

Monergism

**THE SAINT'S  
INHERITANCE  
AND THE  
WORLDLINGS  
PORTION**



Jeremiah Burroughs

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# **The Saint's Inheritance and the Worldlings Portion**

Representing The Glorious condition of a child of God, and the  
Misery of having ones Portion in this World.

Unfolding the State of true happiness with the Marks, Means, and  
Members thereof.

By JEREMIAH BURROUGHS.

Psal. 144.15.

Blessed is that People whose God is the Lord.

London, Printed for Francis Eglesfield, at the Marigold in St. Paul's  
Church-yard, 1657.

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in archaic script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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## **The Authors Epistle to the Reader**

It hath been the way of God in speaking to men, and drawing their hearts to him, to apply himself to them, in those things they have skill of and are acquainted with. When Christ was revealed to the Wise men that came from the East, it was by a Star: they were Astronomers, and conversed much in the contemplation of the Stars, and God speaks to them accordingly: When our Savior called Fishermen to follow him, he tells them. He will make them Fishers of men; he expresseth himself unto them in their own way.

And it may be the suitableness of these subjects may invite some to read this treatise, especially it being the desires of many that heard the same, and found some work of God upon their hearts by them, to have it by them; at first I was unwilling to let such sudden things appear so public, but after considering, that some way it may be useful, and a little good is worth much of my time and labor, who

knows what a truth, what a hint fitted to the apprehensions of people in their own way may do, therefore here you have it, and the Lord prosper it to you.

Yours in Christ,

JER. BURROUGHS.

To the Reader.

Know Christian Reader, that Part of this Work was perfected by the Author in his life time. But it pleased God to take him away before the rest was finished, whereby the Copy was for a time mislaid, and with some difficulty at length procured, which is now published for thy good. Bless God for preserving such a Jewel; and see thy soul be enriched by it. Let it not be said, there was a Prize put into thy hand, but thou hadst not a heart to make use of it. Remember thou hast an immortal soul, and art capable of living in immortal glory, therefore be not put off with the things of this life. Let not that satisfy thy soul, which may stand with the eternal hatred of the great God, least while others partake of an Inheritance above, thou have a Portion with reprobates below. Thou mightest have been past reading or hearing of these things, and have found by sad experience, what it is to be excluded the Saints felicities. Embrace the Opportunity and pass by the escapes of Printing.

So Farewell.

## **The Worldling's Portion.**

From men of the world, who have their portion in this life. -  
Psalm 17.14

This Psalm is David's moan unto God under Saul's persecution; sine dubio Saulum (saith Molerus upon it) without doubt the Psalmist aims at Saul in it, wherein we have these four things.

First he appeals unto God to judge the uprightness of his heart, towards Saul. Let my sentence come from my presence; from Saul and his Courtiers there comes a hard sentence, they call me Traitor, they call me Rebell, but Lord leave me not unto their sentence, let my sentence come from thy presence that I know will be another sentence, then what cometh from them, for thou hast proved me and tried me, and findest nothing in me; that is the first thing.

Secondly, his prayer to God to keep him in his way, his going, and his footsteps from sliding, Lord whatsoever the wrath of Saul be against me, yet let neither that, nor any other thing put me out of thy way but keep my heart close unto thee, and keep my paths in thy way, let not my footsteps so much as slide from thee, for Lord they watch at my halting, if they can find but the least slip from me, they take advantage of it to the utmost, and I am a poor, weak creature; therefore Lord keep me that my footsteps may not slide.

Thirdly, he prays for deliverance, show thy marvelous loving kindness to me O Lord; my straights they are marvelous, I know not what to do, nor whether to turn me, but my eyes are towards thee, as my straights are marvelous, so let thy loving kindness be marvelous towards me, and keep me as the apple of thy eye, O Lord, I am but as a dog, a vile creature in the eyes of Saul, and those about him, but

blessed be thy name, I can look up to thee, and know that I am dear unto thee, as the apple of thy eye; all the Saints of God are dear to God, at all times, but the persecuted Saints, they are the apple of God's eye; if at any time they are dear to God, then especially when they are most persecuted, they are the apple of his eye, and the apple of an eye you know is weak, and little able to resist any hurt, which makes men the more tender of it; the more weak and shiftless God's people are for themselves, the Lord is so much the more tender over them.

