou done him any real Wrong, and given him Occasion of Offence at thee, and hast not reconciled thy self to him? And darest thou thus to come? Or canst thou expect that he will come to thee and bid thee welcome?

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In what *Posture* are all thy Graces toward Communion with him? And how are thy Affections active towards him? Are thy Longings after him insatiable? What is that thou seekest after in this Ordinance? Is it Christ himself thou wouldest meet withall? Is it sweet Familiarity with him that moves thee to come to his Banqueting-House? Is it that thou maist hear his sweet Voice, and feel his precious Embraces? Is thy Faith ready to receive him into its Arms, as thy only Saviour? Is thy Love ready to express it self to him in all the Endearments of it? Hast thou gotten thy self sensible of thy great Wants, and are thy Petitions in a Readiness to be put to him for his Succour? Is there nothing that can give thee Content but he alone, and that neither in Heaven nor in Earth? Art thou under a feeling deep Apprehension of thy Want of him, and the fresh Emanations of his Grace and Spirit upon thee? Art thou under an active Desire to see him as thou hast seen him in the Sanctuary? Art thou fixed? Art thou humbled out of all Opinion of thine own Worthiness, and under the Feeling of thine own Unworthiness? Hast thou the lively Apprehension of the Riches of his Grace, from which Fountain alone thou expectest all that Good to come from him to thee, which thou comest for? Dost thou feel the Bitterness of Sin, and art thou weary of it, groaning under it, and earnestly desirous that it may be more and more mortified in thee? Art thou sensible of the Weakness of thy Grace, and wouldest thou fain have it renewed and strengthened? Dost thou want a new Sealing of his Love, and Confirmation of the Covenant between him and thee? Art thou deeply sensible of, and dost thou cordially bewail all these

76 *Sacramental Meditations.*

Indispositions that thou labourest of, and longest to have them removed ?

If it be really so, then be encouraged, take Heart, the Master calleth thee, and would not have thee to be afraid. But if it be not so, tremble to think of coming and losing the Benefit of this Ordinance ; if thou findest him withdrawn, thank thy self : And be assured this will cost thee bitter Sorrow, and much Darknes and Distress, before thou recoverest him again.

Lord ! Thou knowest the Secrets of my Soul : Thou knowest that I labour under sad Wrestlings with Unbelief : Oh, increase my Faith. Thou seest the Distractions of my Heart ; I beseech thee to settle it. I feel grievous Deadness, Oh, quicken me. I desire to be prepared, but I am not able of my self to do it ; grant me thy Spirit to help me, and let the Pity which thou shewest to them that follow hard after thee be extended unto me. Pardon freely what thou seest short in me, and that, I confess heartily, is in every Thing that I am concerned in. And let me not lose this happy Advantage, which thou hast put into my Hand, of solacing my self in thy Love, and enjoying the precious Refreshments of it in my Soul. Tho' thou chide me, and I deserve it, yet comfort me ; tho' thou upbraid me for my Folly, and I may well expect it, yet succour me, relieve me in and under all my Frailties, know this Frame of mine, remember I am but Dust, and speak Peace to me ; and let my Soul be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, that, with joyful Lips, I may praise thee.





MEDITATION, XX.

On the Sufferings of CHRIST.

THIS great End of this Ordinance is to keep fresh in Remembrance that wonderful Kindness of God, and Condescendency of Christ in dying for us vile Sinners ; for which Reason the sacramental Acts are an Adumbration of it to us ; under the Consideration of which Death of his, we are led to the Contemplation of his whole passive Obedience : And what can be more proper at this Solemnity than to lose my self in this Maze of Wonders ? And Oh that I could gaze so long, and so intently upon it, till I might find mine Heart into the deepest Self-loathing for that Sin of mine which procured all this : And elevated to the highest Raptures of Affection towards him, who underwent all this for me. And where shall I begin but at the Sufferings themselves ? This is a Text on which I may make endless Commentaries.

But I must begin with the *Analysis* of it, how else shall I be able to comprehend the Love of Christ that passeth Knowledge ? And what a large Field of Speculation am I here gotten into ? I find it recorded in, *Isai. 53. 3. That he was a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief.* And what Expressions could be more emphatical ? intimating that he was a Man *made up of Sorrows*, that there was scarce any Thing else to be seen in him ; that there was no Kind of Affliction but he had a Share in it.

He was one that was known by his Grief, and with whom Sorrow was well acquainted ; that Grief and he were most intimate Companions, and inseparable each from the other, and that his whole Life was filled up with Bitterness and Trouble. He was the greatest Pattern or Instance of Sorrow that ever was, and might well cry out, *Behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow,* which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the Day of his fierce Anger ?

When I consider his Troubles for the *Number* of them, they are innumerable ; his Afflictions were beyond Man's Computation. *David* doubtless spake as a Type of Christ, when he said, *Innumerable Evils have compassed me about,* and again, *All thy Waves and thy Billows are gone over me.* We may as well undertake to count the Hairs of our Heads, or number the Sand on the Sea-shore, as reckon all the Troubles that Christ was encounter'd with in the Days of his Humiliation.

When I consider the *Greatness* of them, they were incomparable. Many of God's Children have met with such as made them to groan and roar, but never such as he did. He might well say, *I am the Man that hath suffered Affliction by the Rod of his Wrath.* We have him crying under it : *I am poured out like Water, and all my Bones are out of joint, mine Heart is like Wax, it is melted in the midst of my Bowels, my Strength is dried up like a Potsherd, my Tongue cleaves to my Jaws, and thou hast brought me to the Dust of Death. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all Day long ; mine Heart panteth, my Strength faileth me, as to the Light of mine eyes, it is also gone from me : Mine Eye is consumed with Grief, yea my Soul in my Body : My Life is spent with Grief, and my Years with Sighing.*

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When I look on them in their *Kinds*, they were of all Sorts compatible with his State of a Mediator : Both outward and inward Troubles took hold of him ! He endured them both in *Soul* and *Body* : He suffered in Hunger and Thirst, Poverty, Shame and Reproach ; all Cruelties from Men, all the Assaults of Hell, and the whole Wrath of God.

When I consider them in their *Duration*, I find that they met him at his Birth, and never left him, till they had taken away his precious Life. He could truly say, *I am afflicted and ready to die from my Youth up, thy fierce Wrath goes over me, thy Terrors have cut me off.*

When I consider those Things that are obvious and recorded in the *History*, they are astonishing : That the Lord of Glory was born in a Stable, laid in a Manger ; the Persecution that was out against him while he was in his *Mother's Arms*, by *Herod's Cruelty*, and his Flight into *Egypt* : The low, debased, contemptible Condition in which he passed his *private Life* ; the Obscurity and Servility in which he lived for thirty Years in the World ; the great Poverty which he spent his *publick Life* in, being without Home, or any where to lay his Head ; the many and bitter Affronts that the Jews his Kinsmen were always offering him, the Malice which was exercised against him, the Conspiracies which were made from Time to Time, to take away his Life ; the opprobrious and scornful Reflections on his mean Parentage and Calling ; the horrid Slanders they sought to defame him withal, charging him with Witchcraft, and Compact with the Devil, casting out Devils by Beelzebub, calling him a Samaritan, charging him with Blasphemy, Sedition, and what not ? And besides all this, the inward Sorrow of Heart that he

felt for their Obstinacy, & Infidelity, for the Dishonour they did to God, and the Reproach that was cast on his Name, for the Reproaches of them that reproached God fell upon him. But when I pass over to the *last Catastrophe of his Life*; Oh, what a Confluence of Sorrow do I find meeting of him there? When I trace him from his bitter Agony, till he gave up his Spirit on the Cross. Who can tell the Extremity of Sorrows that fell upon him in the *Garden*, when he vented those strong Cries and Tears of his, when he begged so pathetically, *That the Cup, if it were possible, might pass*; when his whole Body was begored with a bloody Sweat, which was occasioned by the Anguish and Amazement of his Soul? How bitter were his Troubles, when he was seized in the Garden by a Crew of Ruffians, and dragged away with great Insolence and Spite, as a common Enemy to Mankind? When he was *arraigned for his Life*, charged as a Blasphemer, and an Incendiary; when the Air echoed with Clamours to have him crucified, from all Ranks and Orders of Men; when a Robber and a Murderer were preferred before him? When he was arrayed like a mock King, made a very May-game of by the Soldiers, and when they lifted him up upon a *Cross* between two Thieves, as the greatest of them? When they there treated him with all the Taunts and Sarcasms which Malice it self could invent? When he was there as a Man forsaken utterly, and accordingly cries out to his God as such an one; the Sun itself withdrawing its Light from him, turning the Time of his Crucifixion into a Time of Darkness and Horror? And finally, he there resigned up his precious Life under the greatest Ignominy that could possibly be cast upon him.

And

And if I stand still and Commemorate here, is there not enough in this to fill my Heart with the most surprising Admiration, to see this spotless Saviour thus entertained? And may it not well put me upon Enquiry, How came all this to pass? Was this for himself, or for me? *Not for himself but me.* Appropriate then these Things to thyself, Oh my Soul! Lose not thy Affections in a Compassion on him, or an Indignation at the Instruments of his Sorrows, but extract out of all the most endearing Obligations to this precious Redeemer. Look then upon every Article, and write under every Circumstance of his Sorrows, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me*: And study now to entertain and treat him accordingly.



MEDITATION, XXI.

On the same.

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 UT here is not all: Tho' his Sufferings from Men and Devils were great and astonishing, and I cannot but be deeply affected to see the glorious and holy One, under the Fury of Devils and Rage of wicked Men, suffering all Reproach, Scorn, and Sorrow, that Earth and Hell could inflict upon him, yet I am led to that which is unconceivably more tragical, whiles I am invited to the Contemplation of what he suffered from the *Hand of God*. If it were no more that he underwent, but what was obvious to the *View of the World*; tho' they were very bitter Things, and highly aggravated,

aggravated, to make them the more grievous and hard to bear, yet I should call in Question the Exemplariness of his Patience and Fortitude in his Sufferings ; and should be tempted to think, that the three Worthies recorded in *Dan. 3.* and those mentioned in *Heb. 11. 35, &c.* had expressed more of Courage and heroick Resolution than did the Man Christ, which would be an injurious and blasphemous Reflection upon him.

When I consider the *Agony of his Soul*, the Amazement that was upon him, his Complaint that his Soul was sorrowful unto Death, the bloody Sweat that came from his whole Body, by Reason of the Anguish of his Spirit, his earnest triplicated Request, that the Cup might pass if possible, his bitter bemoaning of himself as one that was forsaken of his God ; I conclude hereupon, that it was certainly more than the Abuses, Revilings, Scourgings, and Crucifixion which he underwent, that drew out such strong Cries, and Tears, and Supplications from him, (and I should but disgrace instead of honouring him, by limiting my Tho'ts to such Speculations as the foregoing) and indeed, so it was.

Rouse up then, Oh my Soul, and take a more pathetic View of these Things. Behold him then under the Law, standing in the Place of a Surety, bearing upon him the Guilt of all the Sins of all God's Elect, under the Prosecution of divine revenging Justice, arraigned by God himself at his terrible Tribunal, there charged with all this Guilt, having all our Iniquities laid upon him, and bearing the righteous Imputation of them, and accordingly sentenced to undergo the whole Essence of the Penalty denounced by God against Sin, and that Sentence executed upon him in the Rigour of it : God did not spare him, but

but made his Soul an Offering for Sin, cast him into the Floods of Vengeance, and all the Billows of his Wrath past over him, made him a Curse, and filled him with all his Shafts, cutting him off from the Earth, not leaving him, till the Law had its full Satisfaction upon him to the utmost of its Demands: His Father, all this while carrying it towards him as an Enemy, hiding up from him every Beam of his Favour, filling him with the Sense of the dismal Effects of that holy Wrath of his, which he had declared against Sin; which are in themselves inexpressible, unconceivable.

I am so far from wondring at his Sorrow, and bitter Moans, that I am forced to acknowledge it to be one of the most eminent Discoveries of his Name being truly called *Wonderful*; and that if there had not been an infinite Power sustaining him, and an everlasting Arm underneath him, the close Union of the Person of the Son of God to that Humanity of his, that frail Thing his Manhood, could never have sustained it, or born up under it, but must have been sunk, overwhelmed, and swallowed up by it; and it could never have escaped those Floods, and that Storm of Wrath that he was under. Had the whole Creation stood in his Place, and been laid under the same Sufferings, it would have broken in Pieces, and never been able to evade. To see him, with an Eye of Faith, not only under all this, but *getting through it*, and, after he had drank so deep of the Torrent by the Way, lifting up his Head; what a Mystery is here?

Who can tell what Bitterness the Soul of my Redeemer underwent in all this? He placed his whole Happiness in the Love of his Father, needs then must it be the most unspeakable Trial to this precious Soul of his, to have upon

upon it the deepeſt Senſe of the Fruits of his Anger : To ſee him whetting the Sword of his Vengeance againſt him, to ſheath it in his very Soul ; and as if he regarded not his Cries, to abate him nothing of what he had undertaken for.

Come then, Oh my Soul, take a View of thy Saviour, in the Hand of God himſelf ; look beyond the outward and bodily Sufferings which he underwent ; fit ſtill and contemplate his ſtanding before an holy and juſt God, charged home with the Guilt of innumerable Sins, wrefling with all the Wrath of an holy God, and not diſcharged till he had made a full Expiation by his own Death for it all.

And now remember for what it was ; upon whoſe Account all this befell him. And canſt thou ſay, (Lord, grant I may be able upon good and ſatisfying Grounds to ſay) all this was for *my Sins* ; that ſo I might eſcape, and my Soul might be ſet at Liberty from the Efficacy of that Sentence which was by the Law out againſt me : He was innocent, but I was the guilty one. And now what a Sight is this ?

Look upon him, gaze on him, fix thine Eyes here ; affect thy ſelf here-withall : And let this admirable and unparallel'd Condeſcendency of his affect thee, ſo as to reſolve, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing on Earth that I deſire with thee.* And when thou refleſteſt and conſidereſt, all this was that he might be the Object of my Faith, and the Bread of Life to my Soul ; had not he ſuffered all this, he could have been no ſaviour to me ; now, whiles the World is prejudiced at, do thou admire theſe Sufferings of his, and underwrite all thy Contemplations hereof, *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend :*

Friend: And so fortify thy self in thy holy Resolutions, that thou wilt be for ever for him, and no other; and that thou wilt from hence-forth *glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ.*



M E D I T A T I O N , XXII.

On the Person suffering.

AND *who* is this of whom such dismal Reports are made? Who was such a Man of Sorrows, against whom God and Man sat in Judgment, who was proceeded against as a Malefactor, thought not worthy to live, was cut off from the Earth, and made a Curse? And is this he unto whom I must look for Salvation? And on whom I must adventure my self for Eternity? Lord, help my Faith! The Doctrine of a crucified Saviour, is to the Jews a Stumbling-Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness. That he who could not save himself, should save me, that his Stripes should be my Healing, that I must go to the Cross for a Saviour, to *Golgotha* for a Redeemer: How shall this Man deliver us from the Wrath to come, and bring us unto eternal Salvation? This is the Language of Unbelief. If God forsook him, as he complains that he did, how can I hope to be accepted for his sake? If he could not prevail that the Cup should pass from him, how shall I expect that he will prevail for me.

But

But whither is this carnal Heart straying? Keep Silence ye obstreperous fleshly Arguings. Lord open mine Eyes and lead me into this Mystery. This Man, whose Visage is so marred, in whom, to an Eye of Sense, there appeareth no Comeliness, whom Shame, Reproach and Oppression have so dis-figured, is more than a Man, he is God-Man.

This Son of Man, *is the eternal Son of God*; this Person is *God blessed for ever*: He is *the only begotten Son of his Father*; he never displeased him, he lay in his Bosom, and was his Delight in the Days of Eternity; his Father was never angry with him, for he always did that which pleased him; yea even then, when he inflicted on him all those Penalties, which would have broken the whole Creation, he was then grateful to him, and performed his Will in it, and did it in Compliance therewithall. He suffered not for his own Sin, for he had none of his own personal to suffer for, being spotless, harmless, undefiled, separated from Sinners. He fulfilled all Righteousness, as well as suffered all Miseries.

He was indeed a *Man* who suffered, yea, he saith of himself, *I am a Worm, and no Man, a Reproach of Men*. But yet, if I look at him no further than *as a Man*, I dishonour him, and lose all the Benefit of his so suffering. Yea, all this was *voluntary* on his Part; The Son of God did spontaneously assume the Man-hood into hypostatical Union with his divine Person, that so he might be capable of suffering in that Nature, all that which he had as voluntarily undertaken, and which in his divine Nature he could not have undergone. God indeed hated Sin, and discovered this Hatred in laying these Penalties on him; because he was made Sin, tho' he knew none; and

and yet not because he was a Sinner, but because he had taken the *Guilt* of it upon himself, that by suffering he might satisfy the Justice of God who had condemned Sin, and Man to suffer all the Curses written in the Law, on the Account of Sin. Christ was as voluntary in bearing all these Sufferings for Sin, as his Father was in inflicting them on him; he laid down his Life for the Sheep, he gave himself a Ransom for us.

Well may I admire and adore, instead of taking Prejudice at this: If he had not died, I must: If he had not been made a Curse, the Blessing of *Abraham* had not derived to me. That the World hated, and persecuted, and crucified him, was because they did not know him, for, if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Thus God made use of their Ignorance and Malice to accomplish his holy Pleasure in this Regard.

Be not then offended, Oh my Soul! in this wonderful Saviour: Look thro' this Flesh of his, wounded, bruised, pierced, and see the divine Glory beaming thro' all; put thy Finger into these Wounds of his, and be not unbelieving, but cry out, *My Lord, and my God.* Thou hast a broken Saviour, a bleeding Saviour, exhibited to thee in this Ordinance; thou art called to the Contemplation of all the bitter Things that he underwent; and thou art to affect thy self deeply herewithal; but not to nourish Prejudices hereby, but to inflame thy Love, thine Admiration, and draw them forth to him with most endeared Obligations.

Stand still then and consider: Who is this whose Garments are thus died in Blood, whose Soul is thus made a Sacrifice for Sin? Say, whose Body is this that is thus broken?

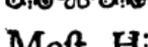
broken? Whose Blood that is so poured out? Conclude it was he who was in the *Form of God*, and *tho't it no Robbery to be equal with God*, and yet made himself to be thus of no Reputation, and became obedient to the Death of the Cross. Remember he is thy Lord, and do thou worship him. Yea, let this raise thee into the greatest Raptures and Extasies of Admiration, and fill thee with all the Transports of Love to him, to think, would he, who was the eternal King, God himself, who needed me not, and against whom I had sinned; who could have gained himself a Name for ever in my eternal Ruin, thus debase himself, and undergo all this to purchase this forlorn Soul of mine from Destruction, and procure for me a Redemption from Sin and Wrath, and open a Way for me to obtain Salvation: And shall I not kiss these Wounds? Rouse up then, here strengthen thy Faith, here enflame thy Love, here engage thy self in paying him the divine Honour, which this Condescension of his for thy sake, hath bound thee to with the strongest Cords and most indissoluble Bonds.



MEDITATION, XXIII.

On the Necessity of these Sufferings.





UT what Need of all this? Why must the Son of God, the Lord of Glory undergo all this? Why might not Sin have been pardoned, and the Sinner saved in an easier Way? Is the Most High cruel? Doth he delight in such Tragedies? Did

Did he not love his own only Son? Did he ever offend him? Did he not always do the Things that pleased him? How could God then lay his Hands upon an innocent Person, and embroe them in his Blood?

But they were *not his own Sins*, but the Sins of those whom he was to redeem, that were laid to his Charge, and exacted of him: He died *the Just for the Unjust*. If he had not died for me, I must have died. It was *the Chastisement of our Peace that was laid upon him*. There was no *absolute* Necessity of his meeting with these Sorrows, he was his Father's Delight, and had he not thus undertaken *voluntarily*, he could not have been *compelled*: But what then had become of me, and all God's Elect for ever? We must have perished unavoidably; had not he stood between and screened us from the Wrath of a justly provoked God, we had suffered the Vengeance of Hell.

But why so? Is not God a God of Mercy, a God prone to pardon? Doth he not bear a Love to the Works of his Hands, and not willingly grieve the Children of Men? Why then might he not have pardoned Sin, and saved the Sinner without a Satisfaction? And would not the Oriency of his Grace have more appeared in his so doing? Is he not *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*? And shall he be denied a Liberty which mortal Potentates challenge to themselves, *viz.* To grant a free Pardon to capital Offenders, and take them into Favour, of his meer Grace?

Stay foolish Heart, and do not call into Question, either the Wisdom, or Justice, or Grace of the most holy God, or measure the Depth of his glorious Counsels, by the short Line of thy crazed Understanding: His Ways are

not as thy Ways, nor his Tho'ts as thy Tho'ts, his Judgments are, unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out. Lay aside carnal Reasonings, and stand still, and gaze thy self into Admiration at the wonderful Condescendency of God, to entertain Tho'ts of Good-will for thee, and his incomparable Love, in that he spared not his own Son, but gave him for thee, when thy Case was otherwise desperate; that he should say, *Spare him from going down to the Pit, I have found a Ransom for him.*

But if thou hast a Desire to contemplate this Mystery, and affect thy self truly with it, do it with all Sobriety, and satisfy thy self with what God hath revealed concerning it to thee in his Word. Follow that Clue, and thou shalt not be lost in a Maze of Error, but find that which will satisfy thy Faith, and curb thy vain Curiosity. It is presumptuous Arrogance for thee to contend with him, who gives no Account of any of his Matters; or to be captious in enquiring, Whether God could not, by his absolute Lordship, have pardoned Sin and saved Sinners, without the Intervention of a Surety, and his bearing of the Penalty of Sin. It is enough to thee, that he would not do so, but chose this Way, which his unappeachable Wisdom judged to be best, for the Manifestation of his rich and glorious Grace in the Salvation of sinful Men. And it is thy Advantage to contemplate the Harmony of the infinite Perfections of God, display'd in this great Work of his.

Know then, That *Holiness* and *Justice* are essential Perfections of God, as well as *Grace*, the divine Lustre whereof he designed to manifest in his Works of Efficacy; and peculiarly with Respect to reasonable Creatures. The Way of the Manifestation whereof, he hath contrived

contrived in his eternal Purpose, according to the Counsel of his Will. And when he hath made this known to us in his Word, it is daring Blasphemy in us, to say, He might have done better.

Now, Tho' God be holy in all his Works, his *Holiness* being, in our Conception, his Engagedness for his own Glory, as his own last End in all; yet he hath been pleased to give a peculiar Manifestation of this Perfection, in his Displeasure at Sin, which is that which alone sets it self in Opposition to his Glory. And wherein could he, to our Conviction, better make Sin to appear to be the abominable Thing that he hates, than by punishing it in the Sinner with the most amazing Punishments, and firmly purposing in himself, that it should not go unpunished. His Holiness therefore is most eminently display'd in his taking Vengeance on Sin.

And that he might herein also make known his *Justice*, he gave unto Man a Rule of Righteousness, of the Equity whereof the Light of Nature did convince him, and he established it in a Covenant, with holy Sanctions, unto which he, as Lord and Governour, obliged himself: And thus it became, not only a Rule to direct Man in his Duty, but a Rule of *relative Justice*, according to which God would righteously proceed with Man. Man therefore, by his Breach of Covenant, and transgressing the Rule of Obedience prescribed him, fell under the Sanction in which Death was denounced, and became necessarily due to him, according to the Sentence of the Law, which therefore the Justice of God stood bound to execute. Man being thus involved, there was now no Way, consistent with salving of the Justice of God, for him to be saved, but by the Intervention of a Surety, who might answer the

Demands of Justice : Nor could the Man righteously be forgiven, till Blood were shed for him, *Heb. 9. 22.* Now, as God had purposed to manifest his Grace in the Salvation of such a Creature, so Mercy and Truth must meet together in it, he must be just in justifying.

So that, as the Case stands, whatsoever God might have done, which is not for us absolutely to determine, the Matter was now thus involved, and that according to the holy Counsel of God. The Sinner must die, if there be none to die for him ; and there was none that could do it to the Satisfaction of Justice, but the eternal Son of God ; and he must take our Nature upon him, that he might do it, and do it so as to answer Justice in it. If therefore God will now advance his Grace in the Salvation of the Sinner, he must prosecute his Justice upon the Surety ; and therefore Christ's Suretiship made Way for the Manifestation of this glorious Grace.