And one argument that the Psalmist useth in praying against his enemies is this, and a special one, because they prospered so much in this world, they are enclosed in fat, and have their hearts desire, and thou fillest their bellies with thy hid treasure, they leave to their babes, they have their portion in this life; Lord keep me from them.

Lastly he doth profess his resolution, yet notwithstanding all the dangers he was in, to go on in the ways of God, and expects a gracious issue, but I (saith he) will behold, thy face in righteousness; indeed I cannot behold the face of the King without danger, there are a great many that run to kill me, and I desire his face, but though I cannot see his face, yet Lord I shall behold thy face, I will behold thy face, and it shall be in righteousness, I will still keep on in the ways of righteousness, and when I awake, for I believe that these troubles will not hold long: I shall not sleep a perpetual sleep, but I shall be delivered, and satisfied with thy likeness, there shall be the manifestation of thy glory to me, that shall satisfy me for all the troubles that I have endured for thy names sake, that my soul shall say, I have enough; this is the sum of this Psalm.

Now the words read unto you, are a description of David's adversaries, implying an argument, why he would be delivered from

them; they are described to be men of this world, they were only those that were adversaries to him; and a comfort it must needs be to the Saints of God, to see that none are their enemies, but worldly persons, men of this world, who have their portion in this life; they have somewhat here, and here is all they are like to have.

Secondly, it implies the argument, why he would be delivered; Lord deliver me from them, because they are men of this world, who have their portion in this life; where lies the force of this argument, that he would be delivered from them because they were men of this world, that have their portion in this life; It consists first in this, Lord, they care not what injustice they do, they have no regard of anything but in this world, therefore be it right or wrong, may they have but their lusts in this world, that is all they care for; Lord deliver me from such men; Secondly, here is all their good, their portion is in this life, and therefore they are greedy upon this, and if they may have this, let it be with the ruin of never so many men, though it be to raise their estates by my ruin, and the ruins of others, that are never so innocent, what care they are greedy upon having their lusts satisfied, for here is all their portion; they care not for religion, they will make use of pretenses of religion any way for their own ends; what care they what pretenses they make for religion, so they may thrive in the world they regard not anything in religion, so they may have their own ends; Lord, deliver me from such men; Thirdly, they have their portion in this world, hence is it that their hearts are so swelled with pride in their lusts, and so warm, their malice is so heated that it is outrageous; O let not the foot of pride come upon me; deliver me from proud men that flushed with the enjoyment of their hearts desires; As long as they may have their own ends, and fulfill their lusts, they will be exceedingly hardened in their own ways, they will give no glory to thee, but will be so much the more enraged against thy people, by taking that as an argument that their ways are good,



Lord, therefore deliver me from those men; they scorn at prayer, or anything that is said, concerning the tenderness of Conscience; they despise Conscience and Prayer; Lord, let me never fall into the hands of such; deliver me from the men of this world, who have their portion in this life; from the men of the world, that is from mortal men, from men though of the world, yet are not like to enjoy the world long, so some translate it, Remember how short my time is, saith David how short, what little time I have in this world, the men of this world, shall have but a little time here, the Hebrew word that is translated men, with the change of the position of one prick, signifies dead men, mortui, as well as viri, (I say) with the change not of a prick, but only of the position of one prick, of one point, it signifies dead men; they are men of the world, but such men as are within one prick of death, within one point of death, howsoever they rejoice in this life; They are men that have all they have but only leased for their lives, nay, not so much as leased, they have but an estate of life at the most, and this present life unto them, as instead of all lives.

There are these two doctrinal conclusions in the words, that lie plainly before you; The first is, there are a generation of men, to whom God gives some outward good things for a while, but these are all that ever they are like to have, they shall never have any more good from God, then that they have here for the present; Secondly, that God's Saints do desire to be delivered from such kind of men; these two contain in them the hope of the holy ghost in the words.

First; there are a generation of men unto whom God gives out a portion, some comforts in this world, and here is all that they are like to have; And now set your hearts I beseech you, unto what I have to say in this argument, for meditating what to pitch upon for such an assembly, I could not determine of an argument that I thought might

more reach unto the hearts of those to whom I was to speak than this, and I hope before I have done, you will find it such a serious argument that concerns us all.

I have read of Gregory that being advanced to preferment, he professed that there was no Scripture that went so to his heart, that struck such a trembling into his spirit, and daunted him so much as that Scripture did, Here you have your reward, Son in your life time you have had your pleasure; O this was a dreadful Scripture that sounded in his ears continually; as Jerome speaks of that Scripture, arise ye dead, and come to judgment; night and day he thought that Scripture sounded in his ears; so Gregory here, you have your reward in this life, you have had your pleasure; this was the Scripture that night and day sounded in his ears; O that it might please God to assist me so far this day, that I might make this Scripture ring in your ears, even when you lie upon your beds, after the Sermon is done, that you may not forget the sound of it, Men of this world, who have their portion in this life; if this Scripture should prove to be the portion of any one of you, of the richest in this place, woe unto him, that ever he was born, which I shall anon make out fully to you.

But (you'll say) do you think to preach to men that have their portion here in this life? I fear me, I may meet with such, whom it nearly concerns in this congregation, therefore be not any of you too ready to put off this from you, to think yourselves, out of the danger of this Scripture; for it was spoken concerning Saul, and Saul might have (for ought I know) as strong arguments of God's love to him, as many of you, I fear have this day.

For 1. Saul was a man chosen immediately by God himself to be the first King that ever was over his own people, and was not that a great favor.

2. Saul for his person was one of the godliest men that was amongst all Israel; higher from the shoulders to the head, then any of them; and for his endowments he was a man, whom God did endow with admirable gifts of government, he caused another spirit to come upon him; he was a man that when he heard of his preferment, seemed to be very humble, as judging himself unworthy of such a dignity, saying, who am I, and what is my Fathers house, that I should be thus exalted; and when he had been chosen, some that would reject him, notwithstanding God's honoring of him, Saul had a mighty power over his spirit, he was very week and a quiet man; for the Text saith, he held his peace, when the Children of Belial said, what have we to do with him; yea.

3. Though he were quiet in his own cause, yet he showed himself to have an excellent spirit in a public cause, he was full of anger: when it was for the good of the people that he was a governor over: when he heard of a dishonor done to the people of Israel, the Text saith, that his anger did rise within him; an excellent pattern for all Governors, for all in public places, to be very silent, quiet, self-denying putting up wrongs, in their own cause, but to be full of zeal for the public cause; to reserve their spirits for a public good; Many, when they are anger'd in their private cause, and so full of violence, and spend their spirit there so much, that they have no spirit at all, when it comes to a public cause, Saul went beyond them in this.

Further, Saul was one who was much troubled at the sin of the people against God, he had not only a spirit to vindicate public wrongs, but when he saw the people sin against God, his heart was much troubled thereat, and grieved for it, and being mighty solicitous and careful to prevent sin in the people, this you shall have in the first of Samuel 14.33, they told Saul there that the people had sinned in eating with blood, upon that, Saul shows himself

displeased, come (saith he) and do not sin against the Lord, roll a stone hither; he would see with his own eyes, that they did slay the cattle, and they did pour forth the blood that they might not sin against God in eating blood; this was his care; yea he was very diligent to inquire of God what he should do in businesses of great consequence, he would not go out, till he had first inquired of God.

Yea more then all this, he was a man that had a very reverend esteem of the Prophets of God; when Samuel came to him, O thou blessed of the Lord (saith Saul to him) when Samuel showed unto him, what his sin was, he came and confessed it before the people, saying, I have sinned, I have sinned against the Lord, merely at the conviction of one Prophet.