Certainly then, God's exacting of the Punishment of our Sin on him, is far from obscuring his *Grace* ; nay, indeed this greatly illustrates it, inasmuch as Reason it self saith, That to forgive an Offence without any Thing more, doth not carry so eminent an Illustration of the Grace of him that forgives, as when there is that which lies in the Way to obstruct, which he also is at the Cost of removing. If there had been no more but pardon of Sin, on the Sinner's Confession, and asking of it, what had that been (tho' it had been a wonderful Kindness) compared with this, that when Justice stood in the Way, and must be satisfied, that Grace might appear, God gave his only begotten Son to satisfy it, and so open the Way that we might be saved ?

Stand

Stand here then, my Soul, and gaze and wonder : Thou art now going to remember the Death of thy precious Saviour, and to affect thy self with the Displays of his unparallel'd Kindness express'd to thee in it. Take heed that thou do not mince or diminish any Thing that shall give it its proper Colours. Beware of thinking there was no Need of all this ado, that there might have been an easier Way of thy Salvation. Thou wilt never give Christ his due Acknowledgment, nor be rightly affected to him, if thus thou thinkest. But see and confess ; I had by Sin withstood the Holiness of God, brought my self under Guilt, stood condemned by a just Law, was under a Sentence of Death, which Righteousness could not have acquitted me from suffering, had not this precious One interposed, and born it for me : His Sufferings were as necessary as my Salvation, and, but for them, I had unavoidably felt the Impressions of God's everlasting Indignation.

Look then and say, This was he who, when there was no other Hope, nor any other Consistency of my Salvation with the Holiness and Righteousness of God, but by his bearing all for me, put himself into, and took my Place, and bare the Weight of the Stroke, which if it had fallen on me, would have destroyed me for ever irreparably ; nor could all the Angels in Heaven have afforded me any Relief. If there had been any other Hope, it had not been so much, but that when I was bro't to the Extremity, he should thus die for me, that I might live ! Let me live no longer than I may glorify the Riches of this Grace.



MEDITATION, XXIV.

*On the Fulness of the Satisfaction
given.*

❀❀❀ NOW see where the *Necessity* of Christ's Suffer-
 ❀ I ❀ ing lies ; it was not on his own Account,
 ❀❀❀ but mine : He deserved them not, being pure
 and innocent, but I did, and he put himself in
 my Room. It was because the Law found him charged
 with the Guilt of the Sins of his Elect, that it fell upon
 him, and executed on him the Sentence that was out a-
 gainst them. If it had not been for his Suretiship, he had
 felt none of these Things : But what then would have be-
 come of me, and all the rest of Mankind ? Oh that the
 Tho'ts of this super-transcendent Love of his, might af-
 fect this stupid Heart of mine, and it might get Warmth
 at this Fire. I would be sorry for, and bitterly bemoan
 these Sins of mine that brought him to this, and imbitter
 them unto the deepest Self-aborrence by this Considera-
 tion, but withal admire and adore that unconceivable
 Kindness which led him to all this.

But I find Doubts, and Demurs, and Disputes, arising
 in my Tho'ts, that offer to disturb my Comfort and Satis-
 faction in this Affair, and how shall I extricate my self,
 and overcome them ? I know that God is holy and just ;
 I know that the Law was the Rule of his relative Justice ;
 and that Law saith, *The Soul that sins, that Soul shall die.* But I am the Sinner, and how can Justice stand if I
 escape ?

escape? I am told indeed that Christ died as a Surety, and so bare our Guilt, and Justice must needs take up satisfied with it: But what Justice is there in punishing an innocent Person, and setting the Guilty at Liberty upon it? In Matters *pecuniary* indeed this may bear, but how it should be right in Matters *capital*, such as that of Sin is, methinks it is not so easy to understand.

But if I could get over this, still I am at a Loss, how Justice is *fully satisfied* by the Sufferings of *One* for so *Many*, every one of whom deserved the infinite Wrath of God; and that the Death of *One* should be taken for all these, and Justice no Loofer by it? Besides this, I know that if I had suffered in *Person*, I must have suffered *eternally*, nor could I ever have wound out of the Hand of revenging Justice, whereas the Sufferings of Christ were short, and he is raised out of them, and tho' he was dead, yet he is alive. And there are many Things contained in the Threatning or Curse that is out against Sinners, which I do not find that Christ did particularly undergo: And how is the Extent of the Law answered by him? Thus I am ready to dispute away my Faith and Hope.

But *Flesh!* Hold thy Peace and be still. Is not the Gospel of Salvation a great Mystry? And dost thou think to calculate the Contrivances of infinite Wisdom by thine Arithmetick, or measure and judge of the Reasons of God by thy dark Conceptions of Things, or to conclude, that because they are above thy Comprehension, and to thy Reason they seem to be against Reason, they are so *indeed*: As if they must stand or fall to thy Verdict? Dost thou not know that God's *Tho'ts* are above thy *Tho'ts*, and his *Ways* above thy *Ways*, as the Heavens are above the Earth? It becomes thee where thou canst not comprehend,

prehend, to wonder, and yet to believe. Do I pretend to Faith, and shall I yet doubt of the Thing, when God hath said it? Is not his Testimony the Rule and Reason of my Believing? Shall I not then firmly believe every Thing that he hath said, and count it sufficient Warrant for my so doing, because he hath said it who is Truth itself, and can neither be deceived, nor deceive?

And why wilt thou cry out with *Nicodemus*, *How can these Things be!* That God is infinitely just, I firmly believe, that the Law of Justice must be answered according to the true Intent of it, I am satisfied, that I am the Sinner condemned by the Law to die, I am sure of; yea, and do stand condemned by it till God passeth a gracious justifying Act upon me. That the Sentence of the Law is out against the Sinner *personally* is manifest; nor is there any *Clause* in it, reserving a Room for the Interposition of a *Surety*: Nor was it requisite; for God would not *save* Man by the *same* Covenant by which he *destroyed* himself, but would introduce another Covenant for that. However, it hath put in no Bar to hinder it, nor hath it said, that God will not accept of a *Surety*: And who shall interpret God's Mind and Design in it, better than himself, who hath given us the full Assurances of it, in that, no sooner had Man undone himself by the first Covenant, but God opened and discovered a new One, by which he should be repaired.

God from Eternity designed the Glory of his Grace in the Salvation of Men, and he contrived the first Covenant and Man's undoing of himself by it, to be a Medium for the Introduction and illustrious Manifestation of the Riches of his Grace. When therefore Man was fallen under Condemnation, and was going to the Pit, God said, *Spare him,*

him, he shall not die, I have found a Ransom. God hath said, That he hath made Christ a Curse, that we might have the Blessing; that he hath made him Sin for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of God thro' him; that he hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all; that he hath accepted of him for an Offering, that he might be attoned to us; and if Justice it self saith it is right, shall Man call the Righteousness of it in Question?

And tho' it seems inconsistent with humane Justice to punish an innocent Person in lieu of the Criminal, and let him go free, because the Ends of Justice among Men are not thereby answered, but rather crossed; yet we are not to stint the Reasons of divine Justice, to that which is rational for Man to do; Man is under God's Government, and is bound to his Law, in proceeding to punish Crimes: But God hath a Prerogative, of which we can make no further Judgment, than as he reveals it to us; and he hath told us, That there was a Covenant of Suretiship past between the Father and Son on this very Account, in which Covenant, the Son voluntarily undertook this Province; he freely engaged himself in it; he took the Relation of a Surety, became bound to the Law for us; and God accepted him in this Relation, and, as such, laid on him, or imputed to him our Transgressions, and so he stood as the guilty Person: This was not by Force, but by Compact. And if this was not consistent with divine Righteousness, and suitable to the Ends of the first Covenant, God would not have done it. So that what God hath done upon this Account, and revealed to us in his Word, is the best Commentary on the Law, and tells us, that tho' the Person of the Sinner be primarily guilty, and bound to die, yet there is a forinsecal Interpretation to be put

put upon it, in which, where there is once a Surety accepted, he is in the Law the Person, and when he dieth as such, it is as much as if the Sinner had died in Person.

Why then, Oh my Soul, shouldest thou have any Scruple on this Account? If *thy Judge* saith, *It is Law and Justice*, what hast thou to do to call it in Question? Thou art safe in this; he is supream; his Acts will stand for ever; nor is there any that can reverse the Sentence that he passeth. If then he saith, That when his Son suffered Death, thou sufferedst in him by Proxy, and he is satisfied in it, thou needest never be afraid of coming into Condemnation; get but the Evidence of this witnessed and sealed by the Spirit of God, and thou needest never be afraid. And as to the Vertue and Value of these Sufferings of thy Saviour, for the satisfying of the Demands of Justice, and compleatly answering of the Ends of the Law, thou hast as little Reason to suspect it as the other, and all thy Scruples are but the Cavillings of Ignorance. If thou wilt question the Holiness and Justice of God, how wilt thou answer him for such an Affront? If thou wilt acknowledge them, thou must believe, that the Obedience of Christ was commensurate with all that his Elect were responsible for.

The Father, in the Covenant of Redemption, that he might save the Glory of his Justice, and yet manifest the Wonder of his Grace, in such a Subject as sinful and righteously condemned Man, proposed a Satisfaction to be made by his Son, who, to that End, was to become our Surety, and take our Nature upon him; and gave him the Terms on which it was to be done, which was the Redempter's Law, which he tells us *was in his Heart*, Psa. 40. 8. and promised him that on his so doing, he should

have

have a Discharge in the Name of all those for whom he should so do: And upon his having done it, he is discharged, and hath a Power to satisfy as many as he died for. And would God have done this, if there had not been a compleat Satisfaction in the Work of Christ's Humiliation? Certainly no. If I believe him to be God, I must believe all this to be thus.

What tho' here were an *Exchange* of Millions for One? Yet inasmuch as that One was worth ten thousand Millions of us, there is no Wrong done. What tho' it was his *Humanity* only that was the Subject in which his Sufferings were terminated? Yet the Person whose Humanity that was, and in which he suffered, was God: It was *God's* Blood that was shed: And that divine Personality must needs put an infinite Value into it. So that Justice could not have been equally glorified in the Death of them all, as it was in his. Nor was the *Eternity* of Sufferings essential to the Curse, but accidental, because of our Deficiency, by reason that we are finite Beings, to satisfy at once, which therefore must be compensated with an infinite Duration. Whereas he, being infinite, could at once, and by one Sacrifice, for ever perfect those that are sanctified. And what tho' there were *particular Things* in which we were exposed and threatened, that he did not suffer, being inconsistent with his spotless Integrity? Yet inasmuch as he bare the whole *Essence* of the Curse, and Weight of the Anger of God, there is no reason to doubt of the Equivalency of it, and the Fulness of Satisfaction thereby given; so that the Law hath no more Claim.

Be not then doubting but believe: Rest satisfied in what God hath revealed of this in his Word, and leave it with

with him to vindicate his own Righteousness in this Proceeding. As for me, my greatest Interest, Safety and Comfort is, in securing by Faith a Title to this Satisfaction of his according to the Promise, and to trust it with God to accomplish it, who will certainly do it to Effect.

Come then to him, and receive him as a compleat and all-sufficient Saviour ; lean thy whole Weight upon him as such : Strengthen thy Faith for the full Pardon of all thy Sins, in the Vertué and Efficacy of his Blood, and look no farther, but resolve that his Blood cleanseth from all Sin. Look upon the Justice of God as fully satisfied, and be not terrified with it : Send a relucting Heart, and an accusing Devil hither. Thus let thy Faith feed upon a dying Saviour ; and resolve, that because he died, and was raised up and exalted to supercelestial Glory, thou shalt not die but live, and praise him for ever.



MEDITATION, XXV.

On the Concurrence of the three divine Persons in this Work.

WHAT dost thou here, my Soul? What is thy Business? I am come to view and gaze upon a broken, bleeding, dying Saviour : And why? Art thou desirous to glut thine Eyes with the Contemplation of bloody Objects, tragical Acts? Is it not a far more pleasing Interview, to behold him crowned with

with all the Glories of his Father's Kingdom? Yea doubtless; but I shall never have a right Prospect of that, till I have traced it thro' his Sufferings, thro' which it was necessary that he should enter into his Glory; inasmuch as I am assured that he was made perfect thro' Sufferings, in the Vertue whereof he is entred into the Holy of Holies; and from thence communicates to us sinful Men, all that Mercy that he first purchased for us in his State of Humiliation, by his bitter Death.

It is not, Ah no, it is not the Wounds and Sorrows, the Cruelties of Men, and the Wrath of God which he underwent, that do for themselves delight me, but it is because he loved me, and gave himself for me: It is that, by speculating the unparallel'd Love of Christ manifested in these Sufferings, I may awaken and stir up my endeared Love to him, who laid down his Life for me a vile Worm, an unprofitable Creature. And can I too much gaze upon this surprizing Wonder, which the holy Angels themselves are, with greatest Admiration, and endless Astonishment enquiring after!

But shall my Tho'ts terminate on the Person of Christ, and limit themselves to the Good-will of the Son of God in this Affair! No, no, for tho' here be enough to swallow me up, and lose me in Extasies, yet I must trace it into the boundless Ocean of the *divine Love*, where let me be swallowed up and never find Bank nor Bottom. When I consider this great Work of Redemption which my dear Saviour hath wrought out for me, I would fain follow it up to the *Fountain* or Well-head from whence it proceeds.

I am desirous to know how all this was brought about, where it was contrived, and what Foundation was laid for

for it. And here I find the *glorious Trinity*, all the three Persons in the adorable God-Head deeply interested in it. I find the everlasting Love of God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost consulting, contriving, and laying out this Work in an ancient Covenant, before I had any Being, or ever the World was. Nor were they only consenting to, but concerned in it, each One according to his Manner of working. I find the Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the divine Essence, not to be merely speculative, but practical, and necessary for my Faith. I find, that tho' One God be sufficient for the Happiness of a Creature, yet there must be Three Persons for the Salvation of a Sinner.

But alas ! How shall I, whose Reason is nonplust, and whose Conceptions are labyrinth'd in the Consideration of Three in One, be able to unriddle the Mystery of Redemption in the Contrivance of it between them, or measure these infinite Consultations with the short Line of my humane Understanding ? God therefore hath condescended to my Infirmary, and laid open this Secret in such Terms as may best suit my Capacity, in that he hath represented it under the Notion of a Covenant, by the analogous Consideration whereof I may have some Glimpse of the glorious Transaction.

Here I read, That God *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* were tho'tful of and resolved about my Salvation ; that when I had undone my self by Sin, I should be recovered by Grace. And what Love was this, that thus laid in for my Restoration before-hand ? Here I read, that God the *Father*, and God the *Holy Ghost* were every whit as forward for, and desirous of my Salvation, as God the *Son*, and their Love in this Regard was alike towards me.

Nor

Nor did the first Motion proceed from the *Son*, but they were *All* equally agreed in it. Here I read, a wonderful Contrivance for the Advancement of the Glory of the Grace of God in and by the Salvation of a Company of poor miserable Sinners, of whom I am chief. And tho' this was done at once, in one undivided Act, yet my Conceptions of it must be led by Steps; In which I conceive of a Consult had upon this Resolve, how this is to be bro't about, so as shall be most admirable: And here are all Things linked together in such an Harmony as is astonishing. Man is created in the Image of God, taken into a Covenant under Sanctions, left to the Trial of his Integrity, and by his own Fault comes under Condemnation: Justice pursueth him to Death, will not let him go without a compleat Satisfaction; a Surety must be found for this; there is none to be found in Heaven or Earth who is able to sustain this Place, the whole Creation is here at a Loss, and poor Man must perish if there be no other Way for his Redemption. The eternal Son of God, who lieth in his Bosom, and is his everlasting Delight, is only capable of this Undertaking; if He will engage in it it may be done; He can assume our Nature, and do and die in it, and give infinite Value to his Obedience; so as to discharge the Demands of Justice for them, and bestow eternal Salvation upon them.

Here I consider God the *Father*, who is the first in Order of Personality, to be so in Order of the Proposal, inviting of his Son to this Undertaking, making the Motion to him, telling how acceptable and pleasing it will be, promising that if he will undertake this Work, he shall have a Nature suited and fitted for him, to manage it in, in Union with his divine Person, he shall have all the Glory
of

of a Mediator bestowed upon him, the Work shall not fail in his Hand, and the Recompence shall be secured to him ; only he must first make his Soul an Offering for Sin.

And while I wait to know what Entertainment is given to this by the *Son*, I hear him declaring his exceeding Readiness to embrace it, and saying, *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God.* His Father is not more forward to propose, than he is to undertake. And that this may be made effectual to the actual Salvation of poor Sinners, I see the ever blessed *Spirit* of God readily offering to do his Part towards the accomplishing of it ; not only in preparing of the Body of Christ, and assisting of it in it's Work, but also in the bringing of poor Sinners into a Participation in this Redemption, and making them to become a Seed of Christ, a Generation that shall serve him, and be with him for ever.

I see these Articles thus written, signed, sealed, and entered in the Rolls of Eternity, and pass'd into a Law that is more firm than those of the *Medes* and *Persians*, never to be altered or disannulled. I here see, that Christ did come not only by divine Promise, but Approbation and Agreement ; that he not only offered a Sacrifice of sufficient Value, but acceptable and pleasing to God. I am hereby assured that the Counsel of God concerning the Salvation of Sinners, is settled for ever in the Heavens, and made to be immutable ; and that there is nothing wanting in this Settlement to the perfect Accomplishment of it. I find that that eternal Life which I depend on Christ for, was promised to him on my Account before the World was. Oh admirable Love ! Here I read the Beginning of my Salvation ; here I see whence it was

that

that I was brought under the Means of Grace, and that I was brought home to Christ by a powerful Calling.

And who am I, O Lord, or what is my Father's House, that ever thou shouldst have such a Regard for me, who am Dust and Ashes, for me a Rebel, that have sinned and dishonoured thy Name, that have departed from thee, and gone after Lies and Vanities? Strengthen then thy Faith, O my Soul, by this, fortify against all Doubts and Diffidence; shall, or can any Thing ever be able to separate thee from that Love, which is without Beginning, and therefore can have no Ending? Read here, that not only did Christ love thee, but the Father loved thee, and the Spirit hath loved thee, and they are all of them perfectly agreed to save thee.

Come then to the Lord Jesus Christ, and by him to the Father, thro' the Spirit, and do not doubt but believe. Believe that thy Salvation, being thus secured, cannot be undermined. Believe, that if One God in Three Persons can make thee for ever happy, thou canst not miss of it. Be not terrified at the Thro'ts of the revenging Justice of God, knowing by this, that God himself hath devised and ratified this Way, that Mercy and Truth might meet together, Righteousness and Peace might kiss each other; And now say, What shall I render to the Lord for these so great Benefits laid in for me? Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is in me, bless his holy Name. Now to thee, O Father, to thee, O Son, to thee, O Holy Spirit, I consecrate my self; and in Extasy do I cry out, To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever, AMEN.



MEDITATION, XXVI.

*On the electing Love of God the
Father.*

O W precious are thy Thoughts unto me, O God, how great is their Sum? Thus could the Psalmist exclaim in a Rapture, on his Contemplation of the Curiosity of the divine Wisdom and Care, expressed in his Composure: And shall I be less ravished in the reflecting upon the more astonishing Contrivance of my Salvation by Christ? I have been making of some general Remarks on the united Love of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity, in contriving and laying out the great Business of Man's Redemption; but I cannot so easily sail over the boundless Ocean of Benignity. Oh that I could search every Creek and Corner of it! Oh that I were able to grasp or comprehend, the Height, Depth, Length, Breadth, of this Love!

Come then, Oh my Soul, enter farther into the Field, and take a more distinct Account of the divine Benevolence, as it refers to *each* of these glorious Persons severally; and therein read the Infinite Obligations lying on thee, to love, adore, admire, and praise the Deity in the Trinity. Doubtless the holy Writ hath not for nothing ascribed to each of these Persons their particular Manner of working in this Affair; but, as it affords thee a Clue to lead thee in this Labyrinth; so it invites thee to trace it

with

with a febrile Curiosity. Am I one of God's called ones? Have I a Right to the precious Body and Blood of Christ, as it is presented before me at this Table? Am I affected with the unparallel'd Love of Christ in this giving of himself for me? And shall I tarry here? Shall I confine my Tho'ts to this? Is not this a Stream, in which the Good-Will of God hath broken forth unto me? And shall I not trace it up to the Fountain? Shall I not follow it thro' all Ages of Time past, till I fall into the *Eternity* where it had its Original? And so get my self acquainted with that great Mystery, how he who suffered under *Pontius Pilate*, was the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*?

And here I find (if that which is eternal may be supposed to have a Beginning) that all this began or took its Rise from God's Election, who chose us in Christ, before any Creature had an Existence. Which Election, tho' it be a Secret unknown to any in particular, in Regard of himself, till such Time as it breaks forth in effectual Vocation; yet by this it is certainly to be known; and if God hath drawn me by his Loving-kindness, it is because he loved me with an everlasting Love: If I am sure of this, I may be sure, and need not to doubt of that. Which Election, tho' it is properly a divine Act, and terminates in the *divine Essence*, yet is frequently attributed to the *Father*, as being most suitable to his Order and Manner of Subsistence, who is the first Person in the Trinity, and from whom the other Persons have their Subsistence, the Son by eternal Generation, and the Spirit by eternal Procession.

Herein then the *Father's Love* is peculiarly celebrated, which Love Christ did not purchase or procure for us by his Merits and Satisfaction; but he himself, and all that

he underwent for the procuring of Life and Happiness for us, are the Fruits of this Love ; for, *God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son.* Our dark Understanding are too apt to take up prejudicial Tho'ts of God the Father, and to look upon him only as a provoked Judge, and one that hates us ; and that the Son interposed to pacify him to us, as one that was enraged at us ; whereas, tho' it is necessary that Justice be satisfied, else we cannot be saved consistent with God's Holiness, and hence there can be no Access to him but by a Mediator ; yet the Father's Love is no less infinite, eternal, and unchangeable than the Son's. On this Account Christ encourageth us to pray to God, *Because the Father himself loved us,* John 16. 27.

And there needs nothing to put this beyond all Doubt, but the believing Consideration of that mysterious *Blessing*, which is a Love transcending all humane Conception ; a Love which never began, nor can it ever End ; a Love which had nothing to engage it, but the meer good Pleasure of God ; a Love so strong and firm, that nothing could ever alter it, or obstruct the Progress of it ; a Love that hath not only appointed us to Glory, but laid out the whole Medium of it in such a Way, as the Angels themselves can never cease gazing upon it with surprizing Admiration ; a Love which hath no Parallel, nor any Similitude among created Beings fit to resemble it, but what rather obscures than illustrates it.

Let me then here stand still and gaze and wonder. Am I then one of God's Elect ? Hath the Father's Love in choosing me, been witnessed to and in me ? And am I now receiving a Seal of it, or a Pledge to confirm it ? Let me then set my self to ponder, *what Manner of Love this is,*
wherewith

wherewith God hath loved me, by which he hath appointed me to Salvation by Christ. How shall I ever be able to find out the Comprehension, or come to the Bottom of electing Love? Ah Lord, what is *Man*? What am *I* a Worm, that thou hast regarded me? That thou shouldest have Tho'ts of Love and Good-will for me, when *I was not*?

That not only, when thy Will set the Bounds to thine Omnipotency, in determining the Works of Efficiency, thou shouldest appoint a Being for me to be given me in Time, when such an innumerable Company of possible Beings, equally capable of Being were left for ever in the Abyss of Nothing: Or that when thou didst appoint so many Sorts of Beings far inferiour, Things to be made out of the same Mass, thou ordainest that I should be a Man, and not a Beast or Stone. But that when thou didst fix the everlasting State of reasonable Creatures, and wrotest down in the *Book of Life* the Names of all those whom thou wouldest make Partakers of the everlasting Love, *my Name* should be recorded *there*, when so many Millions of my Fellows were left out.

What Difference couldest thou see between me and them, that should move thee to put such an one, when we were all without a Being, and our Futurity depended on thy Decree, and we could be nothing but what thou wouldest make us? Who put thee in Mind of me, or mentioned my Name to thee, when I was not to speak for my self, nor any Being besides thy self, to speak for me? What couldest thou foresee in me that should render me a fit Subject of thy Favour, who could have nothing of Good, but what thou must give me of thy free Will, and mightest as well have done it for another?