And God seemed to be with Saul very much, showing great respect to him, to make him an instrument of much good to Israel; he granted unto him as glorious a victory as ever man had in this world, for so we may call it, and if there be any outward thing in the world, might be gathered as an argument of God's love, such a remarkable victory as he had over his enemies; well might the victory you shall find in the first of Samuel 13, where the Philistines were risen up against him and there were 30000 chariots, of his adversaries, and 6000 horsemen, and people as the sand of the Sea for multitude; well, here was a mighty enemy, what had Saul to oppose these? You shall find that there were but 600 men with Saul; there was of one side 30000 Chariots, 6000 horsemen, and people as the sand of the Sea without number, and Saul had but 600 with him at this time, yea and of those 600 there was not any one of them, that had a sword, but only Saul and Jonathan; for the Philistines were wise enough to disarm all the malignants that they accounted so, and would not let so much as a smith be amongst them; they would not only take away their arms, but they would look to them to see that they had no arms supplied

unto them, that was the wisdom of the Philistines, yet we find, if you read afterwards in the Scripture, that God was so far with Saul, and blessed him, and gave him victory over all these; besides all this, God blessed Saul with a very gracious child, a Godly Son of a sweet nature, Jonathan, which indeed if any outward argument in the world, might be an argument of God's love; that might be.

Now put all these things together, and yet here is the man that hath his portion in this world; I now challenge him that hath certain evidence of a mighty work of God upon him in Christ, let him show me greater arguments of God's love to him, then Saul might have done, and yet it proved to be Saul's condition to have only his portion in this world; God herein shows that his mercy is his own, and that he will let out his mercy as he pleases, it is your Fathers pleasure to give you a Kingdom; the Father deals out the portion as he pleases unto his children; God will let the line of his mercy go thus far to one and there stop, and so far to another and there stop, and then come in a cross line again unto him.

God so disposes of his mercy, that there are some that shall have heaven and earth to be their portion, and their portion is blessed, indeed, there are some that shall have earth, but not heaven, and their portion is poor, and sad; there are others, that shall have heaven, but not earth, and their portion is rich and blessed; there are others that shall neither have heaven nor earth, and their portion, (you will say) is miserable indeed, God's mercy is his own to dispose of as he will; we read of Abraham : He calleth for Ishmael and Hagar, and he gives them a piece of bread, a bottle of water and sends them away, there is an end of them; so Jehoshaphat : He gave his other Son (saith the Text) gifts, but the Kingdom he gave to Jehoram; so God hath people to whom he gives pieces of bread, bottles of water, yea some, to whom he gives great gifts in this world, but he keeps his

inheritance for his Isaac's, he keeps the Kingdom for Jehoram; Esau he had his portion in this world, and such a portion as he thought to be a very good portion too: Brother (saith he) I have enough.

Most rich men go not so far as Esau, they have their portion, and yet complain of it, Esau had his portion, and thought he had enough; Christ's auditors, in the 6 of Luke 24, had their portion in this world, woe to you, here is your consolation, (saith Christ unto them) O dreadful speech, woe to this man, woe to such wretches, here is their consolation; Dives he had his portion in this world, Son remember in thy life time thou hadst thy pleasure, in thy life time, and thou hadst thy good things, they were thy good things, those things that were measured out for thee, thou hadst them in thy life time.

In the handling of this argument, I shall divide what I have to say into these six particulars, that you may every one of you go the more readily along with me; first, why it is that God will deal out somewhat to wicked men in this world, why they shall have any portion at all; Secondly, that this their portion, it is confined to this life; and why so; Thirdly, some Corollaries that you will see will naturally flow from those two; Fourthly, we shall consider the condition of these men, who are such that have their portion in this world; and fifthly, we shall endeavor to show unto you, who are those men, to cull out of the congregation, what that man is, and which is that woman, that is like to have their portion in this world, and then sixthly, conclude in the words of exhortation unto you all.

First then, God doth give to wicked men a portion, he deals out something to them in this world, because they are his creatures; saith Jehu concerning Jezebel, go take away this cursed woman, show some respect unto her, let her not lie in the streets, for she is the daughter of a King; so saith God, well, though these be vile persons,

yet they are my creatures, some respect they shall have from me, some good I will communicate to them.

It is not an argument strong enough, that because you are God's creatures, therefore God should be merciful eternally to you; but it may be argument strong enough, because you are his creatures, you shall have somewhat here; for this time of life, is the time of patience, the day of God's long suffering, and therefore somewhat you shall have.

Secondly, wicked men do somewhat for God here, some kind of service that is at least materially a service for God, and God will not have them clamor upon him, that they have nothing for their work, God will give to everyone, what they do for him, though it be never so little, you have a famous place for that in Ezekiel: Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon caused his army to do great service against Tyrus, yet had he no wages for it. Therefore God enquires about this, and seems to complain why Nebuchadnezzar should be all this while without his wages; therefore, behold I will give the land of Egypt unto him, he shall take her spoil, and her prey, and that shall be his wages.

Many wicked men, God doth make use of in divers services, and much refreshing and good his Churches shall have from them, the Lord causes the very earth to help the woman, earthly men to be of use to the Church; and God will not be beholding to them for their work; A thorn may serve to stop a gap, though it be but a thornbush, and if it serve to stop a gap and be of any use, it hath some benefit by it, all that while it is kept from the fire; whereas were it not of use, it might presently be brought to the fire; An argument by the way for all men to be of as much use to the Church of God, as possibly they can, it may be that is the very thing that keeps them from the fire;

thou art a thorn, but God hath use of thee, and therefore brings thee not to the fire, but if thou once comest to be unuseful, the fire is the next thing thou shalt hear off, I remember Austin, speaking of the Romans that had such a flourishing condition for a while, gives this for one reason of it, that the Romans had brave spirits, they were men that had excellent moralities, and heroic kind of spirits, they were delivered from that baseness of spirit, that other people had, and therefore God showed some kind of respect to them; many instances might be in this kind.

But thirdly, God gives wicked men a portion here to show the world, what little good there is in all the things that are here below; certainly if there were much good, they should never have them; it is an argument, there is no great excellency in the strength of body, for an ox hath it more then you; an argument there is no great excellency in Agility of body, for a dog hath it more then you; an argument no great excellency in gay clothes, for a Peacock hath them more then you, it's no argument there is any great excellency in gold and silver, for the Indians that know not God, have them more then you; and if these things had any great worth in them, certainly God would never give them to wicked men; as it is an argument, there is no great evil in afflictions in this world, because the Saints are so much afflicted; so it's no great argument there is any great good in this world, because the wicked they enjoy so much of it, Luther hath such an expression as this.

The Turkish Empire, as great as it is, is but a crumb that the M r of the family casteth to dogs; such an esteem had Luther of the whole Turkish Empire, and indeed God in giving of them worldly goods to Turks and wicked ones, who are his enemies shows there is not much excellency in them; God therefore casts them promiscuously up and down the world, because he looks upon them as worthless things,



God doth not so much regard whether subjects be prepared to give him his glory of them, yea or no, you shall have them however, he is content to venture them.

Indeed when God cometh unto his choice mercies in Christ, there he looks to have glory from them, and he doth never give them to any, but first he prepares them that they may give him the glory of those mercies; but it is otherwise with others; as suppose you see a man but gathering of crabs although swine be under the tree, he cares not much to drive them away, they are but crabs, let them have them; but if he were gathering any choice and precious fruit, if any swine should come under he drives them away: so as for outward things, Crabs, the Lord suffers the swine of the world to come grunting and take them up, but when he comes to the choice mercies in his Christ, there he makes a distinction; O that is precious fruit; a Blacksmith that is working upon iron, though a great many cinders and little bits of iron fly up and down he regards them not, but a Goldsmith that is working upon gold, he preserveth every ray and every dust of gold; and a Lapidary that is working upon precious stones, every little bit he will be sure to preserve; a Carpenter that is only hewing of timber, he much regards it not, if chips fly up and down, but it is not so with a Lapidary; so these outward things are but as the chips, and cinders, and such like trash, and therefore God gives a portion to wicked men out of them.