When I consider the great *End* of this Election, and the unsearchable *Difference* it hath put between the Elect and Reprobate, appointing those to be Vessels of Mercy, and these Vessels of Wrath; the glorious Kingdom, the eternal Mansions of Bliss which thou hast ordained for the everlasting Entertainment of these, when the other shall be shut out, and be for ever in outer Darkness, and dwell with everlasting Burnings; I am amazed with the *Thou's* of it, that I should be so favoured: That I a Wretch, a Sinner, a vile Creature, should be so preferred, who have as much deserved to be eternally separated from thy Presence as any in the World. Why I, and not *Cain*, and not *Judas*?

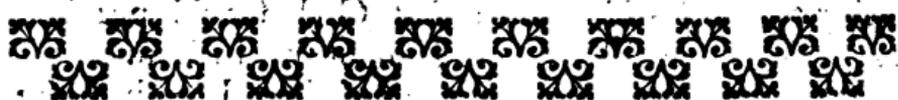
When I consider the *Way* thou hast ordained, and the Means thou hast appointed, for the bringing about of this Design, in thine eternal Purpose, I am lost in Amaze. Oh, the astonishing Way in which thou didst contrive to bring about thy Purpose of Love to me, and accomplish the Glory of thy Grace in my Salvation. That when thou didst fore-know my fearful Apostacy, how I should bring my self under a Curse of Death, and render my self a Child of Wrath, and an Heir of everlasting Destruction, and be involved in a Guilt from which the whole Creation could not be able to rescue me, thou shouldst lay in a Remedy for me before I needed it, and appoint a Saviour in a Readiness to purchase Redemption for me, and provide a remedial Covenant to restore me, when I must else have perished unavoidably; and that, when the whole Creation could not afford one, thou shouldst determine it on thine own Son, and appoint him to this Province. Here is the Wonder of this Decree, that I am *chosen in Christ*; that the Son of God must die for me, rather

rather than I should perish ; that God should purchase me with his own Blood, that I might live by him.

What Need hadst 'thou of me ? What Loss had thy Glory sustained by me if I had perished ? Couldst not thou as well have triumphed over me in my Perdition, and gotten thee Honour upon me, in banishing me from thy Presence for ever, and making me a Monument of thy righteous Revenge ? I find that the Lord of Glory was slain according to thy Fore-knowledge and determinate Counsel, and that he came to do thy Will, according as it was written in the Volume of the Book concerning him. I find him to be a Gift of thine eternal Love, and that to me a vile Sinner, and all this, that the Purpose according to thine Election might stand. Thus, thus do I now desire to receive this crucified Saviour as a Token of this electing Love.

Bless the Lord then, Oh my Soul, and all that is in me, bless his holy Name, and forget not this Benefit. Take this bleeding, wounded, dying Saviour into the Arms of thy Faith, and read in him to thy self a Lecture of the Father's electing Love ; read in it thy Name enrolled in the Records of Eternity for Life, and confirm by it thine Hope unto the End ; resolving that this Foundation of God is sure, having this Seal, that *God knows who are his* ; and that that Love which had its Rise in Eternity, shall endure to and thro' Eternity.

MEDI-



MEDITATION XXVII.

On the redeeming Love of God the Son.




H the Mystery of divine Love ! The further I


O waded in the Contemplation of it, the more am



I surprized at it. Who can search the Depth,
or find the Bottom of electing Love ? Nor is
redeeming Love less astonishing. And here I am led to
the Contemplation of the Kindness of God the Son, the
second glorious Person ; not excluding the Father, who
so loved the World that he gave him to redeem us ; who
spared him not, but gave him for us ; nor the holy Spirit,
who also approved of, and assisted in this great Work.

But it is peculiarly appropriated to the Son, in that the
Work it self terminated in his Person. It was he that
was the indented Surety for us in the Covenant of Re-
demption : He was the Lamb slain from the Foundations
of the World, by Compact and Consent ; it was he that
assumed our Nature into close Union with his Person, by
which the Son of God became the Son of Man : He sub-
jected himself to the Law, not only in its Commands, but
Curfes too ; who fulfilled all the Righteousness, and bare
all the Penalties of it, it was he alone who loved me and
gave himself for me. And *every Article* in this is suffici-
ent

ent to make up a *Volume* of Wonders. When I consider his *free and voluntary Consent* to this in the eternal Compact, I want suitable Words to express it, yea, Conceptions to apprehend it: And when I would form an Idea of it in my Mind, I am at an utter Loss.

I, in my poor Measure contemplate the whole Mass of Mankind, fallen into a Pit of unconceivable Misery, by an unhappy Apostacy, held fast under an unconceivable Curse, dooming him to suffer the whole Weight of divine Indignation eternally, and going, without all Hope in himself, or in the whole Creation, to be made a Sacrifice to revenging Justice.

I conceive the great God, in his wondrous Good-will, calling a Counsel in himself, and consulting, how there may be a Way found, for the salving of the Honour of his Justice, and yet delivering of the righteously condemned Creature from going down to the Pit; how Justice and Peace may meet together, how Mercy and Truth may kiss each other; how the Law may stand unviolated, and yet Grace manifest it self in the Sinner's Salvation; how he may be both just, and justify a Sinner.

I see both Heaven and Earth to fail, and not able to afford any to interpose, and undertake in this Affair; that the Cherubims, those Angels of Might, are not strong enough to stand under this Weight; and when there was no other that could do any Thing for the Relief of the undone Creature.

I apprehend the eternal Son, offering himself to his Father, and saying, *Here am I, send me.* When I consider how *voluntarily* and readily he undertook it, how freely he brought himself under the Obligation, in an immutable Covenant to perform all that was requisite in it; and with what

what Delight he looked upon it, *Rejoicing in the habitable Parts of the Earth, and having his Delight with the Sons of Men.* I am amazed in my Mind, and cry out, *What Manner of Love is this?* How could he that is the eternal God, have such a Respect for sinful miserable Worms? And when I follow it down to those Things in which he accomplished this Undertaking, and went thro' this precious Redemption, I am still the more bewildred in a Labyrinth of Wonders.

When I speculate his admirable Incarnation, God manifested in the Flesh, the Son of God becoming the Son of Man, the Ancient of Days an Infant, the infinite incomprehensible Jehovah, taking up a Lodging in a Virgin's Womb, the Creator of all Things himself becoming a Creature, Eternity and Time, Immensity and Finitude, Immutability and Change, Glory and Contempt, the great GOD and a Worm, meet, and be united in One; *Lord! What is Man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou thus visitest him?* What a Stoop, what a Condescendency is here? Behold, how he loved this poor Thing, Man. What shall I here say, when I observe this Incarnation attended with the State of Humiliation, in which he assumed it? It was an unknown Condescendency that he would be of our Kin, of our Stock and Lineage, that he would be made of a Woman; But what is this that I read after it? *Made under the Law.*

And what was this? Was it only to keep the Commands of God, to perform perfect active Obedience to the Law? No, this was not all, tho' in it also he was humbled for us, in that the Law-giver was under the Command of his own Law, and that, because without perfect

perfect Obedience to it, there was no Happiness to be expected by Man ; he kept it for us, so as to obtain thereby, that the Reward of eternal Life might be conferred upon us ; and how great was this Love ! But he was under it to redeem us from it ; we were under the Curse of it, and how did he ransom us from the Curse, but by being made a Curse ? And for this he was incarnate, he took this Nature on him, that he might, and in assuming of it he did, put himself into the Hand of the Law as Surety for us ; he took, with our Flesh, the Imputation of our Sins upon him ; he abased himself, that so he might redeem us : And for what was it he did redeem us ? Why, to be his Friends, nay more, to be his Spouse, to take us into the nearest Union to himself, that we were capable of. It was not only, to buy us out of the Hand of Justice, to buy off our deserved Punishment, and deliver us from the Wrath to come ; and yet that was admirable Love : But that he might enjoy us, and delight himself in us, and bring us to sit together with him on his Throne, and lie in his Embraces for ever. And if he would have us, he must ransom us, and that at such a Price as this.

Oh the persevering Love of Christ ! He went thro' all, he baulked nothing, what were the Things he went thro' and the Sorrows he met with in the Course of his Life, is hard to tell : He was from his Infancy to his Death, a Man of Sorrows and one acquainted with Grief. His Love carried him thro' all this without murmuring or repining ; And in his Death he had all the Curses heaped on him, which he bore in the full Weight and Measure of them. He bought us not with Silver and Gold, but with his own most precious Blood. He laid not down
Worlds

Worlds for us, but gave *Himself* a Ransom ; and when it came to the utmost, he, *for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.* He was made *Sin for us, who knew none* ; he died *the Just for the Unjust* ; and was well pleased with it.

And how shall I be able to comprehend *the Height and Depth, the Length and Breadth of this Love, which indeed surpasseth Knowledge* ? If I think to find a Parallel for it, in the whole World, I am a Stranger to it, and the Greatness of it. Nay, where shall I look for, or hope to find a Comparison that will suitably adumbrate it ? Christ himself hath told us, that the greatest Love in the World, or that any can make their Boast of, is, *for a Man to die for his Friend* ; and indeed there have been some few Instances of that. And the Apostle supposeth it to be a rare Thing for any to dare to die for a good Man : But for any to offer himself, not only to die, but to the most cursed, wretched, ignominious Death, for an Enemy, for one that hates him, one that hath done him all the Disgrace that he can : Nay, for a Prince to offer himself to die for his Subjects, that have become Rebels, Traytors, that have fought his Life, and endeavoured to subvert his Government, and that, when he had Advantage in his Hands, and could have punished them according to their Demerits ; who ever heard of such a Thing ? To die for one that might be very serviceable is not so much, but to die for one that is unprofitable and mischievous, under whom the Earth groans, and for whom Hell is a very proper Place, is incredible. And yet such an one was I : This is the Emphasis, *While we were yet Enemies ; in due Time Christ died for the Ungodly.*

Lord,

Lord, I can never set forth this Love of thine with Words; Oh, grant that I may celebrate it with silent Astonishment, and with the most engaged Devotion of Heart and Soul unto thee. I was sold under Sin, I was justly condemned to die, there was none in Heaven or Earth to save me; I was cast out to the loathing of my Person, and no Eye pitied me; I was an Object fit for thy Hatred, and capable of, and deserving the being made a Monument of thy Revenge for ever. I never sought for this Redemption, nor enquired after it; it is every Way thine own doing. This hath stopt the Flames of Hell for me, and rescued me from everlasting Burnings, this hath opened Heaven for me, and given me an Hope to inherit the Kingdom.

And now Lord, I am come to view and celebrate this Redemption; and I have in mine Eye, the amazing Sight of the bitter Sufferings which thou underwentst, and by which thou was broken, in order to the procuring of it for me. Oh grant me an enlarged Heart, to view, admire, adore, and suitably to celebrate this Love. Suffer me not to have any other Object to contemplate, but him who hath loved me, and washed me from my Sins in his Blood. Let me not live for any other End, but to love and praise thee.



MEDITATION,





MEDITATION XXVIII.

*On the applying Love of God the
Holy-Ghost.*

NOR doth the divine Love end or determine here, in laying the Foundation of my Salvation in eternal Election; and laying in the Purchase of it by Redemption; but I am invited into a fresh Contemplation of immense Love, as it pursues this Salvation unto *Accomplishment*. As there are three Persons in the God-head, so will each of them manifest his Love according to his Manner of Being and Working. As I must have a God to *chuse me*, and a God to *redeem me*, so a God to *save me*: And altho' this be one and the same God, yet each Subsistence in this undivided Essence hath his particular Work ascribed to him in the Gospel. And as no Person less than the Son of God could redeem me, so no less than the Holy Spirit can save me. As none but he who is God, could pay the Price of my Ransom, so none but he who is God, could apply it to me for eternal Life.

It was the wonderful Love of God to give his Son, and of the Son to give himself for me: But if there had been no more in this Affair, but only an Offer of Christ made to me, and a Promise to make his Redemption mine, on my Acceptance of it, I had still perished. There is a new Covenant opened in and thro' Christ, in which there are

Terms

Terms proposed, and the Way of Salvation is declared and limited. God did not give his Son that *all*, but only that such as *believe* on him, *should not perish, but have everlasting Life*. Not all, but only those that are meet for it, must partake in the Inheritance that he hath bought for them : And how much is there required in this Meetness? And herein is the unconceivable Love of the holy Spirit display'd.

When I contemplate the *Means* that he hath provided, and afforded me for my Salvation, I cannot enough admire his Love in this. I was born a Stranger, and ignorant of the Way of Peace, nor could all the Light of Nature, and Improvement of Reason in me, have ever bro't me acquainted with it : But he hath *bro't Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*. The *Holy Scriptures*, by which I am instructed in the Way of Peace, are of his inditing : Holy Men of God did speak, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. He knew the Mind of God, and hath made it known unto Men, but for which I must have groped in the Dark, and been lost for ever. I was born with an Heart careless and regardless of Salvation, nor should ever have sought after it, or the Means of it ; had not he brought the Gospel to me, I had never enquired after it. Had not he begun the Treaty, it had still been to begin.

But this is not all ; if I have accepted of Christ and his Salvation ; if I have closed in with the Offer, and received the Redemption of Christ according to the Terms of the New-Covenant, I owe the Acknowledgement of this to him : And herein I see, admire, and adore, his special and peculiar Love to me. There is a special Kindness in that Salvation that hath been offered to me, when these are such Multitudes that never heard of it, nor would the Spirit

Spirit suffer it to be carried to them ; and did nothing more to oblige him than they did, nor had I any Thing in me better than they, to commend me to this Favour.

But I consider what Multitudes there are of those who enjoy the same Means and Advantages of the Gospel, who notwithstanding are not brought over to Christ, nor do comply with the Articles of the New-Covenant, who live in Sin, and abuse the Gospel to their own Hurt, neglecting the great Salvation, and thereby making their Condition the more amazingly miserable in the Day when it shall be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* than for them ; and then ask mine own Heart,

How is it that I have embraced Christ, and believed on him, when they refused him, and hardened their Hearts against him ? Whence is it that the same Gospel, which is a Saviour of Life to me, is a Saviour of Death to them ? Was it because I was better inclined to hearken to the Voice of God, and yield Obedience to the Gospel-Commands ? Was it because I had an Heart more disposed to obey the Gospel ? Ah, no : I had an Heart as obstinate as any in the World, as full of Enmity and Malignity against the Way of Salvation, as the worst of Men : And this very Difference which he hath put between me and them, is a Witness in me of his Love ; this should never be forgotten.

But what Need of Comparisons ? I need only to consider what I am in my self, and what he hath done in and for me, and my Carriage under all, to fill me with ravishing Tho'ts of his Love to me. It was when I was weltering in my Blood, and cast out to the loathing of my Person, that he said unto me, *Live*. It was when I was departing from God, and running in the Ways of

Destruction,

Destruction, that he put a Stop to my Course, and turned me. Not only did he set the Light of the Gospel before me, to point me the Way to Life, and plead with me in his Ordinances to accept of it ; but I was blind and could not discern this Light. And he opened mine Eyes, and made me to perceive wondrous Things in his Law. It was when I was utterly averse to the Gospel Salvation, that he took away that Heart of Stone, and gave me an Heart of Flesh ; and how great and astonishing Patience did he use towards me ? I can never think of the Day of his wooing me for Christ, without Shame to my self, and Admiration of his Pity and Forbearance. If all that I could have done to withstand the Treaty would have broken it off, and made him to leave me for ever, I certainly provoked him so to do. When he set Life and Death before me, I chose Death rather than Life ; I preferred lying Vanities before everlasting Mercies. When he offered to convince me of Sin and Misery, I stifled those Convictions, and did all that I could to quench his Motions, and return to my carnal Security. When he set before me the Lord Jesus Christ, and his glorious Salvation, and bid me to accept of him, I said to him, *Depart*, and let him know that I desired no Acquaintance with him. When he bid me to turn away from my Sins, and forsake them, I held fast Deceit, and would not let it go. When he laid before me the precious Terms of the Covenant, I was offended and prejudiced at them. When he knocked at the Door of my Heart, and asked for Entertainment there, I chose to solace my self with other Lovers, and bolted against him. When he urged upon me the Weightiness of this Affair, and bad me to make Haste, and to Day to hear his Voice, I delayed him, and

put him off with trifling Excuses, and thereby plainly discovered, what a low Esteem I had for his Salvation. How often did I thus quench and vex him and grieve him? And if he had not borne an insuperable Love to me, he would surely have left me, and taken an Oath against me. If he had not conquered my Will, and subdued mine Heart, I had resisted him to the Death.

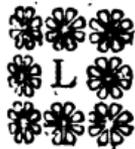
And no less Love hath he manifested unto me ever since; in preserving that Spark of his Grace from being extinguished, by the Floods of Corruption and Temptation that have essayed it. And what Pity, what Tenderness, what Compassion hath he shewed me ever since? I have many a Time grieved him by my Follies; but he hath not forsaken me for them, but hath applyed himself to me, to humble and heal me. I had many a Time gone astray, if he had not prevented me, I had never returned from my Wandrings, had not he sought me up and bro't me back. When I was dead, he quickened me; when I was indisposed, he roused me; when I was in the Dark, he enlightned me; when I was discouraged, he animated me; when I was wounded, he healed me; when I was at a Loss, and knew not what to do, he instructed me; when I was running my self into Mischiefe, he warned me; when my Spirit was overwhelmed in me, he comforted me; and if I have any Hopes yet to obtain the Kingdom, to persevere to the End, and receive the Crown, they depend on his Love to me; it is because I am kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation.

And now, shall I forget to celebrate this Love of his? Shall not the blessed Spirit of God have my Adorations paid to him? Can I honour the Father, and the Son, and neglect to glorify the Holy Spirit? Is he not the same God?

God ! Nay is he not the Spirit that is sent by the Father and the Son ? And do I not come for the Ratification of this Love to me by the Sacrament ? Is it not the Seal of the whole Covenant to me ? And is it not he who hath sealed to me, and must seal up all the Good of it to me ? Let me then, Lord, be helped to render all the Praise of my Salvation, and all my Hopes of eternal Life, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

MEDITATION, XXIX.

On the Subjects of this Love.


ORD, *what is Man, that thou art thus mindful of him ?* What didst thou see in him, to render him thus amiable, when thou didst set thine Heart upon him ? Or what was there in him to move thy Compassion, when thou camest to redeem and save him ? Certainly there must be either something peculiarly excellent in the Creature, about which thou wert so concerned, and for which thou hast done so much ; or, thou hadst some Need of it, for the perfecting of thine Happiness : No, neither of them : God forbid that I should entertain such a Tho't without Detestation. Lord, the more that thou hast done for me, make me the more vile in mine own Eyes. This infinite, admirable, and unparallel'd Love of thine, could have it's Original nowhere but in *Thyself*. *It was even so, because it thus secured good unto thee.*

I was not chosen for any Goodness in me, but that thou mightest impart thy special Goodness unto me. Thou didst not set thine Heart upon me, because thou fore-sawest any Thing better in me than in Others, but because thou hadst a Purpose to communicate more of thy Favour unto me than to Others. When thy free Love elected me, I was not : I was only a possible Being ; and it was thy meer Pleasure that made that Possibility a Futurity, and assigned for me all that I have and am. And tho' thou didst appoint to make me an excellent Creature, endued with a Nature surpassing the Nature of every other Creature of the visible Creation, and thy arbitrary Pleasure put the Difference between me and a Worm, a Toad, a Serpent, yet thou didst know what a vile, odious, abominable Thing I would make my self by Sin, if left to my self, and the Freedom of mine own Will, when tempted by thy great Adversary to Rebellion against thee. Nor did this hinder thee from fixing of thy Love upon me, but thou chosest to make such a Wretch as I am, the Subject of it, and all my Vileness to be the Foil on which thou wouldest draw the fresh and glorious Colours of thy Grace. Hadst thou needed, as thou didst not, such a Creature as Man, to pay thee Service, and glorify thy Name, thou hadst no Need to seek thee such Subjects out of the Ruins of the Apostacy, who hadst the Residue of the Spirit, and couldst out of the Stones have raised up Children to *Abraham*.

Lord, what are the whole Race of Mankind, when thou sentest thine only Son out of thy Bosom, when thou gavest him to die for Sinners, but a Company of unprofitable Creatures ? Sin hath made them so : Creatures fallen short of thy Glory, having lost their primitive Perfection,

fection, and become viler than the Earth; Creatures that were up in Arms of Rebellion against thee, that had taken Part with thy great Enemy, and were resolutely set in the Way wherein they were bringing all the Dishonour to thy Name that they could? And whence is it that thou shouldest be at all this Cost to redeem such a Thing? A Creature for which there must be so much done afterwards, to make it fit for thy Service; a Creature on whom, after thou hast purchased him, and made him the Subject of thy Grace, thou must lay out so much of Pity and Patience; that was like to do thee so little Service, and to bring so much Dishonour to thee by his Folly, and Forgetfulness, and sinful Carriages; a Creature, which when thou comest to make the Offers of thy Love to it, and invite it to accept of and embrace thy Salvation, bad thee to depart, and refused to accept of thy Kindness; a Creature which chuseth lying Vanities rather than everlasting Mercies; a Creature that prefers a Lust before a Saviour; a Creature that, after Grace received, is full of Sin and Folly, and is ready to neglect Duty; that labour-eth of such wretched Infirmities; that needs fresh Pardon every Moment, that must be continually kept by almighty Power, or else it would fall off? Didst thou not know this Frame of ours? Wert thou mistaken in Man, and didst thou think, that he would prove better than thou findest him upon Trial? No, no,

Lord, help me to know my self, and that I may give the due Acknowledgment unto thy rich Grace; grant that I may now dwell in the Contemplation of what I am. Hide Pride from me. I cannot celebrate thy Love as I ought, unless I loath and abhor my self in Dust and Ashes. I was born into the World a Child of Wrath;

I lay wallowing in my Blood, when thou passedst by me; and saidst unto me *Live*; I was dead in Sins and Trespases when thou camest to quicken me; I was running away from thee when thou soughtest me up; hadst thou not then found me, I had never enquired after thee. Why didst thou pass by the whole Company of fallen Angels, and set thine Heart upon Man? I cannot but chew upon this with Wonder.

What am I better than *Cain*, than *Judas*, than the whole Number of reprobate Sinners, who shall never taste of this Mercy? Are there not those, to whom if thou hadst made those Offers which thou madest to me, that would have repented in Dust and Ashes, would have accepted of the first Call; whereas I rejected Thousands, and, if the Power of thy Grace had not been greater than my Resistance, I had to this Day stood out and refused thee? Lord, how many Millions of Sins, and those fearfully aggravated, have I accumulated, which Multitudes in the Place of everlasting Miseries were never guilty of? How sinful a Life do I lead? How dead and indisposed to that which is good? How prone and ready to that which is evil? How backward to perform, how apt to forget the Work of my Generation? How often do I grieve thine Holy Spirit, and give Affronts to him who hath sealed me to the Day of Redemption?

And wilt thou save such a Wretch as I am? May I believe and hope that I shall not perish, but have everlasting Life? Shall not this be an eternal Admiration? Will not Heaven ring for ever with the Acclamations of this Love? And shall not I now begin to celebrate this Praise? Lord, help mine Unbelief! Open these dim Eyes, that I may discern this Wonder; a Child of Wrath, made a
Subject

of the divine Love ! An Heir of Hell made an Heir of Salvation ! A worthless Sinner advanced into the Favour of the God of Heaven ? A condemned Caitiff, redeemed by the precious Blood of the Son of God ! A Bondslave of Satan, made a Servant of Jesus Christ ! A Rebel pardoned, and not only pardoned, but advanced into the Number of Children, married to the Son of God, and made a joint Heir with him in the Inheritance of Life !

Mine Heart fails me, I have no more Spirit left in me. Lord seal up this Love to me afresh ; give me some new Confirmation of it ; help me to lie low before thee, and yet strengthen me to hope in thy Grace ; and grant that I may be confirmed in thy Love, and may by it be enabled to walk more humbly with my God : And the more that I am enabled to apprehend, and be confirmed in that Love of God which passeth Knowledge, let me be the less in mine own Eyes, and assisted, with the greater Enlargedness of Heart, to pay the whole entire Acknowledgment of all mine Hopes, to the Praise of the Riches of the Glory of thy Grace.



M E D I T A T I O N, XXX.

On CHRIST'S glorious Exaltation.

Cannot too much contemplate the sorrowful
 I Life and Death of my precious Lord. I know
 this Solemnity is suited for the helping forward
 such a Contemplation: How shall I better en-
 gage my Love to Christ, and rouse it up, than by viewing
 of

his Love to me ? And how shall I know that but in the Effects of it ! And what higher Strains could he express his Love to me in, than in so dying for me ? Nor shall I better excite my Hatred of Sin, or render it more odious to my Tho'ts, than by viewing it in the Tragedy of my Lord's Sufferings. Yea, what a powerful Help to my Faith have I here, when, by seeing that he dared to die such a Death for me, I can strongly argue, that he who did not shun this, will not fail of doing all that remains to make me perfectly blessed ?

But yet I find that if I suffer my Tho'ts to tarry here, and look no farther, I am encountred with Temptations to doubt and fear, and call all in Question. The Mention of a Christ *crucified, is unto the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness.* If I follow him no farther than his Cross and Sepulchre, I am ready to say, *How shall this Man save me ?* I am told indeed that he suffered all this for my Sins, that by it he might satisfy offended Justice for my Sins, and atone a justly provoked God for me, and I cannot but love, admire, adore him who had such good Will for me, as to die the Just for the Unjust.

But how shall I know that he hath done this Matter to Effect ? That Justice is satisfied, that my Sins are answered for, and expiated, that God is pacified, and my Soul ransomed ? And what Good will his Benevolence do me, if the Thing be not accomplished ? If the Hand-writing which was out against me be not taken away ? If my Obligation to suffer Death stand still in Force, I am miserable and undone after all. If Justice still holds him its Prisoner, if the Bands of Death are not broken by him, I am surely where I was.

But

But Thanks be to God, who hath given me the Advantage to look forwards, and confirm my Faith in the Fulness of the Sufficiency of my great Undertaker, and to establish me in the Belief that he did not only engage or undertake, but that he hath gone thro' with and finished the great Work of my Redemption, and that the holy God is abundantly satisfied in it, when I contemplate his following *Exaltation*, and see after what a wonderful Manner he was acquitted and glorified. I am now standing in *Golgotha*, and looking upon him in his amazing Sorrows, combating with the Wrath of God, and undergoing the Weight of the Curse: But I am here invited to see this Jesus, for the suffering Death, *crowned with Glory and Honour*; and how refreshing a Sight is this?

Stand still then, Oh my Soul, and comfort thy self with this surprizing and ravishing Contemplation; here fix thy Foot, here establish thy Faith. I am sure that Jesus Christ stood in Suretiship, he bore these great Sorrows for Sins, and those none of his own, for he knew no Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth, yet was he arraigned at God's Bar, the Law charged Sin upon him, he was found guilty by Imputation, he bare the Penalty thereof, according to the Righteousness of the Law, nor would Justice bate him one Jot or Tittle of its Demands: In this State he died, under the Weight of the Sins of all his Elect. Justice had accepted of his Suretiship, and would therefore have its Satisfaction of him: Nor would it have accepted of him, if it had not known him to be solvent: And having seized him, it would not discharge him, till he had compleatly satisfied it.

But behold he is gotten out of its Hand, nor did he make his Escape by Flight, but he had a legal Discharge given

given him. Though he died, yet he *rose again*, and he rose in the same Quality in which he died, *viz.*, as a Surety. Nay, he not only rose, but *God raised him*, the same God who condemned Sin in his Sufferings, hath raised him; and would he have so done, had not the Debt been discharged? I am told by the Word of Truth, That it was not possible that he should be holden by Death; and why was it not possible? But because by Death he had fully done that which he died for. This Resurrection was his full Discharge; in it his Bonds were cancelled, he was declared to be the Son of God by his Resurrection. If Justice had not been fully answered by his Death, it would not have acquitted him, and set him at Liberty.

When I see him rising, I believe that he left all my Sins buried in his Grave. When I see, that *He who was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore*, all my Doubts about the Fulness and Acceptance of his One Sacrifice, are answered, and I am assured that he died not in vain; I am assured, that there is not One Sin that he undertook for, but he hath procured the Pardon of on account of his Redeemed; and I trust, that because he lives, I shall live also: And if there were no more but this, how may I corroborate my Faith by it? I find Emphasis in this, *Who shall condemn, it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again*: Not that his Death did not do the Thing for me; but his Resurrection is my great Help to confirm me in the Belief of it.

But when I look forward to the *remaining Steps of this Exaltation* of his, how abundantly am I confirmed and assured, that he is to be trusted in, and may safely be relied on, for Pardon, Peace, and Glory. When I follow him from his Resurrection to his *Ascension*
from

from Earth to Heaven, when I see that God hath not only released him, but entertained him in that blessed Place, and that the *Heavens have received Him* after all, and that still this is in Pursuit of his Mediation and Suretiship, I am ravished at the Sight because now I know that my Redeemer is Heaven's Favourite, He is entred there for me, he is gone as my Advocate, there to manage my Cause, and prepare a Place for my Entertainment, from whence I expect him, when he hath made it ready for me, and me for it, to come according to his Word, and fetch me thither. And yet am I farther transported, when I contemplate what *Entertainment* he hath found there, and what Honour is done to him in the Kingdom. And all this in Testimony of the Acceptance of his Death and Obedience : That, *because he made himself of no Reputation; and humbled himself to death, even the Death of the Cross, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name.*

When I see him to be sat *down at God's right Hand*, upon an exalted Throne, and made King on his holy Hill, and the Dispensation of all Things put into his Hands ; and him made Head over all Things for his Church, the Angels being subjected to him, and all Judgment devolved upon him ? I herein read how highly delighted the Father was in this Work of Redemption, and that from that Throne he will uncontrollibly dispense Salvation to all that believe in him for it, and dare to adventure my Soul for Eternity upon him. I here see my Redeemer thus glorified, and believe that it was for me too, because he hath promised, *That if I overcome, I shall sit down with him upon his Throne, who hath overcome, and is sat down with his Father upon his Throne.*

And

And I am farther confirmed in all this, when I consider the special *Employment* that my exalted Saviour is engaged in at his Father's right Hand, who having offered his Sacrifice at the brazen Altar, is now gone into the Holy of Holies, and hath carried the Memorial of it with him, and, in the Vertue of it, is pursuing the other Part of his priestly Office, in a *continued Intercession* for me, from whence I am taught strongly to conclude, that he is able to save me to the uttermost. When I consider, that he intercedes not as a Suppliant or a Beggar, but in Pursuit of the glorious Covenant of Redemption, and *challengeth* the Accomplishment of those sure Promises which were made to him in that Covenant, which he hath a Right to claim, because he hath done all that was required in order to his receiving them.

How am I comforted, that he not only will be faithful in managing my Cause, because he so loved me, and gave himself for me, but that his managing of it shall be effectual to impetrate for me all that I need; because I hear him saying, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me.* I am here satisfied that my Prayers shall be heard, my Follies shall be pardoned, my Imperfections covered, my poor Duties accepted, my Accusers answered, my Wants supplied, my Soul preserved unto eternal Life. Lord, help my Unbelief.

Oh, what a wonderful Sight is here? Open thou mine Eyes, that I may discern it; ratify my Faith that I may believe, establish mine Hope, that I may depend upon it: Give me, not only to believe these Things in general, but to be able to apply them to my self in particular, and from them to draw that Life, Strength, Vigour to my Soul,
 this

that may enable me to trust in thee for ever, and chearfully to serve my Generation to thy Praise. Let these Tho'ts take off the Prejudice of, and help to give the more kindly Operation to my Meditation on the Death and Sufferings of my Redeemer, and make them still to be the more precious to me; because as the Foundation of my Hope is laid in that Death of his, so the Confirmation of it is to be derived from his Exaltation.

Let me then be crucified with Christ, that I may live with him; let my Sins be laid in his Grave, that I may rise up together with him to heavenly Places; and let me here learn more patiently and chearfully to bear his Cross, that I may also wear a Crown of Glory with him. Make me willing to have Fellowship with him in his Death here, that I may be bro't at length to sit down with him in his Kingdom, and to enjoy the Glory which he is there, as my Forerunner, in Possession of for me.



M E D I T A T I O N, XXXI.

*On the Holiness and Righteousness
of God.*

THE first Thing that I have to contemplate in this Ordinance, is the unparallel'd Love of God in giving of his Son, and of Christ in giving of himself for me: And Oh that I could get up my stupid Heart into some lively Apprehensions of it. But there is something more of God, which it concerns

cerns me to be thoro'ly acquainted with, and much in the Contemplation of, for the right exercising of my Faith, and suitably affecting my self with the Greatness of the Kindness appearing in this whole Affair; and that is his *Holiness* and *Righteousness*. These Attributes of his discover themselves in all his Works of Efficiency; for God is *just in all his Ways, and holy in all his Doings*. But in nothing do they appear more oriently, than in the Contrivance and Accomplishment of our Redemption. The not considering and believing of this hath made Christ's Obedience so much undervalued among Men, and produced so many strange Opinions about it, which have made Christ neglected, and Men to be regardless of seeking to settle an Interest in him. Help me then, O Lord, to a right and serious Meditation on this Matter.

By the *Holiness* of God, I conceive *God concerned, and unchangeably bound for his own Glory in all his Works*. I conceive it to be an Attribute displayed in his Efficiency: And as he is infinitely wise, and so cannot but purpose to himself a worthy End in all that he doth, so he is the best of Beings, and having none superior to himself, he must need design his own Glory ultimately in all that he doth, and consequently, I apprehend him by this Attribute, to be a God resolutely set against all that is contrary to his own Glory. And because there is nothing that directly withstands it but *Sin*, hence this Attribute is peculiarly celebrated in his holy Word, as being engaged against *Sin*, and Sinners for it. On this Account he is said to be of *purser Eyes than to behold Evil, and he cannot abide Iniquity, that Fools shall not stand in his Sight, and that he hates all the Workers of Iniquity.*

God,

God, to display this Holiness of his peculiarly to the reasonable Creature, gave him an holy Law, requiring his entire Conformity thereto, which was to be the Holiness of Man: And God demanded it of him, in Imitation of his own Holiness, the Image whereof Man bare, and in this Regard, he hath said, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* And the special Nature of Sin, is a falling short of this Holiness, which renders the Sinner impure. God therefore, having engaged this Perfection of his in the Government of Causes by Counsel, displayeth it in the Witness that he bears, or Testimonies that he gives of his infinite Displeasure at Sin.

And tho' there be many Things wherein he hath exemplified it, to the just Astonishment of Sinners, and Warning of the World, yet it's greatest Splendor did appear, in his treating with the Lord Jesus Christ when he stood Surety for his Elect, and bare the Imputation or Guilt of their Sins upon him. Whereas he was in himself holy, and without any Blemish of Sin upon him, yet, because it was charged upon him, as he stood in the Room of Sinners, God spared him not, but made him to suffer the Effects of his holy Indignation at Sin, in undergoing the whole Curse that was out against it, and that, though he was his own Son, infinitely pleasing to him, yet he must be made a Monument in whom it is to be for ever read, *That Sin is the abominable Thing which God hates.* And here I have in my View, that Sight which may well astonish me, to see him who was the *holy One*, *Israel* thus suffering the fierce Wrath of God, and broken in pieces by the Efficacy of it, and pouring out of his Soul by the Sorrow that he underwent on this Account. I read it as written in red and capital Letters, **That GOD IS HOLY.** Look

Look then thy self into such Conclusions as these are : That Sin is a most vile Thing : That the Defilement of it hath made me justly odious to God : That if I am under the Guilt and Power of it, I cannot have Communion with God : That as long as any of this Impurity adheres to me, I am not capable of being admitted into the holy Place. Bring thy Sin then to be washed away at this Fountain, and so taken from thee. Learn here to love Holiness and hate Iniquity : Read here the Necessity of the interposing of the holy Jesus between God and thee, to make Way for thy Admittance into his favourable Presence, and never rest till thou art fully cleansed from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and art perfected in Holiness. Lord, help me at this Ordinance to be more engaged and strengthened in the Mortification of Sin, and Pursuit of Holiness in the rest of my Life ; nor let me hope to obtain thy Favour thro' Christ, if I allow my self to wallow in the Filth of Sin.

By the *Righteousness of God*, I conceive, *God inclined and set to do that which is right*. And as there is an universal Righteousness of his, which he exerciseth in his Government of the whole Creation, and every Part of it, so there is a *péculiar* Righteousness which he exerciseth toward *Man*, in that *special* Government under which he hath put him ; which was fixed in giving him a righteous Law to obey, every Command whereof is right ; and establishing of it with just Sanctions, wherein were contained the Terms on which Men stood with him. And herein he celebrates this relative Justice, and proceeding with Man according to these Terms ; and this is done by distributing of Rewards and Punishments, as Man should prove obedient or disobedient to it. Which Righteousness

ness of his stood engaged in the first Covenant, to punish Sin with Death.

And, as there have been eminent Displays of this Perfection of his, in the awful Judgments which he hath bro't upon Sinners, setting them forth as Monuments of his Justice, and giving solemn Warning to Others to beware of Sin, as a Thing exposing them to his righteous Severity; so he chose his *own Son*, standing in our stead as our Surety, to be a *peculiar Subject* in whom this Justice of his was to be manifested. Accordingly, when he found him standing in the Place of sinful Man, under the just Law, to answer for him, he ~~spared~~ *spared* him not, but arrested him, bro't him to the Bar, indicted and arraigned him, charged our Sin upon him, found him under the Guilt of it by Imputation, and Suretiship; and thereupon proceeded to condemn him to die, and executed this Sentence in full upon him: And, tho' he was his Fellow, yet he commanded his Sword to smite him, tho' he was his only begotten Son, the Son of his Love, a Son who ever did that which pleased him, and never gave him any Provocation against him; and tho' in our Nature, he prayed earnestly, and with Iteration, that the Cup, if possible, might pass from him, and did sweat gore Blood under the amazing Apprehension of it, yet he proceeded to smite him, and bated him of nothing which the Law had made the Demerit of Sin, as to the Essence of it. And if ever Justice sat in State, and displayed its Severity, and made it appear how dearly God loveth Righteousness, it was now, when all the Waves and Billows of the Wrath of God past over our precious Redeemer.

Here then I see in this broken and bleeding Saviour, a Mirror of Justice; and I am amazed at the Sight. I

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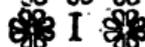
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here learn, that it is no easy or light Matter to sin against God. If it were thus done in the green Tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the Son of God underwent this inexorably, because Sin was imputed to him, how shall I appear before God in my Sins? What can I expect but Destruction from his Presence?

Here I see, that if he had not thus died for me, I must have died hopelessly, and he that made me, would have had no Mercy on me. Here I see that all my Safety is in having his Righteousness become mine to answer for me, which can only be by my being in him by Faith. Here I also see the Necessity of these Sufferings of his, and the absolute Dependance of my Salvation upon them. Lord, grant me then of thy Grace, that I may be found in him; that this Righteousness of his may cloath me as a Garment, that so I be not exposed naked to eternal Vengeance, Grant that I may now rejoice in this Saviour, who was holy and righteous, and may sing of thy Righteousness, even of thine, all the Day long.

MEDITATION, XXXII.

On the vile Nature of Sin.

 A M now going to celebrate the Remembrance of Christ's Death, but how shall I make this Remembrance serviceable to his Glory and my spiritual Profit? Certainly it must be by endeavouring, thro' his Grace, to improve the solemn Thoug

of it, to render him more precious to my Soul. And wherein can I do this better, than by contemplating of that which was the procuring Cause of this ignominious Death, and these bitter Sufferings of his? I am assured that this was *my Sin*.

If ever I taste any Sweetness in a dying Saviour, I must feel *Sin to be an evil and bitter Thing*. The End of Christ's dying was to take away Sin, for this he was made the Lamb that was to be offered, and burnt. I am called to mortify Sin, and am directed to bring it to his Cross for that End; and if ever I truly mortify it, I must see, and be duly affected with the Vileness of it: And where can I have a better Prospect of this, than in the View of what it cost him to take it away?

It is the Character of Fools, that *they make a Mock of Sin*, and because they see not the Terribleness of that, they see no Beauty or Excellency in Christ, nor account themselves to have any Need of him; and I find in mine own Heart such a Frame too ready to seize it; such light and such easy Resentments of Sin; so many Excuses, Extenuations, and Covers for it, so many Prejudices apt to arise in me against the holy Severity of God, and the awful Curses that are out against Sin, that damp my Affections to Christ, and so shut up and straiten my Bowels, that I cannot as I ought, set wide open the Doors of my Heart to let in the King of Glory.

And how shall I get this ill Frame removed? Lord, open mine Eyes, and give me a true Prospect of the sinfulness of Sin, and touch my Soul with a real Apprehension of it. And what better Rule can I have to make a right Judgment of it, than to take my Measure by those Discoveries which God hath made of the Esteem he hath of

it? I have an ignorant, erroneous, deceitful Heart, and if I lean to mine own Understanding in this, I am a Fool, and shall be imposed upon; but God is infinite in Knowledge, and judgeth righteous Judgment. And how shall I know what Tho'ts he hath of Sin, but by his *Word*, and by his *Works*.

When I look into his *Word*, I consider his Law, which is holy, just and good: Here I find him, in the Constitution of the first Covenant, threatning of Death in Case of Sin; and this Death to contain in it all the Miseries that the Creature is capable of sustaining, in Soul and Body, in Time, and thro' Eternity: I find the least Sin to be capital; and would God appoint so great a Penalty for a Thing of nought? No, I am told that this Death is but the Wages of Sin, it is but a due Retribution for it. I read of fearful Curses that are denounced by God himself, of a vast Roll that is written on both Sides with these Curses, and all upon the Account of Sin. And I must either accuse God of Ignorance or Cruelty, or say that Sin is an astonishing Evil. I find God declaring it to be the abominable Thing that he hates, and calling of Heaven and Earth to be astonished at it: And shall I think him misled with a preposterous Zeal in this? Or shall I not rather wonder at mine own Stupidity, that I am no more touched with it?

And when I look on the *Works* of God, I find that his Laws were not *Scare-Crows*, that his Threatnings were not *politick Stratagems* to keep Men in Awe, but Realities, and great Discoveries of his Holiness, and that he cannot endure *Sin*. When I look upon the *old World*, and see it laid in a Sea and Flood of Destruction, yea, the whole Earth unpeopled and made desolate, I find that the Reason of

of it was, because that *all Flesh had corrupted themselves, and their Iniquity was great upon the Earth.* When I gaze upon *Sodom*, and those other Cities, and see their Flame rising up to Heaven, and those flourishing Places turned into a sulphurious Lake, God raining Hell from Heaven upon them; I find that *the Cry of their Sin was very grievous.* When I look upon *Jerusalem*, and see her *coming down wonderfully*, and God's own Covenant-People, whom he had exalted to highest Favours, made the Monuments of his fiery Indignation; their Cities wasted without Inhabitant, and their Land turned into Brimstone, and Salt, and Burning; and enquire, What meaneth the Heat of this great Anger: I am told, *It was their Sin that procured it for them, because they had forsaken their GOD, and served other Gods.* And shall I ever think *Sin* to be a small Thing any more?

But I have here yet a *more amazing Mirrour* in the Providence of God about *Sin*, than all the rest; and that is, *The Lord Jesus Christ himself, the eternal Son of God, who being in the Form of God, and who tho't it no Robbery to be equal with God, yet humbled himself to the Death of the Cross;* and that his Father, who loved him, did not yet spare him, but made him to suffer the whole Weight of his Wrath: And what was this for, but because he had taken on him our *Sins*, by Way of Suretiship, and had subjected himself to the Law, and undertaken to answer for us? It was for *Sin* by *Imputation*, that he who had no *Sin* by *Adhesion*, bare the Indignation of the Lord, was made a Man of Sorrows, was forsaken of God, and tasted of the Bitterness of the whole Curse.

And can I any longer entertain any extenuating Tho'ts of this vile Thing? Would God have punished *Sin* in his

own Son for a Compliment? Would he not have spared him, who never displeased him, if the Guilt of *Sin*, which he took upon him, could have been in any other Way expiated? Could not his Eyes, and Tears, and bloody Sweat, prevail that this Cup might pass? And was all this a Comedy? Certainly it is not possible that a more clear Mirrour can be found, to represent *Sin* as the most vile and loathsome Thing: Certainly a less Price might have been found for it, if such an one could have expiated it.

Surely then, if I would crucify my Affections to *Sin*, and make it really and deeply odious to me, I am now going to have such a Sight and Representation of it, as is most proper to this End, and Oh that I may have mine Heart duly affected with it. I here see what must needs have become of me for ever, if Christ had not interposed for me; if God spared not him standing for me, I am sure he would not have spared me, standing on mine own Account; I had died and perished for ever. If it were done thus in a green Tree, what had become of me a dry one? I must have been made Fuel for the Flames of God's fiery Indignation eternally. It was my *Sin* that made it necessary that he should suffer all this Misery.

What Love can sufficiently express my Gratitude to him, that he would, in such an Hour of Necessity, when I was going to Perdition, and there was no other Hope to escape, step in, and bear the Blow upon himself, that so it might not fall upon me, and cut me off? And shall I ever again while I live think *Sin* to be a little Thing, and afford it any Retirement or Hiding in my Soul? God forbid: No, I will loath my self as long as there remains ought of it in me, I will pursue it to Death.

Lord,

Lord, kindle this Resolution into a Flame, and keep it in the Purpose of mine Heart as long as I live. Give me then the Tokens of thy Presence with me, in my Communion with thee at thy Table, that I may there have such a Sight of my Sin, as may make me to come away, more humbled for, more engaged against it, and filled with more Bitterness and godly Sorrow by reason of it.



MEDITATION, XXXIII.

On the Loveliness of CHRIST.


 S not this *Sacrament* appointed to be a Medium of Communion between Christ and his Spouse? Is it not for the expressing of their mutual conjugal Love to each other? And how shall I express my Love unto him better, than by taking a View of, and affecting mine Heart with his Amiability? Have I fixed my Choice upon him, and rejected all other Lovers for him? And shall I not be able to give a Reason of this Choice of mine? Can I indeed love him, and fix the Eyes of my Mind in Contemplation of him? And can I gaze upon him, and not be ravish'd at the Contemplation of his transcendent Excellencies, and count him the *Chief of Ten Thousands*? If I truly believe on him, he is Preciousness it self unto me. Surely then I must be able to tell what it is that makes him so.

Faith is not a Fancy, divine Love is not a brutish Affection, but most highly rational. I find that the Spouse,

when he was withdrawn, and she could not find him, had yet such an Idea of him formed and fixed on her Mind, that she could describe him from Head to Foot, and give a Character of him in his unparallel'd Beauties, and Sum up all in that comprehensive Encomium, *He is altogether lovely*: And shall not I do as much when he shews himself to me, and appears in his Glory before me? Certainly my Love to him will move in some Proportion to the Impression that I have on my Mind of his Loveliness.

Lord, unveil mine Eyes, guide my Contemplation, enable me to look my self into Extacy, by the View of thine admirable and adorable Perfections. A carnal Mind can see nothing desirable, much less ravishing in thee; no Form or Comeliness for which it should desire thee; and for this Reason it despiseth thee, because these Things are spiritually discerned. Give me then a spiritual Eye-sight, then shall I see a most surprizing Comeliness in those Things, which a vain World entertain with the greatest Contempt.

Loveliness in an Object is, whatsoever in it renders it attractive of the Love of those that contemplate it, and when there is nothing in it but what is so attractive, then it is altogether lovely. Such an one is he whom I have chosen for my Beloved, and to whom I have consecrated my Heart, and given my self in an everlasting Covenant. Nor am I ashamed of this my Choice, or see the least Reason to repent of, or retract it. Let an ignorant World call it Fancy, and mock me for it, I care not. I dare bid a Challenge to all Despisers of Christ, and Doters on the fading Beauties and Excellencies of Creatures, to shew me such another Beloved as mine, when they have ransacked Heaven and Earth to find one. *As the Apple-tree among*

among the Trees of the Wood, so is my Beloved among the Sows. I have seen an End of all created Perfection, but I cannot discover the one Half of the amiable Excellencies of Christ. The more I view other Things, the more am I made to see their Emptiness, and am weaned from them, and see mine egregious Folly in the Exorbitancy of that Love which I sometimes had for them : But the more I search into the Mystery of Christ the more am I surprized, and made to see how rightly his Name is called *Wonderful*.

Recollect thy Tho't now, Oh my Soul, and let *my Heart set it self to indite good Matter concerning the King* : Think whom it is thou art now going forth to meet, and have Fellowship withal, that thou mayest entertain him with the most enlarged Expressions of an overflowing Love. Doth he not deserve it ? Is not his Loveliness more than Words can form into suitable Expressions, or Tho'ts digest into Conceptions worthy of him ?

Is there any Attractive in *Beauty*, doth not the World acknowledge that there are Charms in it ? And how doth it command and enflame the Affections of Men ? But there is no Beauty like his, *He is white and ruddy, he is fairer than the Sons of Men*, there is nothing in him but what is Excellent ; there is no Spot or Blemish upon him.

Is there any Desireableness in *Nobility* ? Doth not Grandeur among Men command Affections, and dazzle the Eyes of Mortals ? Behold, *He is the only Potentate, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords : He is the eternal Son of God, the Governour of the whole Creation, all the Angels of Heaven do worship him, and every Knee shall bow before him.*

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Are not *good Conditions* the Motives of Love? Yea, indeed, Men that are acted by Reason, prefer them before all out-side Ornaments: A good and kind Nature may be called, *Amor et deliciae generis Humani*: And never was there any comparable to him for this, *He was meek and lowly*; *Grace was poured forth on his Lips, never Man spake as he did*, never any condescended as he did, his whole Life was spent in *doing Good*. Will *Wisdom* commend any to be loved? He is the *Wisdom of God*; his Carriages and Managements of the whole Affair lying on his Hand, are ordered with the greatest Prudence; nor was he ever chargeable with the least Folly. Will *Wealth* bespeak a Room for any? He indeed became poor in his Humiliation, that he might make us rich, but that cannot discommend him to our Affections: However, He is *Lord of the whole World*, all that is in Heaven or Earth is at his Dispose, and he will entitle all those to it that accept of him, and are married to him.

But, when to all that hath been mentioned, or whatsoever more might be tho't of, there is added the Consideration of *the Love that he hath shewn to thee*, thou must needs say, That there is none that can possibly deserve thy Love like him, or appear equally amiable unto thee. I confess, Love without other Qualifications, will not command Love, but oftentimes draw Contempt; but the Love of Christ, *the Height and Depth, the Length and Breadth whereof surpasseth Knowledge*, is a Thing which commends him to the Love of the Children of Men: Nor is there any Thing that carrieth a like Force to command thy Love to him, as the Contemplation of it.

That this glorious Person had a Love for thee a *Worm*, a *Sinner*; and that he entertained such a Respect for thee,

as to undertake thy Redemption, and be willing to die for thee, that he might enjoy thee ; that he took thy Nature upon him, that so he might be thy Saviour ; that he came a wooing to thee, after he had paid the Price of thy Redemption ; that he made the most condescending Offers to thee, that he bore with thy unworthy Carriages to him, that he waited on thee with such Patience, that he left thee not notwithstanding thy Frowardness, and all the Contumely thou offeredst to him, that he put his Spirit upon thee, and adorned thee with the Adornings of his Grace, that he hath put his Name upon thee, and condescends to hold intimate Communion with thee, and is gone to prepare a Place wherein to give thee everlasting Entertainment in his Embraces, and hath promised to come and fetch thee thither ere long.

But thou art at a Loss, nor canst possibly know what he hath done for thee, till thou shalt come to the full Enjoyment of it in the Kingdom. Look on him now as such a Saviour, and if he be indeed such an one to thee, it will, it cannot but make thee to rejoice in his Presence, and delight thy self in his Company, and long for the Time when the *Glass* shall be done withal, and taken away, and thou shalt see him *Face to Face*.



MEDITATION,





MEDITATION, XXXIV.

On the Exercise of Faith.


I AM now come to a Table, where I find the Provision set upon it, is suited for the Relief and Support of the Body ; and I have bro't these bodily Organs with me, that are adapted to receive and improve them to that End : And if this were all, it were easily done. But I am told of a *Feast of fat Things, and of Wines on the Lees ; of a royal and costly Banquet*, and Provision made that is of more Worth and Excellency, than the most magnificent Feasts that ever were kept ; of *Meat indeed*, and of *Drink indeed*, that will nourish, revive, quicken and strengthen the Soul, and confer eternal Life upon it, and preserve Grace in Life and Vigour unto eternal Glory : And is all this contained under a Morsel of Bread, and a Cup of Wine ? And is the receiving, eating and drinking of it that which derives the Vertue of it to the Soul ! Certainly there is a Mystery in it which the World knows not, and the Ignorance of it must needs prejudice a Capernaite.

I am satisfied that here is *spiritual Meat*, and *spiritual Drink* offered to me, and then I am sure that it requires of me a *spiritual Eating and Drinking*, if I hope to receive this wondrous Benefit by it ; and how can that be but by the Exercise of Faith ? Which Faith in itself answers to all the bodily Organs which are employed ; and in the Exercise of it, answers all the bodily Actions in receiving and improving

improving of the sacramental Elements here exhibited. One great End therefore of this Ordinance is to strengthen my Faith, which, as it must receive Strength from Christ, who is the Life of it, so it must derive it to me, by the fresh and lively actings of it upon him, in which alone I can expect to enjoy Communion with him, so as to participate in the Vertue which derives only from him.

Lord, help my Unbelief! I have hoped that I have been made to partake in the Grace of Faith, thro' the mighty Operation of thy Spirit on and in me; grant that I be not mistaken in this Hope; for how can I exercise the Grace that I have not? Without this all my Confidences will be Presumptions, and the greater they are, the more effectual is the Delusion. But I am sensible, that tho' I have Faith, yet I cannot exercise it so as I ought, unless thou please to set a second Hand to it, for without thee I can do nothing.

Grant Lord, that the *Eye of my Faith* may be cleared, that I may discern the Body of my Lord, and apprehend that Christ is here indeed; that this Bread is his Body, and that this Wine is his Blood, that he himself is the Feast, as well as the Feast-maker. I expect him not to be here corporeally present by an impossible Transmutation, under the Species of Bread and Wine, but I crave that I may be able to say, that he is here in Truth, by the real and saving Influence of his active and passive Obedience on my Soul, to communicate to it all the Blessings of the New-Covenant, which are sealed in his Blood. Quicken and invigorate my *spiritual Taste of Faith*, that I may be able to relish, and so to experience that he is good, and see that Vertue deriving from him to me, which none else but he can do, which may render him sweeter

sweeter and more precious to me than ten thousand Worlds. Envigorate my *spiritual Digestion*, that I may feel all that Life and Strength coming in, whereby I may be helped to run the Way of thy Commandments with renewed Force and Alacrity. Corroborate my Faith, that I may now glorify thee by the Exercise of it, more than ever I have done heretofore. Let my Trust in thee be more stable, my Dependance on thee more confirmed, my Obedience of Faith made more even, resolute and constant. Help thou my Faith now to break forth in its more vigorous Actings upon thee.

I come to thee as to the Well-spring and Fountain of Grace and Glory, and all that is good. I have found nothing but Vanity and Vexation in the World, nothing but Husks instead of Bread, I have forsaken these lying Vanities, and resolve by thy Help, never to go to them any more: Lo I come to thee, and promise my self better Entertainment. Lord, I expect to find that in and from thee, which I have sought in vain elsewhere. I believe that there is all Fulness of Sufficiency in thee, enough and more than enough, to answer all the Cravings of this Soul of mine: I come for it, and I wait upon thee to make me the happy Partaker in it. I believe that thou canst do more for me than I can ask or think, withhold not from me any good Thing which thou knowest is proper for me.

I see enough in my Lord Christ, to make me happy now and for ever; I depend upon thee for it, thy Promises are full, and my Soul relies upon them; I have taken thee at thy Word; I have called thee my Portion and my Salvation: Thou hast bidden me to ask what I want, and hast told me that if I ask I shall receive; only thou

thou requirest me to ask in Faith : My Wants are great, but thy Fullness of Sufficiency is greater, help me to refer all my Wants thereto, and leave them upon it. When I consider thee to be as willing as able, and faithful to thy Word ; and as thou hast enabled me to hope in thy Word, I resolve that here is enough, and that I will trust in thee for ever.

It is now a good Day ; and methinks I hear thee saying to me, What is thy Petition ? and it shall be granted thee : They are great Things that I have to ask, and great is my Unworthiness, which would offer to discourage me, but I believe thy Salvation is great, and the Worthiness of my Redeemer will over-balance all my Unworthiness, I believe, Lord ! therefore do I speak ; I know that my Sins are great and innumerable, but thy One Sacrifice can purge them all away ; thy Blood can cleanse me from them all ; there is Forgiveness with thee, I adventure my self upon it, I embrace thy Righteousness, even thine alone.

I want Abundance to make me happy, I despair of it in the World, tho' I could gain it all ; but I believe that all they are perfectly blessed, whose Portion thou art ; I have chosen thee to be mine, and renew my Choice, and say, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? And there is nothing on Earth that I desire with thee.* I bring nothing with me to merit it, I depend upon thy free Grace to bestow it, and come to have this Dependance of mine made more unswaying.

I have a great Work to do in thy Service, and in the working out of my Salvation ; and I find that I can do nothing of my self ; but thou hast said, *That my Fruit is found in thee, and that thou wilt work my Works in me and for*

for me: I embrace this Promise with all mine Heart, and resolve to go forth in the Strength of it.

I find all, even my best Duties to come short, and to have enough in them to condemn me, and that without Faith, referring to thy Incense, they cannot be accepted; I fly from them to thee, and expect in no other Way, that any Thing of mine, should be of a sweet Savour in thy Nostrils, Oh my God!

I have great and potent Adversaries to grapple withal, that seek to devour me, and they are too sly and too strong for me, neither do I know what to do, but mine Eyes are to thee: I now come to thee to have Courage given to my Faith, that I may resolutely withstand and get the Victory over them.

Lord, my Foolishness is not hidden from thee; I have many and daily sinful Infirmities, and sometimes I fall into grievous Neglects of Duty, and Transgressions of thy holy Command; and I feel Wounds and Bitterness on Account of them, and I cannot recover my self; I can make no Satisfaction to thy Justice, nor yet heal up the Wounds thus made; but I cry, *Heal me, for I have sinned against thee.* And I would believe for the healing Vertue of thy Spirit to be applied to me.

Lord, all the Good I hope for, for Time and Eternity, depends on thy free Grace: This Ordinance is a Seal of that Covenant, in which a sure Title to it is conveyed to thy Children; and to be improved for the further Confirmation of their Faith in thee; I have been assaulted with Doubts and Fears from Satan and a misgiving Heart, I come now for a new Sealing by thy Spirit, and humbly beseech thee, that thou wilt enable me by a lively Faith to receive at thy Hands, the Sealing and Confirmation of all

all that Good to me, which was purchased for me by my dear Lord, at this great Price which is now set in my View, that so I may gather Consolation against all that would shake or undermine my holy Confidence, and be enabled to glorify thee for so rich a Favour freely communicated to me.

MEDITATION, XXXV.

On the acting of Love.

T is a fearful Word, 1 Cor. 16. 22. *If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.* Nor was it a rash Imprecation of the Apostle's, but a solemn Dictate of the Spirit of God; and indeed it is highly rational: As to those who never heard of him, it is impossible that they should love him, and this very Thing holds them under a destroying Curse. But in Regard to those to whom he hath been published, and Salvation by him hath been offered, if they do not love him, yea so love him as to make Choice of him, and part with all for him, and devote themselves everlastingly to him, needs must these render themselves guilty of despising the Lord of Glory, and thereby expose themselves to yet more tremendous Curses.

Shall the Son of God discover so much Good-will to miserable and undone Mankind, as to take the Curse of Sin upon him, and put himself between the Wrath of

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God, and sinful Man who had fallen under it, wherein he bore all the unconceivable Miseries contained in the Death that was threatned, and then come and strive with them by his Spirit to entertain him, send gracious Messages to them, inviting them with utmost Importunity to accept of him to be their Saviour, and tending to make them rich and happy with all the Benefits of his Purchase, and not be loved, and accepted with great Willingness? How prodigious Ingratitude is this, and what horrid Contempt is cast upon him by it?

And how shall such hope to escape the Damnation of Hell? And for Men to pretend to embrace him, and by an outward Profession to give themselves up to him in the Gospel-Covenant, and in the mean while keep back their Hearts, and Love from him, and bestow them upon other Lovers, and secretly dally with them, whiles with their Lips they shew much Love to him, cannot but be highly provoking to the Heart-searching God, who cannot be imposed upon; and against such is this *Anathema* more peculiarly fulminated. Infinitely then doth it concern me, who have made such a Profession, to enquire and know whether my Heart be right with him. I may gain the Reputation of Men, and cheat mine own Soul, but him I cannot impose upon: I dread the Sentence that such Pretenders will one Day be unexpectedly entertained withal, *I never knew you, depart from me all you workers of Iniquity.*

Lord, search me and try me, lay me open to my Conscience on this Account: Yea, say, Oh my Soul, hast thou tasted that the Lord is gracious? And dost thou not love him? Hast thou known what it is to be ransomed from Destruction, and entitled to a Crown of Life, and Kingdom

Kingdom of Glory? And who was it that did this for thee, and what it cost him to bring it about? And dost thou not love him? If thou hast any Spark of this divine Love in thee, can it lie still, and not burn and blaze up when thou comest to celebrate the Remembrance of his infinite Love to thee, in this sacred Ordinance? Surely if there be any of this holy Fire on the Altar of mine Heart, it will discover it self in reciprocal Ardours, when he thus comes to bestow his Love upon thee.

Rouse then, Oh dull and dead Soul! Be fixed, Oh thou wandering Heart! Thy Lord Redeemer invites thee into his Chambers, and offers to spread his Banner of Love over thee. Thou art come to sit down at the Table with the King; hearken how he caresseth thee, what choice Viands he hath provided for thee, purchased at no less Price than his own Blood; with what kind Compellations he entertains thee, *My Sister, my Spouse, my well-beloved One*: How heartily he invites thee, *Eat O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Well-Beloved*. And are not these Soul-melting, Heart-refreshing Carriages? And what more doth he require of thee, or what other Returns doth he expect from thee, but that thou love him? This is all the Acknowledgment that he expects, this is all the Requital that he looks for.

Metinks I hear thee, dearest Saviour! accosting of me, as once thou didst *Peter, Lovest thou me more than these?* Grant that I may, with as much Truth; return the Answer, *Lord, Thou knowest all Things, thou knowest that I love thee*. And Lord! that I may now approve mine Integrity of Affection to thee; how happy shall I be? I have a treacherous Party in me, an old Man that loves thee not; I am pestered with a Body of Death, that

hinders the Expressions of my Love to thee, and is ever dragging of me to such Things as are ill Requitals of that wonderful Kindness of thine whereof I have been made to partake : But I loath them, and my self for them, I abhor my self in Dust and Ashes on the Account of them.

Thou hast asked mine Heart of me, and I have given it to thee ; I am no more mine own, but thine ; and I resolve never to revoke this Alienation. I have sometimes followed other Lovers, but I have now rejected them, and given them a Bill of Divorce, and will by thy Grace, never return to them more. I have made an absolute Choice of thee, to be mine only Lord and Saviour, and I am fully resolved, never to make mention of any other Name. I have seen an End of all created Perfection, and there is nothing in all the Things in this World, for which they are to be desired ; but I have discovered all Fulness to dwell in thee ; thou art all Desires, every Thing that is lovely ; who then should have mine Heart but thy self ? And who can deserve it as thou dost ? Thou hast been mine only Friend when I had none else, when my Father, my Mother forsook me, thou tookest me up ; when there was no Eye that did so much as pity me, then didst thou cast an Eye upon me, and saidst to me live : When there was no Help to be had in Heaven or Earth, among all second Beings, thou didst afford Succour to my Soul, and how can I but love thee ?

And now Lord, I come into thy Presence ashamed that I have no more shewn this Love of mine to thee ; that I have done any Thing that hath grieved thy good Spirit, that I have been no more solicitous for thine Honour, that I have done no more for thee, that thy Name hath been no more precious to me, that I am so apt practically

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to deny thee, that Communion with thee hath been no more sweet and satisfying to me : Lord, grant me this Request, that I may love thee with all my Heart and Soul : that I may find no Satisfaction in any Thing else in Heaven or Earth, but in thee ; that I may, in Fellowship with thee, be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness ; that a Sight of thee may kill all mine exorbitant Affections to any created Being, that thy Love may be enough to me, and I may not envy but pity the miserable Children of Men, who have nothing but the Creature to give their Hearts unto.

Lord, I now again, with renewed Resolution, repeat mine indissoluble and everlasting Engagements to thee, and beg that thy Spirit in me may seal and ratify it for ever : That I am thine and acknowledge no other Proprietor, that thou art to me the chief of ten Thousands, that I confess mine infinite Obligations to thee, that thou hast loved me, and shall I not love thee ? All mine Hope to escape eternal Destruction, and enjoy Life everlasting derives from thy free Redemption ; thou hast bought me with a Price, and I have nothing to do but to glorify thee ; I love thy Law, because it is thine ; I delight to serve thee : My Service is very poor, but if thou accept it, and testify to that Acceptance, it is my greatest Satisfaction ; I count it more honourable to be thy Servant, than to command the whole World ; my Soul's Desire is, that thy Commandments may never be grievous to me, and I trust, that I delight in them after the inward Man : I resolve, that it is a Glory to suffer Reproach for thy Name, and purpose to follow thee, wheresoever thou goest.

Lord, I come to thy Table, an unworthy Guest in my self, let me be worthy in thee : Now let me see thy Face, and receive thine Embraces, and I will set my Seal to it, that such a Day in thine House, is better than a Thousand else-where. Let all Creature-Comforts fail me, let the World hate me, let the Trials of this Life assail me, let me but go thro' the Wilderness leaning on my Beloved, and it is enough, I am satisfied in it, till I come to lodge in thy Bosom thro' eternal Ages.



MEDITATION, XXXVI.

Imbittering of Sin.

OW shall I come to this Table, at which I am feasted and made welcome by my Lord Redeemer, and not remember my Faults, and make Mention of them before him? I find that *Israel* of old were to eat the Passover with *bitter Herbs*, which doubtless was to raise in them a Sense of their fore Bondage, whiles they celebrated the Pledge of their Deliverance : Nor can I rightly partake in this blessed Communion with Christ, unless I mix my Joy in the Hope of his Salvation, with true Mourning for Sin. I find this Difference between Earth and Heaven ; there I shall enjoy a perfect Serenity, and no Cloud shall ever arise to intercept or obscure my full gazing on the Sun of Righteousness ; whereas now, I can have no Harvest, except I meet with Showers as well as Shines to ripen it. I must
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low in Tears, if I will reap in Joy. Nor can I duly and suitably express my Love to my Saviour, except I fortify it with the Exercise of Hatred of Sin, and Self-loathing for it; which that I may do, it becomes me to resent it as an evil and bitter Thing.

And where shall I have a fairer Occasion for, or more powerful Incentives to such an Exercise than at this Table? Whither should I go to make my Sin appear to me the hateful Thing, and fill my Soul with the deepest Sorrow for it, but to *Golgotha*? I am sure that if Christ hath been indeed made precious to me, the Sight of him in his bitter Sufferings, must fill me with the greatest Detestation of my Sins, and give the most effectual Stroke to the mortifying of every carnal Lust that is within me. Nor can I find any Place so fit to crucify my Corruptions, as on the Cross of Christ. I can look no Way with a spiritual Eye on my Sin, but I discover enough to make it a Burden to me, and render me weary of it.

If I consider the *evil Nature* of it, and believe it to be as the Word of God hath discovered it, I must needs cry out by Reason of it, *Behold I am vile!* It is a Rebellion against that God who gave me a Being, and made me for his Service; and how horrible is this? It carries in it the most unreasonable Ingratitude; it hath robbed me of my primitive Excellency, and stript me of the glorious Image of God, which once was my greatest Ornament; it hath turned my Silver into Dross, my Wine into Water; it hath made me an unprofitable Creature, and reduced me to a Lump of Vanity; it hath emptied me of all that is truly good, and filled me with the worst of Evils; it hath turned my Love to God into Hatred; made me of a Subject, a Traytor, and a Slave of Satan, instead of a Servant of God.

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When I proceed to view it in its *dismal Effects*, how terrible a Representation of it is here made to me? This is it that hath turned me out of Paradise, and made me a Vagabond in the Earth, that hath broken the League between God and me, and made him of a Father and a Friend to become an Enemy; that hath separated me from him, and removed me from dwelling by the Fountain of living Waters, and set me down by broken Cisterns that can hold no Water; that hath shut up Heaven's Doors against me, and opened Hell to receive me, that hath pulled down on my Head all the Curses written in the Book of God, and made my Portion, and hath left me impotent to any Thing that is good, and desperately set on that which is evil; that hath bro't on me all the Miseries of this Life, and exposed me to the fiery Indignation of God, and a fearful Expectation of its falling upon me every Day: That, in a Word, hath left me every Way miserable, and in my self hopelessly so. And is all this the genuine Effect of Sin, and must I not be worse than infatuated, if henceforth I can relish any Sweetness in it?

But when I do here look upon *my crucified Saviour*, and behold him in all his *bitter Sufferings*, as he is here represented to me, in his broken Body, and his effused Blood; methinks I have not only all the Promises bro't fresh to my Remembrance, but there are yet more melting and heart-affecting Arguments which flow here-from, to fill me with bitter bewailing of my self for my Sins, and dissolve me into Tears by Reason of them.

Come then, Oh my Soul, contemplate a crucified Christ, till thou hast looked thy self into the greatest Rage against thy Sins; and look not off till thou hast put thy Hatred of Sin into a Paroxysm; and, by giving it fresh Wounds,

Wounds, hast furthered the Mortification of it, and thereby a new enflamed thy Love to him who came to redeem thee from it. I will not say, with one of the Ancients, *Oh happy Sin, that hast procured such a Saviour* ; but I must cry out, *Oh wretched Sin, that gavest Occasion for all those bitter Sufferings which beset the Lord of Glory* ; nor shall my great Thankfulness to Christ for his Undertaking to go thro' all this for me, make me to forget the Consideration of the Vileness of my Sin, that procured it, but enhance it, and put the greater Emphasis upon it.

I am here confirmed in the Belief of all the Evil which the Word of God tells me there is in it, else it would never have bro't all those Miseries on the Son of God, when he stood under the Imputation of it : And I am astonished at the Sight of it, and how doth my Heart rise and boil with Indignation, when I look upon a bleeding and dying Saviour, under the Effects of the divine Displeasure, and consider, this was procured by Sin ; this was it that bro't him into this debased Estate, and made him a Curse, and nailed him to his Cross ? Mine Eye affects my Heart, and I cannot endure my self, when I think that the Consideration of these Things makes no deeper Impression upon me : If Sin were more bitter, Christ would be more sweet to me, my Love to him would hold Proportion with mine Hatred of that.

Lord, help me then in this, let me look on my Sins with this Reflection, and *charge home* this Consideration upon them. Seest thou not, my Soul, how thy Saviour was handled ? It was *thy Sin* that did all this, hadst thou not sinned, he had not thus suffered ; it was this that put him into the Hand of revenging Justice, that condemned him to die, that fastned him to the Cross, that procured him all those

those bitter Things, the cursed Scorns and Reproaches of Men and Devils, the divine Desertions, the bitter Agony, the ignominious Death. See what thou hast done, and canst thou love that Sin any more, or entertain one favourable Thought of it? Let it not be. Abhor thy self in Dust and Ashes for this, let this make thee to go softly as long as thou livest: Mourn not for Christ, but bless God for him; thou hadst perished, if he had not thus suffered; but mourn for thy self who hast procured this.

And now, when thou art come to remember his Love to thee, let the Consideration of the Vileness of Sin, encrease thy Admiration at it, that ever he should have one Thought of Good-will to a Creature whom Sin had made so detestable; and now fortify thy self unto the more vigorous Prosecution of the Mortification of Sin, so long as thou hast a Day to live in this World. Make Darts of the Cross of Christ to thrust into the Heart of every Lust that remains alive in thee, to hasten the Death of it; look upon every Sin in the Temptation of it with that hateful Tho't, This is it that killed my Lord, and shall I lay that Murderer in my Bosom, or hug that Lust in mine Heart, which was the Death of my most precious Redeemer? God forbid.

With this kill every Motion of Lust in the first stirring of it; when Satan and wicked Men tempt thee, and thou beginnest to be tickled with their Insinuations, look upon Christ on the Cross, and so act: say, shall I so requite him for his incomparable Love to me? Did he die for my Sin, and shall Sin live any longer in me? Shall I so despise that precious Blood? Let the very Tho'ts of it raise Abhorrence in thee. And if at any Time thou art imposed on and snared by the Deceitfulness of Sin, come hither and refresh

refresh thy bitter Sorrow and soaking Repentance, with the Contemplation of Christ's Death: Let this fill thee with Indignation against thy self, and make thee an Abhorrence to thy self, and establish thy Resolutions thereby, to a more watchful and circumspect looking to thy self, and flying from all the Allurements of Sin: And let this holy Ordinance establish thee in these Resolutions.



M E D I T A T I O N, XXXVII.

*Complaints of Deadness and
Indisposition.*

WHAT aileth this dull and heavy Heart of mine? What a Stupidity, what a Lethergy is here grown upon me? Where are my spiritual Senses? Are they all benumbed at once? What is befallen all the Members of the new Man in me, that there is no getting of them to stir? Have I any Grace? Are there any of the Fruits of the Spirit in me? Or have I deceived my self, and taken up with a Resemblance instead of the Substance? Were they more than Pictures or Images, surely there would be some Life and Breath to be found in them. Is it not the Voice of my Beloved? Do I not hear him, with the most insinuating Compellations, inviting me to his Table, bidding me to come, for all Things are ready; telling me what he hath done, what rich Provision he hath made to give me the

the most welcome Entertainment at the Feast of fat Things that he hath made ready ?

But how sluggish and backward am I to receive the Invitation ? How far from being able to say, *Mine Heart is prepared, Ob Lord, mine Heart is prepared ?* What heavy Chains are these that fetter mine Hands and my Feet ? What a Weight lies upon me and keeps me down, that I know not how to stir ?

Where is that *Faith* that I sometimes tho't carried me out to Christ alone, as the only Object of my Trust and Reliance, whereas I now can hardly, and but very faintly say, Lord help my Unbelief ? Have I found some other Object of Trust to put my Confidence in ?

Where is that *Love* which sometimes entertained such a precious Esteem for Christ ; that valued him the Chief of ten Thousands, and altogether lovely, that made me never to think my self well, but when in his Embraces, and could look upon every other Thing with Scorn, in Comparison of him, and esteem every Thing in Heaven and Earth not worthy of my Affection ? Have I found out another Beloved ? Is there any Thing else that I have a greater Value for, and count more worthy of my Heart than he ?

Where are those *Desires* that made me to long for Communion with him, and restless in following after him ; that made me to cry out, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? And there is nothing upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of thee ?* That made me to faint in his Absence, and to adventure thro' all Hardships in Quest of him ; that now I can sit still and quiet, and not miss him ? Nay, tho' he accosts me with his charming Allurements, I can give him that

that idle Answer, *I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my Feet, how shall I defile them?*

Where is that *Hope* that was wont to wing my Soul, and carry me into his Presence with raised Expectations that in it I should be *satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness*, that I am now so flat and indifferent, as if I reckoned upon no Advantage in drawing near to him?

Where is the *Joy* that sometimes ravished me, and put me into those Transports, that I reckoned my self happy indeed when the King invited me into his Chambers: That made me to forget all my Toil and Travail, to account my self to be in Heaven upon Earth, and cry out, *It is good being here?* Have I lighted upon something else to solace my self withal, that is more delectable to me than he is?

Where is that *godly Sorrow for Sin*, that carried me into his Presence with bemoaning my self, and bewailing my Folly, and with which I could weep out my Repentances into his Bosom, and so receive from him his Consolations? Doth Sin cease to be the evil and bitter Thing, or have I none left in me to complain of to him? How comes this lamentable Change?

Is Christ become another than he was? Is he not as worthy in himself, as glorious in all his Perfections, as necessary for me as ever? Or must I not call mine own Heart to an Account for this? *It is I, it is I* that am to blame, it is my Foolishness, my Carnality, my Inconstancy, that hath brought this ill Frame upon me? and doubtless his Spirit is not a little grieved to observe it in me. I am sensible that it is an Effect of his withdrawing from me, but I dare not to complain of his doing me an Injury by it; no, no, it is I that have provoked him to this; I gave
him

him the Occasion, and now I desire to smite on my Thigh and say, *What have I done?*

Thou Lord art righteous, but I beseech thee to shew me wherefore thou thus contendest with me: And come thou deceitful and treacherous Heart of mine; I summon thee to stand forth and give Glory to God, and make Confession: Where hast thou been? What hast thou been doing? What Narcotick, what stupifying Potion hast thou taken, that has thus all over benumbed thee and scarce left any spiritual Sense or Motion in thee? Thou hast been imposed on by some deceitful Lust; thou hast been entangled by some of the Snares and Devices of the Adversary.

The *World* hath some Way or other insinuated into thee; thou hast been drawn off from thy spiritual Watch, and been charmed by the fine Oratory and fair Shews that thou hast been solicited withal; these have beguiled thee, and wrought Prejudices in thee, and thereby cast thee into this carnal Frame. Thou hast suffer'd some *vain Tho'ts* to find Harbour in thee, and entertained a long Conference with them, and these have cooled thy spiritual Meditations, and indisposed thee to them: Thou hast fallen into, and delighted thy self in some *unprofitable Company*, and frothy Entertainment, that hath left a Poison behind it; thou hast exceeded the Bounds of *christian Moderation*, in the Allowances of lawful Things, and they have put thy spiritual Palate out of Taste, whilst thou hast over-relished these Things, and thou hast hereupon either neglected the Duties of more close Communion with Christ, or *perfunctorily* attended them. Thou hast grown *carnally confident* in thy Graces or Comforts, and so given the Adversary Advantage against thee, and wilt thou never take

take Warning? Hast thou not often enough experienced the Unhappiness of this Presumption and Heedlesness? Hast thou out-grown the old Wounds that thou gattest by this?

What wilt thou do now? Wilt thou tarry away from this holy Communion, because of thy present Indisposition? Is this the Way to get out of one Sin by precipitating into another? Will this either expiate thy Guilt, or promote thy Reconciliation, or not rather bring thee into greater Perplexities? And wilt thou then come to the Lord's Table in this Frame, and say, I make Conscience of my Duty, and cannot help my Indisposedness? Will not this be to eat and drink unworthily, and so provoke a severe Rebuke instead of a kind Entertainment from thy Lord Redeemer! See what a *Dilemma* thine own Folly hath bro't thee into: And there is none but he whom thou hast thus offended, that can bring thee out of it: But I believe there is Help with him in this Case also.

Lord, I come then unto thee and crave thine Help, I acknowledge that I have hurt my self, and thou only canst relieve me, I feel and I would take Encouragement by it, because thou hast made me to feel mine ill Frame; I have a dead Heart, wilt thou enliven it? I have a dull Spirit, wilt thou quicken it? I cannot prepare my self to come before thee, do thou do it for me: I have wounded my Graces, Lord heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee: I have lost my Strength, do thou strengthen me again with Might in mine inward Man. Stir up my Faith, revive my Love, encrease my Desires, animate my Hope, fill me with Joy in the Lord, and active Mourning for Sin.

Lord,

Lord, what shall I do here, if I may not enjoy Fellowship with thee? I cannot with Content think of coming hither and going away again, and not meeting with thy self in thine own Ordinance. Put in thy Finger at the Hole of the Lock, and my Bowels shall move, mine Heart shall relent; and thy Graces shall recover their vigorous Disposition in me again, draw me now and I shall run after thee; put into me thy reviving Influence and my Soul shall set me as the Chariots of *Aminadab*. If thou leavest me to my self I shall never recover; but if thou send forth thy Spirit into mine Heart, I shall flourish again.

I take the Blame and Shame of this Deadness to my self, and acknowledge to thy free Grace and Power, the pardon of it, the recovering of me from it, hearken then for thy Name's Sake to my Supplication for this Grace. Oh! let me not be always thus; that when thy Children are fat and flourishing in thine House of Prayer, and can come and solace themselves with thee, sit under thy Shadow with sweet Delight, and increase with the Increases of God, and joy in their Saviour, I only should be as one forgotten, as an Heath in the Wilderness. Lord, I wait for thy Salvation.



MEDITATION,





MEDITATION, XXXVIII.

Engagements unto Holiness.

Am every where informed by the Word of
 I God, that he requires Holiness of all that pre-
 tend to be his People; and as there must be a
 Principle of it in me, else I cannot exert it in
 my Life; so he expects the Exercise of it, else the Prin-
 ciple would be infus'd in vain. It therefore becomes me,
 as to make sure that I am sanctified; otherwise my most
 specious Performances will be an Abomination to God;
 so to use utmost Endeavours to promote the lively Opera-
 tion of his Grace in my whole Life, that I may conform
 to his Will, who hath commanded me to be *holy in all my
 Conversation.*

I know that in my *natural Estate* as I derive from the
 first *Adam*, I am impure, *For who can bring a clean Thing
 out of an unclean?* Holiness belongs to the Image of God,
 which was at first put upon Man, and adorned him; but
 I had lost that Image, and contracted a defiled one, in
 the Room of it, and I am sensible that there is abundance
 of this Pollution cleaving to me, and mixing it self with
 all that I do. Yet I hope that thro' his Grace, God hath
 by his sanctifying Spirit *renewed me in the Image of my Mind,*
 and sown the Seeds of true Holiness in me.

Lord, search me and suffer me not to be mistaken in
 his Matter: And let me prove this to mine own Con-
 science, and approve my self to be such unto all that I
 converse

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converse withal. If I live in the Spirit, help me to walk in the Spirit; and not only to abstain from fleshly Lusts which war against my Soul, but to be ever cleansing my self from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in thy Fear: Sanctify me throughout, and preserve my whole Soul, Spirit and Body blameless to the Coming of my Lord Jesus Christ; for without thee I can do nothing: And yet I am convinced that it is an indispensable Duty lying upon me, to be constant in the Pursuit of this; for which, Oh! that mine Heart were engaged in Love to Holiness, and filled with insatiable Longings after more of it: And let my daily Cry be, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Acquaint me Lord, more and more with the Nature of this Holiness, and engage my Heart more earnestly unto it, by the serious Consideration of the great Obligations, which thou hast laid me under to prosecute it.

What else is Holiness but spiritual Purity? It therefore hath no other Contrary but Sin, which diametrically withstands it. I cannot therefore nourish any Sin, and at the same Time sincerely follow after Holiness. Every Sin defiles me, I must therefore hate every false Way, if I will purify my self as thou art pure.

Holiness in a reasonable Creature, is nothing else but an Imitation of that immense Holiness that is in Thee, which tho' I can never equal, for *the Heavens are not pure in thy Sight, and thou chargest thine Angels with Folly; How much more vile and abominable is Man, who drinks up Iniquity like Water!* Yet thou hast commanded me to be *perfect as my Father in Heaven is perfect.* And here is Work enough to take up all my Tho'ts, and Time, and utmost Endeavours, and all too little without thy Grace and Spirit to assist me.

Thine

Thine Holiness, according to the best imperfect Conceptions that I can have of it, is thy being bound for thine own Glory as thy last End, in all thy Works : And I then and only then pursue Holiness, when I do sincerely make thy Glory my designed last End in all that I do. In this therefore do I read the Impurity of my Sin, because it is a coming short of the Glory of God.

Holiness, as it is attributed to the Creature, is a Separation of it from common, and a Dedication of it to divine Service. As thou hast thus separated me, by my Relation to the Covenant of Grace, help me thus ever to separate my self by serving of thee in Newness of Life all my Days. Thy Word is the Rule of this Holiness, in which thou hast shewn me what is good, and wherein I may live and please thee : Work me up, I beseech thee, to an universal Conformity hereunto.

Oh ! that my Ways were so directed, that I might keep thy Statutes to the End. I find a deceitful Heart in me, and many Allurements are offered, to draw it off from this, and deaden these Dispositions in me : Oh quicken and give a new Life to these Resolutions, and leave yet deeper Impressions on my Soul, by all these Engagements which I am under, which are great and innumerable.

When I consider of *my Creation*, which was bestowed upon me, that I might by it be engaged to glorify God ; and the Furniture which thou didst then bestow upon me, to fit me for it, in which thou didst more for Mankind, and for me as one of that Species, than thou didst for any other Part of the visible Creation ; I am ashamed of my self, that when other Beings do serve thee in their Place, and pay a Tribute of Glory to thee, I should be so ungrate-

ful as to neglect the End of my Being, who owe all that I have and am to thy Goodness.

When I reflect upon all the *Benignity of thy Providence* toward me a sinful Creature, in keeping me out of Hell, where I deserved to have been as soon as I had a Being; in bestowing on me all the Comforts of Life, which I forfeited by my Sin: I cannot but acknowledge that this Goodness of thine should have led me to Repentance; and that it is worse than Brutishness in me to requite all this with thy Dishonour.

When I ponder on the *Treaty of Peace* which thou hast opened with me, the Offers of Salvation therein made, and the gracious Terms proposed to me, when the greatest Part of the World lie in Sin, and have no Discoveries of the Way of Life made unto them; it astonisheth me to think that I should cast any Affront on this Grace of God, or shew the least Undervaluing of so rich a Mercy.

When I consider the *Profession* which I have made, and the Relation that I stand in to the Gospel-Covenant, in which I have named the Name of the Lord; it is an awful Tho't to me that I should not *depart from all Iniquity*, and in all Things walk worthy of the Gospel: That I should call God Father, and not be holy as he is.

When I turn mine Eyes *inward*, and read the Love of God in drawing of me to himself by his Word and Spirit, bringing of me into his Favour, and giving of me a Title to Life eternal; when he hath left such Multitudes to despise his Offers, and abuse all the Means of Grace to their own Destruction; and consider that I am by Nature nothing better than they, nor did any Thing more towards mine own Conversion, than they did to their's, till thy mighty Power wro't in me, and produced a saving Principle

ciple in my Soul ; it makes me to reflect on my self and say, Do I expect a Kingdom of Glory, *What manner of Person then ought I to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness ?*

But that which comprehends all in it, and puts orient Colours upon all, is, *the great Love of my God and Saviour* which hath appeared to me, and the *Expectation* which he hath of me. I consider that I was not only redeemed from Hell, but also from my vain Conversation ; that my Saviour came not only to save me from Hell, but from Sin ; that he hath not only delivered me from the Curse and Fear of Wrath, that I should take Liberty to sin, and wax bold to live as I list ; but that I *should serve him in Holiness and Righteousness all my Days* : That he seeks an holy Seed : That his Grace *teacheth to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this World* : That he bought his Church, that *he might sanctify and cleanse it, and so present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle.*

And then revolve in my Mind what he hath done, what he hath undergone, for the bringing all this about, his whole Humiliation, his active and passive Obedience, and peculiarly those bitter Sufferings ; that he underwent to atone Justice, and open a Way for Mercy ; and that he did all this for me, and that now all that he requires of me is, that I love him, and that I testify this Love of mine to him, by living as he did in this World, who was the holy One of Israel ; and that *herein his Father and He are glorified* ; and that by every unholy Action I dishonour him, and give Occasion that his Name be blasphemed.

How can I withstand the Efficacy of this Argument ? How unworthy of Christ shall I shew my self, if this doth not keep up the Vigour of Holiness in me, and make me

constant and resolute in the Prosecution of it? Can I bear to do any Thing that will be a Reproach to so glorious a Redeemer? Can I think any Thing too much to testify mine endeared Love to him? Can I any longer think myself to be mine own, or prefer my Self-interest to or equal it with his Glory?

Shall I not deny myself for him? Shall I not refuse Conformity with an evil World, tho' they think it a strange Thing that I will not run with them into their Excesses; and will revile me for it; because I know my Saviour will be grieved by me if I so do? Shall I not make that the great Enquiry in every Step of my Life? *Will God be glorified, will my Saviour be honoured by this; and accordingly either pursue or reject it?*

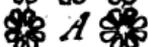
Lord, I now come to that holy Appointment of thine, which requires these holy Frames and Dispositions of them that hope to enjoy Communion with thee in it, and that they be raised in them after a peculiar Manner and Measure: For thou hast said, *That thou wilt be sanctified in all those that draw near unto thee.* Oh! put my Soul into such a Frame, and raise it up to an high Pitch.

And now give me such an heart-melting and engaging View of my precious Saviour, and all that wonderful Work of Redemption which is here lively presented to my View, that may revive my Purposes, and put me upon fresh Resolves, to war against all the Corruptions of mine Heart, and mortify them at his Cross; and make me more constant and faithful, and chearful in the Pursuit of thy Glory in the whole Course of my Conversation in this World, so long as I have a Day to live.



MEDITATION, XXXIX.

Crucifying of carnal Affections.

 H! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? How doth this Flesh stir and strive in me? And how forcibly doth it draw me after vain Objects? How exorbitant are my Cravings after earthly Things? How do sensual Fruitions captivate my Soul? How are my Tho'ts turn'd that Way and drawn off from Things that are spiritual? My Lord hath commanded me to *set my Affections upon the Things that are above, and not on such as are below*; and the Motive to this is, *because Christ is risen and ascended*; and where should my Love, Desire, Hope, and Joy be, but where their Object is? But alas! a carnal Mind cloggs me, and contrary Affections, as an heavy Weight, hold me down, so that I cannot ascend, but lie grovling here below, how do these fill my Tho'ts? When I would set my self to meditate on any Thing that is good, how am I insensibly carryed aside to vain Musings? And when I would be in the Mount with God, I am gotten, ere I am aware, into a Crowd of worldly Business; so that my Ponderings become Distractions, and are filled with Confusion: And when I would speak of that which is good, how easily do I fall into earthly Discourse?

And what shall I make of my self? Is it so with a Soul that has tasted that God is gracious? My Saviour hath told me, *That where my Treasure is, there will mine Heart*

be also: And will not mine Heart condemn me if I judge my self by this Rule? I would fain encourage mine Hope, by saying, *I allow not this in me, I judge my self, it is my Burden and Bitterness; I groan under it; and would fain be rid of it; I am oppressed, Lord undertake for me.* But how is it, then that I get no more Victory over those cursed Affections? Am I not imposed on by a deceitful Heart? Are these any more than the Sluggard's Wishes? I can hear the Psalmist say, *Mine Heart is fixed*; whereas mine is wavering and inconstant, and will it ever be thus! Is there no Relief?

Are the Resistances which I make real, or only complemental? Are they resolute, or faint and discouraged? Do I go forth against these Murderers in the Strength of the Lord, or in mine own? Are the Weapons of my Warfare spiritual or carnal? Lord, search me and try me, and shew me my Mistakes, and set me right. I know that I must expect that these *Canaanites* will be in the Land to prove me; but shall the House of *Saul* prevail and gather Strength? Let it not be.

Let not only my cordial Mourning over this, be a Witness that I am faithful to thine Interest, but, Oh! that I may find, that these Lusts are indeed mortified; and, tho' not quite dead, yet they are daily dying. Grant that I may be able truly to say, *I am crucified with Christ*, and that this Flesh of mine, with the Lusts and Passions of it, are nailed fast to his Cross. If ever I get my Affections up into Heaven, I must see that they be weaned from Earth and earthly Things: And if Christ's glorious Exaltation, be the Attractive to draw them upward, certainly then his Cross must be the Corrosive that I must apply to kill the Carnality of them.

Lord,

Lord, direct me how to do this aright, and assist me with thy Grace, that it may be to Effect; that I may be able to say with thine holy Apostle, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of Christ, by which I am crucified to the World, and the World to me.* Bring me then to this Cross, and help me in this Work, that I may bring all these Affections and nail them to it; that I may mortify all these Members that are upon Earth.

And where can I have a better Advantage for this than at this holy Ordinance, wherein a crucified Saviour is represented lively before me! My misgiving Heart is ready to offer Discouragement, and saith to me, *What hast thou to do to come to this Ordinance with such an earthly Mind? Art thou not afraid of eating and drinking Judgment to thy self?* And the Disquietments and Fears arising thereupon are almost too hard for me. But my recollected Tho'ts tell me, that if I ever get Victory over this Frame, it must be at Christ's Cross; if I think to have it better before I repair thither, I deceive my self, and forget that this is one great End and Usefulness of it. I have the more Need to come to it, and if by thy Grace, I may be helped to bring these carnal Lusts with me, and get them here more subdued, I shall therein please my Saviour, and have Comfort in my Soul.

And how shall I fasten these to the Cross of Christ, but by applying the solemn Meditation thereof to them, thereby to imbitter them to me, and to stir up mine Hatred of them, and Self-abhorrence for them? Lord, enable me rightly to speculate the Sufferings of my Redeemer, and to make every Circumstance in them a several Nail to fasten these Lusts withal to his Cross: These carnal Affections are the Fruits or Product of Concupiscence; kill that

that in me, and these will die with it. Let me then here find mine Heart so affected with the Consideration of the Death of Christ, as may make me to look upon all those Objects of these Affections, which they have been surprized withal, with Contempt, and thereupon despise them.

When I here see that these Lusts killed my Saviour, and what a Death they bro't him to, let that Sight kill in me all inordinate Desire after them, or Delight in them: Let that turn mine Eye from them, or make me to entertain them with mortified Looks. Hath my Lord suffered in the Flesh, and shall I any longer live in the Lusts of the Flesh? Let it never be. How shall I look upon all the Sorrows, Reproaches, and bitter Evils, which beset my Saviour, and not by the Contemplation of them, be weaned from the World, and every Thing in it? Shall not the Spear that let out his Blood, let out the Life of my Lusts? Shall I find any Thing, after the View of that incomparable Love of his to me, appearing in that which he underwent for me, worthy of drawing my Heart after it, and from so precious a Sight? Or shall I ever after entertain his Enemies, and divert my self with them? And such are these carnal Affections of mine.

Lord, help me in the Exercise of thy Grace, while I set at thy Table, to corroborate mine Hatred of vain Sights, and vain Tasse; and enable me hereby to die, more and more unto Sin, and unto all the irregular Motions of mine Heart, that so I may follow my dear Lord, who thro' Death passed into Glory; that I also being dead to Sin, and to all the Lusts of it, may be fitted to live to God here, and so may be bro't to the Kingdom of Glory, to be with him where I shall cease from those Follies for ever.

MEDI-

MEDITATION, XL.

Fortifying of Patience.

ME THINKS I hear my Lord saying to me at this Table, as once that King did, at a royal Banquet, *What is thy Petition? And what is thy Request? And it shall be granted thee.* Or as once he bespake Solomon in a Vision, *Ask what I shall give to thee.* Lord, my Desires are large, my Wants are many and great, and I am satisfied that it is vain to go else-where to have any of them supplied; and that in Thee dwells all Fulness: Thou Lord knowest all my Necessities, nor is any one hidden from thee.

But there is one Thing, which now burdens my Soul, and I come to thee for Succour against it: Thou hast made it the Lot of thy Children to encounter with many Afflictions in this Vale of Tears; thine infinite Wisdom hath seen it best that it should be so; And thou hast made it my Duty to be patient in Tribulation, and to endure Hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ: But I find an impatient, disquiet, disturbed, discontented Mind: under all; and how unable I am *in Patience to possess my Soul*, according to thy Precept. Every little Cross puts me out of Order; and when I am exercised with some great Trial, I am oppressed and ready to sink under it. I murmur at thy Providence, I envy them that are at ease, and am discouraged in my Work, and drive heavily. I allow not my self in these Frames: I am convinced that it is not as it ought to be. I

I use many Arguments to quiet my self, I chide with mine own Soul, and say to it, *Why art thou cast down? And why art thou disquieted within me?* I sometimes think it is the common Lot of Mankind, and why should I expect to be exempted? Sometimes I argue, it is that which is appointed for me, and there is no avoiding it, and therefore I must bear it. I plead against my Disquietments with considering, that my Impatience will not relieve me, but make my Trouble the more uneasy, by vexing my self under it. I look upon others far better than my self, who are yet exercised with sorer Trials than mine are. I meditate on my Sinfulness and thy Righteousness, and convince my self that in all that I meet with, thou visitest me far less than mine Iniquities have deserved. I ponder on thine Holiness, and resolve, that if God will be glorified in me by my Tribulation, I ought to rejoice therein. I study to reconcile mine Heart to the Afflictions which I suffer, by pondering on the Promise, *That all Things shall work together for Good to them that love God;* and would fain fortify that Conclusion on my Soul, *That this light Affliction which is but for a Moment, shall work for me a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* I endeavour to look over this little Spot of Time, wherein these Trials will be terminated, to the never ending State of Felicity which follows: And would fain realize these Things to my self.

But, alas! what poor Work do I make of it? How little am I strengthened and stablished by all? And if I think I am gotten composed, and begin to hope, that I shall never carry it as formerly under the afflictive Hand of God; yet the next Assault that is made on me shakes me again, and I am as ready to dishonour God, and disturb my own Quietness as before.

And

And what shall I do? Shall I ask thee to free me from these Troubles, that so I may be delivered from the Temptations of them? I dare not limit the holy One of *Israel*: And, if I know mine own Heart, and it doth not deceive me, I shall count it an incomparably greater Kindness to be able to glorify thee in the Fires, than to have them put out.

Could I acknowledge thy Sovereignty, believe thy Love, discern thy Wisdom, and cheerfully bear up under all, with an holy Confidence in thee, and a patient Continuance in well-doing, resolving, that tho' *thou shouldest slay me, I would trust in thee*: I might as much honour thee by suffering as by doing. This then is the Thing that I want, this is it that I come to thee for, and earnestly request that thou wilt not deny it me.

I have met with many Troubles, and some sore Temptations. Lord, I confess that I have carried it very unworthily under them: I have not got the Good by them which I might: I have not improved them to that Humility, Self-denial, Weanedness from the World, as I ought to have done. I seek of thee to pardon it unto me; and cover all these Obliquities under the Robe of thy Righteousness.

I know not the Things that shall befall me, before I leave an evil World; nor would I be anxious about it, only I beseech thee to help me with thy Grace and Spirit, to carry my self so, as that it may appear, that I have not received thy Grace in vain: And let me now have some Earnests and Sealings of this. Thou hast commanded me to *run my Race with Patience, looking to Jesus*; therein signifying to me, that there is such a Looking to him, as is very advantageous to this Purpose; that He is an
Object

Object every Way suitable to derive Vertue from, for the strengthening of this Patience, in running the Race of Godliness.

And where can I have a better Sight or Prospect of him for this End, than at the present Ordinance, in which he is represented to me as a Mirrour of Patience himself? And in the Price which he hath laid down to purchase this, as all the rest of the holy Graces of Sanctification, whereby I may be enabled to live to the Praise of him who hath called me? Help me then thus to look on thee, and let Vertue derive from thee to my Soul by it, that all my Impatience may be mortified, and I may be strengthened with Vigour in the inward Man, unto all Patience and Long-suffering with Joyfulness.

I am here entertained with a Sight of the most bitter Sufferings of my Saviour, compared with which, all mine put together are but a Flea-biting. I am here called to see and adore the holy Sovereignty of God, in laying all this upon One, who was in Person innocent, who *never did any Sin, nor was Guile found in his Mouth*; and yet it pleased him to bruise him; to make the whole Ocean of divine Wrath to fall upon him, to arraign, judge, condemn, and do Execution upon him; to expose him to the Fury of Hell, the Rage of the vilest of Men, the most ignominious and painful Death; and mean while to put his Soul into sharpest Agonies, to hide up the Light of his Countenance from him, and forsake him: Never was any Sorrow like his Sorrow.

And yet I see him quiet under all, He is as a Lamb and as a Sheep under the Hand of a Shearer, he opens not his Mouth: He rageth not at the Instruments, he flies not from the Hand of God: He useth no preposterous Course

to

to free himself, he submits with greatest Willingness to his Father's Pleasure in it ; he prays him to glorify himself.

And can I look on and see all this, and not be animated by so stupendious an Example ? Shall Jesus the righteous suffer patiently, and I a sinful Worm, be impatient ? Shall he who knew no Sin, be made Sin, and bear it with Silence, and shall I repine, who am full of Sin ? Shall God *smite the Man that was his Fellow*, and he not complain ? And shall I a Worm, turn upon him and charge him foolishly ? Shall he say, *Nevertheless thou art holy ?* And shall I call his Truth and Love in Question ? Lord, help these Looks of mine that they may be salubrious : Yea, Oh ! enable me to read the vast Disproportion, and to be excited by it, That he bare the Curse, and all the Bitterness of that, and thereby unstinged all my Afflictions, so that now they are no more but a Cross ; and shall I not bear that for his sake ?

Oh thou who by suffering all hast paid the Price of my Redemption, and bought all for me that is needful to bring me to eternal Life ; give me, that I may here, by renewed Faith, derive from thee that Supply, by which I may be better enabled to encounter whatsoever Fight of Affliction thou mayest call me unto ; and that I may follow the Steps of my patient Saviour, through all Troubles unto his Kingdom ; who *for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.*

MEDITATION,



MEDITATION, LXI.

Forgiving of Injuries.

❀❀❀ S I find it to be a Duty frequently and forcibly
 ❀ A ❀ urged in the Gospel, that we not only bear In-
 ❀❀❀ injuries patiently, but also readily forgive those at
 whose Hands we have received them : So I am
 sensible that it is irksome to Flesh and Blood : And this
 corrupt Nature is very prone to study and practise Re-
 venge, and that too often when we make a Pretence as if
 we seemed to take no Notice of the Affronts offered us ;
 we do in that very Way utter the most reproachful Invec-
 tives ; and in Way of Retaliation lay open those Sins of
 others which we ought to cover : And how apt are we
 to rejoice if they by their Iniquity expose themselves, or
 to hear them evil spoken of.

Lord, I find too much of this spirit prevailing in me ; I
 loath my self for it ; it is the Evil that I would not do ; I
 groan, I mourn under it, I resolve against it, I judge my
 self for it : I am apprehensive how much it unfits me for a
 close and intimate Communion with him in spiritual Du-
 ties & Ordinances. In *Prayer*, how doth it obstruct my Faith
 in praying for the Forgiveness of mine own Sins, when I re-
 member that I ask it with that Consideration, as I forgive O-
 thers the Injuries they have done to me, and reflect on my
 great Deficiency in this. And when I consider, that I am
 to lift up pure Hands without Malice, and find so much
 of the Stain of that upon me, I am discouraged. And
 when

when I come to pray for mine Enemies, and find my Heart so indisposed to it, and my Petitions come off so cold upon that Topick, I am ready to call all in Question. When I go to *hear the Word*, and set my self to meditate on it, What impertinent Parenthesis doth the Resentment of these Things insert; and how wofully doth it disturb and distract me? And when I approach to thine holy Table, when I should keep the Feast with unleavened Bread, and find so much of the Leaven of Malice in me, that it makes me afraid: It is an easy Matter to say, *I am at Peace with all Men, I forgive all the World*, and use such traſonical Brags: But what avails it in Words to profess, and in Works to deny?

I use many moral Arguments with my self, to charm and allay this Malady: I consider that I am a sinful Creature, and am apt enough to affront others, and ought therefore to bear from them, who have so often Occasion to bear with me. I think what an honourable Thing it is to pass by Injuries, and requite them with Kindnesses. I shame my self with considering how many Heathen will condemn me, who have gained great Repute by such Carriages as these; I think how poor a Satisfaction it is to see another exposed to Trouble who hath abused me, and how I am nothing bettered by it; I persuade my self, that if I can but withhold from satisfying my self upon them, and leave it with God, to whom belongs the Recompence of Wrongs, he will do it better for me than I can for my self: I reflect that it is unreasonable for me to judge in mine own Cause; I strive to persuade my self that I may be mistaken, and misinformed: And many such Things I revolve in my Mind; and they often prevail so far in me as to suspend the Act, and silence me

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from reproaching; and hold back mine Hands from requiting : And a vain Heart would persuade me, that I have gotten a great Conquest over my self, and am ready to be proud of it.

But alas ! I find the Root of the Malady abiding, and too too much unmortified. I now see what Reason the Apostles had, when my Lord had urged upon them the Doctrine of forgiving their Brethren, to pray, *Lord, increase our Faith !*

And I am acquainted that the only Way to kill Concupiscence, and get every Lust crucified, is to bring it to the *Cross of Christ*, and apply to it the Blood of the Covenant. And where can I have a fairer Opportunity for this, than when I am called to entertain my self with the Contemplation of a crucified Saviour, and apply my self to his Death, for the Destruction of all my carnal Affections ?

And therefore tho' I come with a self-abasing and trembling Consideration of mine own Unworthiness on this very Account, as well as on all others ; yet I come with earnest Longings and Entreaties that I may find Relief here against so oppressing a Malady, and obtain more Grace to help me unto a more vigorous Practice of this Duty. I cannot expect to live in this World without Temptations of this sort : But Oh that thou wouldest here influence mine Heart with thy Spirit, that I may obtain an happy Victory over this Lust also.

Give me then here such a Sight and Experience of thy wonderful Love to me, in the Forgiveness thou hast bestowed upon me, as may work me unto the most kindly and delightful Exercise of this Duty.

Lord,

Lord, I was indebted to thee ten thousand Talents, and thou forgavest them all freely, when I had nothing to make Satisfaction withal; and how few Pence are there that I can charge any of my Brethren with, who have most of all affronted and injured me?

Such was the miserable Condition that my Sins had bro't me into, that I could not be forgiven till Justice was satisfied, and yet thou laidst in the Satisfaction, which was no less than the Blood and Life of the Son of God, that so I might obtain Pardon thro' him: But alas! it will cost me nothing but a little Self-denial, to forgive my greatest Enemies.

I sought not for thy Forgiveness, nor had I ever enquired after it, if thou hadst not bro't and tendered it unto me: And shall I be so hard-hearted as to refuse a Reconciliation when it is offered, or to forgive my Neighbour when it is besought?

I resolutely withstood thine Offers to me, and refused to comply with thee, in confessing my Sins and asking thy Remission... But thou applyedst this Grace to me, by subduing of my rebellious Heart, and causing it to comport with the Terms of the Gospel: And shall I stand upon such Punctilio's with my Neighbour?

My Sins were committed against the great GOD, and thereupon horribly great, and yet thou forgavest them; but what am I, a Worm, to think that an Affront offered to me is too great to be forgiven?

Thou never didst me any Hurt, but heaped Kindnesses upon me, and yet I dishonoured thy Name, and revolted from thy Government, and this notwithstanding, thou forgavest me: But as for me, I have given Occasion enough to him, and he could see sufficient in me to pro-

voke his Corruptions, and, in many of the Wrongs which I suffer, I may thank my self for them.

Yea, thou hast required of me, that I should herein testify my due Acknowledgment of thy inconceivable Love to me, by a Readiness to shew my Love to my Brother, and in this Point peculiarly : And can I say that I am duly affected with thy Love, or that I love thee cordially, if I hesitate at this ?

I need every Day to come to the Throne of thy Grace, to take out new Forgiveness ; and I must come in the Vertue of this Blood that was shed for me : But how shall I come, and not be confounded, if I do not pray for-giving ?

Lord, this is one of thy great Commands, and thou hast told me, that *By this shall all Men know that I am thy Disciple.* Oh grant to me then this Grace and Assistance ; corroborate my Faith and Obedience, fill me with thy Spirit ; let me here view the astonishing Price that was paid in to the Justice of God, for the procuring of my Pardon ; but for which, I had perished for ever.

And how small a Thing then is it for me, in Obedience to thy Will, to cover the Multitude of Sins that I see in my Brother, and pass by all the Wrongs that he hath done me, in Consideration that I wrong thy Name more every Day, and yet hope to have all blotted out with the Blood of my Redeemer.

Grant me then this Grace for thy Name's Sake, that I may do it from mine Heart, and that I may have more and more of the vigorous Exercise of it in me. And now seal up this Benefit to me at thy Table, that in this also, I may be perfect, as my Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

MEDI-



MEDITATION, XLII.

On Recovery after Sicknes.


ORD! Who or what am I, that thou hast bro't me hitherto? That thou hast regarded me in my low Estate, visited me with thy Favour, and said to me, *Return and live*? That thou hast bro't me to thine House, and restored me to thy Service in it, I have now Hope to be entertained by thee at the royal Banquet, which thou hast provided to solace and refresh the Souls of thy Children withal? And that I have an Opportunity to confess thy wondrous Benignity, and celebrate thy Praises with a thankful Heart? What shall I render to thee, O Lord, for all thy Benefits unto me?

I look upon this Ordinance to be a Seal of the Covenant between God and his People; and as thou dost therein anew ratify thy Love to thy Chosen, so thou expectest that I should renew my Covenant-Obligations unto thee, and bring my self under fresh Bonds to fear and serve thee: How much more then when thou hast, by special Favour, and signal Acts of Benificence, laid Bonds on me so to do, and made me a peculiar Monument of thine admirable Kindness? Such an one am I this Day: Help me then to record thy Kindness and Mercy, and Righteousness.

I confess thine holy Hand in all that hath befallen me; thou hast bro't me low by Sicknes, and it was thou that saidst, *Return and live*; this is all the Lord's own doing: Enable me to sanctify thine holy Name in the whole of it.

Cordially acknowledge that all thy Judgments are just; that thou hast offered me no Occasion to complain of thy Severity; but on the other Hand, to declare with the greatest Freedom, that thou hast visited me far less than mine Iniquities have deserved. Grant, I beseech thee, that I may also be able upon Experience to say, *That in Faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, and That in Love to my Soul, thou hast delivered me from the Pit of Destruction, and cast all my Sins behind thy Back.*

Thou, Lord, hast said, That when thou bestowest eminent Salvations on thy People, *Then they shall remember their own evil Ways, and their Doings that were not good, and shall loath themselves in their own Sight, for their Iniquities and Abominations.* It then becometh me this Day to remember my Faults, that I may give thee thy Glory by confessing of them.

By Nature I am as vile a Sinner as any in the World, and thereby was exposed to thy Wrath, and it had been righteous with thee to have turned me into the Pit, as soon as I had a Being: Thou also knowest the Sins of my *Childhood and Youth*, how many, and how great they have been; and mightest righteously have called me to an Account, and punished me for them: Nor can I forget, but embrace this Opportunity to spread and bewail them before thee. How long did I lie out from thee, embracing lying Vanities, and forsaking my own Mercies? How many Calls did I withstand? How many Counsels did I despise and trample upon? How long did I persist in a Course of Sin and Impenitency? How many Times did I resist thy Spirit striving with me, and bid him be gone? And why didst not thou then, when I would

would have none of thee, give me up to mine own Heart's Lusts, and swear against me in thy Wrath?

I have hoped that thou hast, notwithstanding all my aggravated Provocations and Contempt offered to the Lord of Glory, bro't me over unto Christ, and planted thy Grace in me, and introduced me into the Covenant of Peace, in Dispite of all the Attempts which I so often w'd to break off the Treaty of it: And what infinite Engagements did this lay upon me, to avoid and hate all Sin, and set my self with utmost Vigour in the Pursuit of Holiness and Righteousness?

But alas! How short have I come, in my Life, of adorning my Profession? How vain in my Tho'ts? How sinful in my Words? How foolish in mine Actions? How easily drawn to the Omission of Duty and Commission of Sin? How carnal in my Conversation? How eager in the gratifying of the Flesh? How indisposed unto and how lifeless in Duty? And on this Account, how little Honour have I bro't to my God, and what Occasion have I given that his Name should be evil spoken of?

How unsuitably have I carried it under thy Providences? How apt have I been to idolize thy Mercies, and abuse them, by indulging in me a Neglect of thy Service, and for the nourishing of the carnal Part? How have I despised thy Afflictions, and murmured under them, instead of improving them for thy Glory and my Soul's Profit, to humble me, and rouse me to search my self, and turn from my Follies, for which End they were laid upon me? How have I violated my Promises, which I made in my former Troubles, and broken Vows then solemnly plighted? How righteously then hast thou laid thy Hand upon me,

me, and how justly mightest thou have refused to prove and try me again ?

Thou Lord hast put me in many *Relations* which I have borne among Men, and bound me under the special relative Duties thereunto belonging ; in the faithful Discharge whereof, it concerned me to have honoured thee, and to have done good to those whom I stood so related unto, and thereby have approved my Sincerity : But how unsuitably have I acquitted my self in all these ?

As to my *private* and *œconomical Relations*, how short have I been in approving my self as a Man of Knowledge, in governing my Passions, in giving faithful Counsels and Warnings to my Family, and every Person in it ? How dead and lifeless have my Prayers with and for them been ? How far have I come behind in setting them an eminent Example of Gravity, Holiness, and a good Conversation ? And what Reason have I, with the deepest Soul-Abasement, to cry, *Lord, enter not into Judgment with thy Servant !*

But that which above all I desire to commemorate, and bemoan my self on the Account of before thee, is the *publick Station* which thou hast put me in, and my woful Failings in the Management thereof. Thou hast seen meet to call me a sinful Man, and who am less than the least of all Saints, and for whom, the least Service in thy Sanctuary had been an undeserved Honour, who was not worthy to be so much as admitted for a Door-keeper in thine House ; to serve at thine Altar, and administer thine holy Things to thy People. Thou hast afforded to such an one as I, this Grace, to preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ ; a Work which the most glorious Seraphims would reckon a great Honour to have been imployed

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ed in. Thou hast given me the Charge of Souls, and warned me that I must give an Account of them at thy dread Tribunal.

But with what Shame, and Blushing, and Confusion of Face, do I look back on my whole Demeanor in the Discharge of this great Trust, and wonder that thou hast not long since called me to give an Account of my Stewardship, and put me out of it! How little hath been my Concernedness for the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men? What a miserable Reckoning can I make of the Talents, which thou hast entrusted me withal, and charged me to occupy for thee? How careless and slothful have I been in my proper Work, and how many fair Opportunities for it have I lost by fruitless Diversions? How much have I sought my Self, mine own Credit and Applause; instead of advancing the Honour of my Lord Christ?

What little Life and Zeal have I manifested in my *publick Administrations*? How cold in my Applications to; and Pleadings with Sinners, in setting before them their Misery, and exhorting with them about their everlasting Concerns? How short in the Commendation of Christ, and setting forth his glorious Excellencies, for the alluring of Men after him? And in my more *private Discharge* of mine Office, in which I had peculiar Advantages to serve God, and to do Good, yet how have I, partly thro' Sloth, partly thro' unnecessary Discouragements, foolishly lost a Price that was in my Hands? What a poor Example have I set before Men? How little have I loved those Things my self, which I have pressed upon others in my Preaching? How unguarded have my Words and Actions been? How seldom have I with Tears and im-

fortunate

portunate Entreaties, warned Sinners of their evil Ways, and besought them to be reconciled to God? How mealy-mouth'd have I been in reprov'g loud Sinners for their exorbitant Courses, and setting before them their Danger, and seeking to pluck them as Brands out of the Fire? What Excuses have I made, what Delays have I used about this Duty, till some of them are gone over to Eternity, and gotten beyond the Reach of my further Treatment with them; and others grown desperately hardened in their wicked Ways? What unprofitable Visits have I made, and how little have they turned to the Edification of those to whom I have paid them? Lord, if thou be strict to mark what is amiss, who can stand? I fly to thee for that Forgiveness which there is with thee that thou mayest be feared.

And tho' I hope thro' thy Grace, that I have not in these Things wickedly departed from thee; that I have felt the Burden and Bitterness of these Things; that I have in the Tenor of my Ministry, sincerely aimed at the serving my Generation to thy Praise; have bemoaned my self by Reason of this Body of Death, and the Captivity that I have been bro't into by the Law in my Members; and have been cordially thankful to thee, when thou hast enabled me, in my Measure to be faithful; yet I herein justify thy Dealings with me; and confess that thou mightest righteously and wisely thus correct me; And I wonder that thou shouldest spare me, when in thine Hand, who have been so unprofitable. Thou didst not need me. Thou couldst have carried on thine own Work better without me, and filled up my Place with one that would have bro't more Honour to thee, and done more Service for thee.

And

And now, O Lord, I come to thee, begging of thee that thou wilt, in this Ordinance give me a sealed Pardon of all my Follies. Thou, Lord, art exalted by thy Father's right Hand, to give Repentance to Israel, and Remission of Sins. I betake my self to thee for this Mercy. And as I desire to aggravate mine own Folly, and fortify my godly Sorrow, by looking on the precious Sacrifice, that is set before me, so to embrace it with a penitent Faith, looking to the Blood of Christ which cleanseth from all Sin.

And now, Lord, that I am admitted to draw near before thee, and to set with thee at thine own Table; my Petition and Request is, That tho' this Deliverance be in it self an outward Favour, and such as thou affordest to thine Enemies, as well as to thy Friends; yet I may receive from thee those true Tokens and Fruits of thy Love whereby I may know, that this Affliction was a fatherly Correction, and that the Salvation from it was a Product of thine everlasting Kindness; and that accordingly in both thou hast treated me in thy covenant Faithfulness.

Let me not only live but live to glorify thee: Let me be able to say, That tho' before I was afflicted I went astray, yet now I have kept thy Law. Whatsoever Follies thou sawest in me, during my Affliction, which I am sensible of, and beinoan my self for; let thy sparing Mercies humble me yet more, and bind mine Heart yet firmer to thy Fear.

And now help me, with holy Fear and Trembling, to renew my Promises and Covenant-Engagements to thee. I know that I can do nothing of my self; if I vow I shall never pay, except thou give me the Grace and Influence. I am afraid of my self; I know that neither Affliction nor Mercy will do alone.

I resolve that I will run the Way of thy Commandments, when thou hast enlarged mine Heart. I charge my Soul to bless the Lord, and to *forget none of his Benefits*. I promise, that thy Grace helping, I will hence-forward take more Heed to my Ways, lest I sin. I purpose to keep a more strict Watch over my corrupt Part, and ply harder than ever the Work of Mortification. I will more carefully seek thy Glory, and deny my self; I will endeavour to carry it more as becomes the Gospel, in every Station and Relation which thou hast set me in, and in my whole Conversation. I renounce all carnal Confidence in my self, in my Gifts and Graces; I resign my self to thy Will, and do thou with me what seemeth good in thy Sight, only let me have Grace to glorify thee in all. Pity my sinful Infirmities, subdue my Corruptions, corroborate my Graces; let it appear to all Men, that thou hast neither chastised nor rescued me in vain. Confirm all the Purposes of my Heart, and set thine AMEN to them: And let this Ordinance be made a sure Seal to me of thy gracious Acceptance of me.



MEDITATION,





MEDITATION, XLIII.

Discouragements resisted.

I. *From doubting about an Interest*
in CHRIST.

WHAT a *Dilemma* am I now bro't into? How
 W^hat turmoiled are my Tho'ts? The Time ap-
 proacheth for the solemnizing of the Remem-
 brance of my Lord's Death: I am under a
 Covenant-Tye to attend upon it, and keep the Feast in
 Communion with the People of God; but I am at a great
 Loss in my Spirits: I am afraid to tarry away, and I am
 afraid to go. I dare not stay behind, because Christ him-
 self hath said, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; and made it
 a sacred Ceremony for the shewing forth of his Death 'till
 he cometh. And if I absent my self, I shall scandalize the
 Profession that I have made: And if I go, that awful
 Word terrifies me, *He that eats and drinks unworthily,*
eats and drinks Judgment to himself: And if I may be a true
 Believer, and yet come under this Guilt, how much more
 then, if I am still out of Christ, and have never received
 him by a saving Faith?

I dispute this Case in mine own Reasonings, and resolve,
 That if I were sure it were my Duty to come, as Matters
 stand with me, I would not dare to withdraw: But here
 also I find no small Difficulty to determine.

If

If I were sure that it were by Institution a *converting Ordinance*, and appointed as the Preaching of the Word is, for all to attend upon it for this End, I were resolved and beyond Doubt as to my Duty to come, as knowing that tho' I should Sin by coming Unworthily, yet I should Sin more by not coming at all.

But if it is not, by Appointment, a *converting Ordinance*, but for the *Nourishment* of Grace in the converted, (of which I am perswaded) I then conclude, that tho' I sin in that I remain unworthy, and do not restlessly seek after the Grace to make me fit, and by this discover that I vilely undervalue this Ordinance; yet I should sin more in coming, when I am assured that I am in my Sins. And altho' God can work Conversion in me by it if he will, yet it will be a daring Presumption in me, to rush upon it under such a Supposition of a Possibility, which I have no Warrant in the Word of God to expect.

I find that Christ hath *guarded* this Ordinance in the Gospel; as God did of old guard the *Passover*; and hath made it the Duty of his Church, and peculiarly his Officers in it, to take heed of entertaining such as make to appear on Observation or Trial that they are not fit for it; and that it is a Fault found in, and charged upon them, if they put no Difference between the clean, and the unclean; and hath for that End, given Rules of Trial according to which they are to proceed. If they know any to be in their Uncleanness, they are to forbid and debar them; and if they have occasionally contracted any notorious Pollution, so long as it abides, it is sufficient to keep them off. How much more then, that which is sufficient Indication of their being under the Dominion of sinful Concupiscence?

Certainly

Certainly if a Believer be unworthy, because he hath defiled himself with some scandalous Sin, then an Unbeliever when he is known to be such, is more incapable, because it is certain that such an one must pollute the Lord's Table. If any Leprosy were enough to remove a Person from the Congregation of *Israel*, much more that for which he was to be pronounced utterly unclean: And such is the Defilement in one who is an utter Stranger to Regeneration and Sanctification. I cannot be otherwise perswaded, but that every Man is as much concerned, to be as watchful over himself, and as severe in judging of his own Fitness, and passing a Sentence upon himself accordingly, as any Pastors of Churches ought to be of him. If others are to watch over me, I am then greatly concerned to watch over my self, for I must stand or fall according as I am found another Day, and bear mine own Iniquity. If they may and ought to forbid me on these and those Considerations, I ought to forbid my self on the same; for why should they withhold me, if I had a Warrant from Christ to come?

I cannot but think that if an *Israelite* had known himself to be under such legal Pollutions, as were to exclude Persons from the Passover, he ought not to have ventured on the eating of it, tho' the Levites, the Porters could not discover it by the most curious Search that they could make of him: And the rather because I find such a Threatning: *Lev. 7. 20, 21. But the Soul that eateth of the Flesh of the Sacrifice of Peace Offerings, that pertain unto the Lord, having his Uncleanness upon him, even that Soul shall be cut off from among his People. Moreover, the Soul that shall touch any unclean Thing, as the Uncleanness of Man, or any unclean Beast, or any abominable unclean Thing,*

Thing, and eat of the Flesh of the Sacrifice of Peace-Offerings which pertain unto the Lord, even that Soul shall be cut off from his People.

Besides, I find that Christ himself hath given a Rule to be practised by the Person himself; Matth. 5. 23, 24. *Therefore if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* And if it be our Duty when a *Man* hath a just Cause of Offence at us, much more then, when we know that God is our Enemy, until Reconciliation be made.

Besides, I believe there is a vast Difference between Duties in *themselves moral*, tho' there be an Institution for the *Manner* of the Performance of them, and Duties which are *ceremonial*, and were appointed for such a special symbolical Design, of which latter Sort is the Sacrament.

I am therefore fully satisfied that a Person, who doth certainly know himself to be in the Gall of Bitterness, whose Conscience plainly tells him, If the Word of God be true, and if there be any Reality in the Character of Men there given, thou art beyond Question a wicked Person, a Stranger to God, and a Child of Wrath, will add to his Wickedness by approaching the Table of the Lord, while he remains thus, and lives contentedly in this State: Altho' mean-while it is his horrible Sin, that he contentedly abides in such a Condition; and his not seeking unto God for his Grace to fit him for this Communion, is a plain Witness in him, that he despiseth the Lord of Glory, and tramples upon the Blood of the Covenant.

But

But here ariseth a Temptation, and I find it hard to withstand, which is, How then shall I dare to come to this Ordinance until I am fully assured of mine Interest in Christ by a thoro' Conversion? For if I am not converted, I sin in coming: And I may be deceived; I may think and hope that I am one of these upon a Mistake: Where I find a great deal of doubting ever and anon rising within me; I hope, and fear, I dare not deny, and yet I dare not to affirm: I have Experience of Things that perswade me that the Spirit hath done the great Work in me, but I am in Suspense whether they are not all of them counterfeit.

And what shall I now do in this Case? Shall I come, or shall I tarry away? If I come, my Heart misgives, and faith, *What if I should prove an Hypocrite at last?* Shall I not then be charged for having put as many Affronts upon Christ, as I have made Approaches to his Table? Or shall I stay away, and therein, if I am one of his, neglect a precious Medium of Communion with him, and hinder myself of that Fellowship with him which is to be had in this Ordinance, and thereby signify an undervaluing Esteem of it, and thus add to grieve his holy Spirit? Shall I tarry till I have gotten a full Assurance before I come; and will not my thus absenting myself be a great Hindrance to my gaining of it? Is not God soveraign? Doth he not keep many of his own Children in Darkness, Doubts, and Fears all their Days? If I absent 'till then, it is possible that I may live and die without this Ordinance.

Lord, help me with thy Counsel in this Case.
Thou receivest the weak in Faith, as well as the strong, he was accepted and favoured by thee, who could but say, *I believe, Lord, help mine Unbelief.* I am perswaded that

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thou

thou hast appointed this Ordinance, not only for the maintaining of a good and comfortable Assurance in thy Children who have it, but also for a support of the most infirm and weak Faith in them, and for the encreasing and establishing of it. Thou invitest the weary and burthened Souls to come unto thee, and on their coming, as thou hast promised them Rest, so hast thou made this Ordinance to be a Seal of that Covenant in which this Promise is contained. Thou hast said, that *thou wilt not quench the smoking Flax*, but kindle it into a Flame; help me, to take this Encouragement, and come.

I do acknowledge that it is thy sovereign Liberty to measure out Comforts and Assurances to thy Children, as thou seest meet; and it is my Duty to keep fast hold on Christ, and not to let go the Hope which he hath given me. I am satisfied that there is a Mixture of Doubting with the strongest Faith here; and that the greatest Assurance in this Life, is not out of the Reach of being shaken in an Hour of Temptation, which thy Wisdom hath seen meet to exercise the Graces of thy Children withal: And yet the Duty of attending on all the Means of recovering it, is not thereby suspended, but on the other Hand urged by it. Never hath a Soul more Need of getting near to Christ, than when Satan and a misgiving Heart offer most strongly to perswade it to call in Question its Interest in him.

I believe that the Way for a Child of God to get more Light, more Settlement of his Hope, more comfortable Apprehensions of the Love of God, is, not to run away from Christ by neglecting of his Duty, but by running the faster unto him: If ever I have loved him, it becomes
me

me to maintain that Love, and not to impair it by an Alienation from his Communion.

Lord ! Whatsoever my Fears of my self are, yet I dare not to deny thy Grace. I find enough in me to make me loath my self in Dust and Ashes. My Faith and Love are so weak, & the contrary Corruption in me is so strong, that it grieves me, it shakes me, it gives mine Adversary the Advantage to frighten me : But yet I know that there is an *Assurance of Hope* ; there is an Evidence which encourageth the drooping Soul to wait on the Lord : And grant to me that I may herein testify my Sincerity, under all the Clouds of Discouragements that hang over me. I cannot live without thee, and Fellowship with thee, and that because I hope I can say, *That I have none in Heaven but thee, nor any Thing on Earth that I desire with thee* : Because I am perswaded that my Life and my Salvation is in thee, and for this Reason I dare not but to seek thee in thy Way, and lie at the Pool ; knowing that it is only in thy Light that I can see Light,

Come then, Oh my sinking Soul, wait here, seek after the Lord Jesus Christ, there where he is to be found ; and take up this firm Purpose, that if thou perishest, it shall be in the Way of seeking his Face, and not of turning thy Back on him, and resolve, that those who in this Way come unto him, *he will in no wise cast out.*

MEDITATION, XLIV.

II. *From the Sense of former Unprofitableness.*

NO sooner can I get one Fear over, but another afflicts me; as one Temptation seems to abate another steals upon me, and offers to discourage me from a chearful Serving of my Redeemer. I find that if I am by Grace excited to be serious and solemn in Attendance on his Institutions, a slavish Fear is ready to get the Mastery of that reverend Fear which he calls for; which instead of regulating me in, would drive me from my Duty, and in the Room of quickning me in, discourage me about it, and bring me into a *Dilemma* whether I had best to do it or no.

I have gone a great while to the Table of the Lord; I have set many a Time with his People, and partaken with them in the terrene Part of the Ordinance, and am afraid that I too much satisfied my self with that, and was over contented in carrying a visible Badge or Resemblance of a Christian. For when I come to cast up the Account of my profiting by the Ordinance, I am at a great Loss to know whether I have gained, or lost by it: And this makes me sometimes Question my Sincerity, and Interest in it; and at other Times to dispute with my self, and demur in my Mind, and say, *What is it that I go for? And why should I go any more?*

I consult with mine own Reason, & say, Am not I a Cause by Counsel? And doth not every rational Agent propose to himself some End and Advantage by what he doth? And is not the Hope or Expectation of that, the Motive and Spring of his doing it? And if he finds himself defeated in his Proposals, especially after several Essays, which prove frustrate, will he not say, It is vain for me to make any further Attempts, and accordingly to give it over as a Thing hopeless? And why should I not thus do as well as they?

I revolve many Things in my Mind, which I find to add to and greatly increase the Discouragement. I meditate on the Promise, which Christ hath made, of being present with, and in the midst of them that draw near to him: But alas! I come and cannot find him.

I can hear these and those speaking of the Comfort, the Raptures, the Sealings which they have met withal at this Table; how they were revived, quickned, and encouraged, and their Spices gave their Smell, and I am surprized with it; and now I reflect on my self and think, Why is it not so with me? Must I alone remain barren, my Roots dry, mine Heart dead, my Graces languish? Must I have not one Word, not one Look? I have tho't, Oh! how happy should I be, might I but find such Experiences as these? But whilst they flourish, I wither; whilst they gather fresh Vigour and Strength, I faint; whilst they can boast, *We sat under his Shadow with great Delight, and his Fruit was sweet to our Taste,* I am forced to cry out, *I sought him whom my Soul loveth, I sought him but I found him not:* Whilst they can come away from this holy Ordinance rejoicing, and bring their Sheaves with them, I come sorrowful and empty-handed.

I have not been altogether insensible of this Deadness and Unprofitableness ; and I can say truly that it is my Burden, and it costs me great Searchings of Heart. I have bemoaned my self, I have sought to the Lord, I have importunately begged of him for his Spirit and Presence with me ; but still I find my self at a Loss and perplexed.

And what shall I now do ? Shall I go again ? Shall I make one more Essay ? How often have I so resolved and done, and still am but where I was. And now I find strong Motions within me, urging and pressing me, and saying, Wait no longer, give over, thou dost but strive against the Stream ; nay, thou provest thy self to be an unworthy Communicant, and thereby aggravatest thy Guilt.

But no sooner do these Tho'ts assail me, and begin to prevail, and are just putting me on this desperate Conclusion, but my Heart misgives, and upbraids me, and tells me, this is mine Infirmity, and asketh me, Whither wilt thou go ? And where hopest thou to find Relief if not in this Way, which is of his Appointment ? It tells me that my Reasonings are carnal ; and that if I hearken to them, I shall but involve my self in Guilt, and increase my Sorrow. It asks me, if thou canst not find him there where he hath commanded the Blessing, where dost thou expect to meet him ? How vainly dost thou argue ?

Reason indeed saith, That if in seeking to obtain an End, we use such *Media* as have no Tendency to the compassing of it, but are in themselves improper, & on that Account we are disappointed, it is a sufficient Conviction, that we have been in a Mistake, & calls us to desist, Reason may also say, That if the End itself be a Thing not necessary for us to obtain ; and therefore, tho' we use Means in themselves

themselves accommodable; yet if, after our best Prudence and Industry used, they are blasted once and again, and a third Time, there may be an Hint in God's Providence, as if he would not give us Success in such a Design: Tho' this also is but conjectural; and God may sometimes call us to essay again. Nay Reason may say in such Things, the *Media* are proper, but thou hast not the Faculty or Skill in using them to purpose; and therefore they are out of thy Sphere, and beyond thy Calling; and therefore thou hast no Reason to expect Success in the Undertaking.

But none of all these Considerations will be a Parallel to the Case before thee: I may live and be happy tho' I am disappointed in my secular Projects; but I cannot live without Christ. God can make up to me my Loss in any Thing in this World, but nothing can be to me in the Room of Christ, and make up my losing of him. I may be mistaken in the Measures that I take in the Pursuit of other Things, but I am assured in what Way I can only expect to find and enjoy him. I may be deceived in my Judgment of the Vertue of the Means which I use to obtain my other Designs, but there can be no Error here: These are the Ways that God himself hath appointed and blessed: Here hath Christ commanded me to seek him, and wait for him. I may be mistaken, and think I have not met with him, when I have.

Tho' I have used the Means, yet I may have erred in the Manner of my Attendance upon them. I may have gone to them in mine own Strength, and not in his; I may have been too arrogant, and tho't that if I did but go, I must without fail speed, and did not humbly acknowledge his Liberty and Sovereignty. Possibly I went for

Comfort, when I wanted Abasement : I was too proud in my Preparations, and for that Reason he withheld the Manifestations of himself to me ; and in this very withdrawing he left a sensible Touch on me, which was a Fruit and Witness of his being still with me after the best Manner. However, this very Discouragement tells me that I am out of Frame. Shall I measure my Duty by the Success ? Am I bound to serve God no further than he answers me just as I would have it ? Am I to shake off my Obedience, whensoever I think that he withholds from me the promised Good ? Certainly this is not as it ought to be, and I have no good Reason to expect to find Consolation in this Way.

He may have come to me, and I observed it not ; because I looked another Way for him ; and I am not to despond as long as he continues me under a deep Sense of my Unprofitableness, and enables me bitterly to bemoan my self for it, and earnestly to crave his Help against it. If I receive any Thing at all from him, it is more than he owes me, any farther than he hath made himself indebted to me by the Promise of Grace ; and if he do not measure more to me, He is holy still.

If I must mourn whiles others rejoice, his Will be done ; and I will be thankful, if he pleaseth to maintain in me a Frame of Mourning after him : And tho' he hide his Face, I will wait for him ; and I believe it is my Duty to put my self in the Way wherein he hath required me so to wait. I know that the Command is my Warrant ; and for me to neglect will be my Sin : And I believe that the Blessing is his Prerogative to give.

I know that Men of Reason, if they use proper Means for the gaining of their Desires, will not be beat out by
some

some Disappointments, but will, if Opportunity present, try again, because there is no Ground of Despair, but that the next Essay may hit. And what tho' I have not succeeded at this and the other Ordinance, yet I may at the next. I have no Encouragement to hope to meet him if I tarry away, but I may if I go.

I will therefore persevere in attending on him, and seeking for him there. Lord ! Establish my Resolution, and, whiles I bemoan mine own Barrenness, let me not be suffered to charge any Blame on thee, but to take the whole Shame of it unto my self : And whiles I see and acknowledge that the moral Cause is in me, and the Obstruction ariseth from within ; it is my dead, and wandring, and stupid, and unbelieving Heart, that puts in to hinder my lively Communion with thee, which else I might enjoy.

I come to thee, that thou wilt graciously remove all that is impedimental to my free and full Communion with thee : I cannot do it for my self, but I look to thee who art able to do it in and for me. My Corruption is too hard for me, but thou canst subdue it, I resolve, but I forget my self ; I strive, but the Law in my Members captivates me : I think I will strictly watch mine own Heart, but it is gone out at unawares ; humble me out of all my carnal Confidence. I find experimentally that without thee I can do nothing : I know that this is my Duty, & I know that thou canst, and that none else can help me in it ; and I resolve, by thy Grace, that I will go no whether else, nor will I leave crying to thee.

Lord, strengthen me in these Resolutions, and grant, of thy free Benignity, that I may live to see that the Winter is past, and that the Spring is come, in which thy Grace in me may have a fresh Verdure, and I may feel thy
warm

warm Influences in thine Ordinances, to the refreshing and comforting of my Soul.



MEDITATION, XLV.

III. *From present Unpreparedness.*


 LAS! What shall I do? Can I do no Duty

 A with Freedom and Alacrity as I would? Must

 I still have some Weight or other to bear me

 down? Must I thus wrestle for every Inch of
 Ground in my christian Course? Well! I would hope
 that I am in the right Way, because I experience so much
 Opposition, and so many Wrestlings in it; and I would
 prize that *Medium* of Communion with Christ which costs
 me so much Bickering with Temptation in my coming
 to it: Only this doth sometimes not a little involve me,
 to know whether the Suggestion which brings me to a
 Stand, be a Warning of the Spirit of God, or a cunning
 Insinuation of the Adversary, thereby to prevent me of
 the Delight and Benefit of such Communion.

And in nothing am I more perplexed, than in resolving
 whether I may, without involving my self in more Guilt,
 approach to his Table and participate in the Ordinance,
 when I find my self under such an indisposed Frame as at
 present I apprehend my self to be; I cannot but acknow-
 ledge it is my Sinfulness, that I am at any Time unpre-
 pared and out of Order for any Duty, that I am called to
 give Attendance on; nor can I justify my self in my Neg-
 lect

ect or Omission, by pleading that I was not ready ; and yet, on the other Hand, I am ready to muse, Will it not be daring Presumption in me to rush upon such an Ordinance, when I find my self in such a Posture as will render me very unlikely to meet with my Saviour, and enjoy his Blessing upon me, but will rather provoke him to holy Displeasure at me.

I know that it is my Duty in general to come ; but whether it be so in particular as Matters are circumstanced is to me a Matter of Doubt ; and how shall I be resolved ? This I am satisfied in, that I may be in a State of Grace, and so have a true Right in this Ordinance, which belongs to every one that is born of God, and is appointed as a suitable and necessary *Medium* of Growth in Grace, and maintaining of Fellowship with Christ : But I also know, that such an one may sinfully debar himself from present Actual Participation in it, and he should sin if he should approach to the Altar, until that *Remora* be removed.

Nor does the sole Judgment of this Matter belong to Others, whose Duty it is to keep the Table of the Lord from Pollution by such whose Conversation renders them a Scandal to their Profession, 'till by their suitable Repentance, the Obstruction is removed ; but more especially with the Man's own Soul, who ought to be better acquainted with himself than all the World besides.

I am (I confess it my own Fault and Folly, and do earnestly bewail it before God, that I am) so dead, so indisposed, so flat, in all my spiritual Dispositions ; I am gotten into such a Posture, that I find every Thing in me out of Order : I can find no Vigour or Activity in any Grace, how then shall I exercise it with that Life in my Communion, which my Lord requires and expects ; and without

without which I am like to come away as empty as I go. Instead of a lively Faith, I can hardly perceive whether I have any Life or no ; instead of flaming Love, mine is raked under the Embers, and I can discern scarce any Warmth at all in it. Sin that was sometimes a Burden and Bitterness to me, is now scarcely repented by me, and I am rather stupified ; instead of those Cravings and Longings of Soul after Communion with Christ, and crying out, When shall I come and appear before God ? I had such an Indifference in my Mind, that argues in me a very low Esteem of my Redeemer. I can set about no Duty of Self-Preparation, but I am disturbed and distracted in it, and diverted in my Thoughts from it, so as not to know where I am ; I am chained, fettered, led Captive by the Law in my Members : I am so full of vain Thoughts, Wandrings, roving upon carnal Objects, that I cannot tell how to get my Heart fixed. I have lost my self in the World, and the Incumbrances of it, so that there is grown an astonishing Estrangedness between Christ and me ; and I feel my self so stupid and impenitent under it, that I cannot tell how to mourn for it as I ought to do. I have gathered Dirt and Defilement by my converse with Things here below, and I know not how to get it off : I have slipt the Opportunity of due and solemn Preparation by my Avocations and Neglects.

And shall I, for all, come in this Pickle ! Shall I dare to adventure thus as I am ? Can I expect to be here entertained with any Thing but Frowns and Withdrawings ? Will not my Saviour check me, and say, How didst thou dare thus to come to this holy Table, and so defile it with thy polluted Hands ? Thus am I disquieted, thus am I brought into a grievous *Dilemma*. I am afraid

shall dishonour him by tarrying away, and I am afraid that I shall grieve his Spirit, and hurt my self by coming.

Lord, extricate me; shew me thy Will, and my Duty in this Regard: And to this End, help me in my present judging of my self, and let not my Heart deceive me, in the Resolution of this great Question.

I believe that there is a Frame which I may have contracted, and if it should abide on me, it would be a great hindrance in me so to come to thy holy Table. I believe there may be some Things so fall out, which, thro' my Neglect of duly attending what the Rule requires, may cut me off from an Advantage to get them regularly removed before the Season for Communion comes; and then it would be high Presumption in me, for all this, to make any Approaches to this Solemnity: But thro' Mercy, this is not my Case.

I also know that there are Indispositions which do and will cleave to the Children of God, and they shall find them, and encounter with them, in every Duty which at any Time they set themselves to the Performance of: And if these should drive them away from, they would never do, any Duty whiles they live; neither read the Word, nor hear, nor pray. But these Indispositions will not warrant a Neglect. To do nothing in the Service of God, but when the Spirit moves, or the Frame is on and eagerly set, and accordingly to wait for that, before we engage, is to follow an enthusiastical Spirit, and not to yield Obedience to the Command.

There is also a Preparation that may be made for our approaching to this Communion, in a shorter Time than many plead for: And it favours of Superstition to fix it to so many Hours or Days of providing for it. It is true,

we should keep always in a Readiness for whatsoever Acts of Worship we may be invited to : But there is, besides that, a serious setting our selves to get ready for the more solemn Approaches to God : But this is to be attended according as his Providence gives us the Opportunity : And may the Soul be but gotten into an humble and sensible Frame on Account of Follies and Indispositions, and truly penitent, it would be Sin and Folly to refrain from any Ordinance wherein there a present Advantage of drawing near to God.

How is it then with me on this Account ? How do I at present resent my Unpreparedness ? Doth it not at all affect me, am I not at all concern'd about it ? How is it then that I am brought into this Doubt and Distress ? Am I affected with it, and is it my Burden ? Can I then be so void of Reason as to reckon the Neglect of an Ordinance is an appointed *Medium* for the Removal of my Malady ? Where hath the Spirit of God in his Word ever thus prescribed to me ? True, when I am under a Duty to abstain, by reason of sinful Impediments, which cannot seasonably be removed : This is an Ordinance to me, to humble me, and to make me the more watchful to my self, and to raise in me the Value of Communion with Christ, by the Want of it, which I have foolishly brought my self under. But if the Spirit of God hath put into me a deep Sense of my Unpreparedness, and made me with godly Sorrow to repent that I am thus out of Order in my spiritual Frames, so as to begin to question my Duty ; this is proper to rouse me up to the Duty, whereby I may come in a better Readiness to receive and find Welcome with my Lord.

Say



T H E

C O N T E N T S.

PREF. *The Nature and Usefulness of divine Meditation in general, and of These particularly.*

Medi.	Page.
I. <i>ON the Good-Will of CHRIST in leaving us the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.</i>	1
II. <i>On the Elements chosen for it.</i>	3
III. <i>On the Bread.</i>	8
IV. <i>On the Wine.</i>	12
V. <i>On their sacramental Signification, or the Union between CHRIST and them.</i>	16
VI. <i>On the Danger of receiving only the Elements and not CHRIST.</i>	20
VII. <i>On discerning the Lord's Body.</i>	24
VIII. <i>On sacramental Eating and Drinking.</i>	27
IX. <i>On the New-Covenant sealed by the Sacrament.</i>	30
X. <i>On the sealing of the Covenant herein.</i>	33
XI. <i>On remembering of CHRIST in this Sacrament.</i>	37
XII. <i>On eating and drinking unworthily.</i>	41
XIII. <i>On Self-Examination.</i>	45
XIV. <i>On Examination of our State.</i>	49
XV. <i>On the same by Faith.</i>	54
XVI. <i>On the same by Repentance.</i>	58
XVII. <i>On the same by New-Obedience.</i>	63
XVIII. <i>On the same by the Spiritual Warfare.</i>	68
P	XIX. <i>On</i>

The CONTENTS.

	Page
Medi.	
XIX. <i>On the present Frame.</i>	72
XX. <i>On the Sufferings of CHRIST.</i>	77
XXI. <i>On the same.</i>	81
XXII. <i>On the Person suffering.</i>	85
XXIII. <i>On the Necessity of these Sufferings.</i>	88
XXIV. <i>On the Fulness of Satisfaction given.</i>	94
XXV. <i>On the Concurrence of the Three divine Persons in this Work.</i>	100
XXVI. <i>On the electing Love of GOD the Father.</i>	106
XXVII. <i>On the redeeming Love of GOD the Son,</i>	112
XXVIII. <i>On the applying Love of GOD the Holy-Ghost.</i>	118
XXIX. <i>On the Subjects of this Love.</i>	123
XXX. <i>On CHRIST's glorious Exaltation.</i>	127
XXXI. <i>On the Holiness and Righteousness of GOD.</i>	133
XXXII. <i>On the vile Nature of Sin.</i>	138
XXXIII. <i>On the Loveliness of CHRIST.</i>	143
XXXIV. <i>On the Exercise of Faith.</i>	148
XXXV. <i>On the acting of Love.</i>	153
XXXVI. <i>Imbittering of Sin.</i>	158
XXXVII. <i>Complaints of Deadness and Indisposition.</i>	163
XXXVIII. <i>Engagements to Holiness.</i>	169
XXXIX. <i>Crucifying of carnal Affections.</i>	175
XL. <i>Fortifying of Patience.</i>	179
XLI. <i>Forgiving of Injuries.</i>	184
XLII. <i>On Recovery after Sicknes.</i>	189
<i>Discouragements resisted.</i>	
XLIII. 1. <i>From doubting about an Interest in CHRIST.</i>	197
XLIV. 2. <i>From the Sense of former Unprofitableness.</i>	204
XLV. 3. <i>From present Unpreparedness.</i>	210

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