And then further, God knows that he hath time enough to manifest his justice upon them, he hath an eternity hereafter for the declaration of his justice against sinners; and therefore lets them have somewhat, for a while; as you know it is natural in all, when they see a man going to execution, that is not like to live above an hour or two, everyone is ready to pity him, and to be any way officious to him, O saith one, the man shall not have comfort long, we

cannot do much for him, he will have misery enough, shortly, and it is observable, let a man go to execution for wickedness, and then he is pitied by all; but if a man should suffer for godliness, then perhaps they will not be so full of pity towards him; as I remember in the book of Martyrs, there is a story of Mr. John Frith, a learned godly Minister, and Andrew Huet that were martyrs, and were to suffer for their consciences, and the story tells us of one Dr. Cook a Parson in London, that openly admonished the people that they should pray for them no more than they would do for a dog, that charity of theirs that they talk so much of, is such towards them that suffer out of conscience; and as amongst Papists, so amongst ungodly men, let a man suffer out of conscience, they will rather rail at him, and when they are in their sufferings, they will rather give them gall and vinegar to drink, as they once did Christ upon the Cross; though in other sufferings they will pity men.

Fifthly, by this that God gives to the wicked the Lord shows what great things he hath reserved for his own children; surely if the dogs have so much, the Father keeps a good house, if the hang-byes may have such doles, certainly there is good provision for the children within, as by the afflictions of the Saints, God doth declare to wicked men, and would have them draw such an argument from it; that there are fearful things that are like to befall them, if judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the wicked and ungodly appears so by the prosperity that wicked men have in this world, God doth declare to his children, and he would have them argue from thence, what then hath he reserved for his beloved ones, for his Saints, for his Children that are so dear unto him.

Sixthly, God fetches a great deal of glory from hence, he fetches about his own ends very much, from the portion that wicked men have; as sometimes he doth it that they might stumble and harden

their hearts, and break their necks at it, and to ripen their sins, hence he lets them go on a long time, and have their wills; We to thee who spoilest, and wert not spoiled, and dealest treacherously, and wert not dealt treacherously with all, when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; I will let thee go on, thou shalt spoil as much as thou wilt, and when thou hast done spoiling, thou shalt be spoiled thyself; sometimes God doth it, to fetch about this end, namely, to chastise his own people with the prosperity of the wicked, as I have read of one, being a Monk was advanced to come into an Episcopal seat, and being a lewd wicked man, he began to be proud of his advancement, whereupon he heard a voice uttering these words, cur superbus O infelix, &c. why art thou so proud, O unhappy man, thou art not advanced, because thou art worthy of this honor, but because this City is so ill, that it deserves such a Prelate to be over it, in way of judgment to that place. God advances some man out of ways of heavy judgments unto others, God gives them such a portion not out of love to them, though they are ready to gather the argument, but out of his displeasure unto others; and then, he gives a plentiful portion to many, to teach us all to do good unto our enemies, not only humanitati as they say, but homini not only to human nature, but to men, to men that are wicked, some good must be done unto them.

And besides the Lord would show hereby, that he would have no argument of love or hatred to be drawn from these outward things; and indeed because he would not have them to expect anymore; it may be many men that are ungodly, prospering in this world, they gather this argument, that therefore God loves them, and intends mercy to them; no, you may rather gather an argument quite the other way because God intendeth no further good unto you hereafter, therefore it is, you have so much now; we use to answer men that come for their dole, when they come twice, why do you come again, you have had your dole already; so will God answer to many men,

when they shall cry to him for mercy at that day, why come you to me for more, you have had your dole already; have you not had already more than your works comes to, more then you have done; you have had your part and portion already; indeed men speak much of God's mercy, and the mercy of God we acknowledge to be very great, and glorious; well, God doth show himself glorious in mercy that thou being so wicked hast so much as thou hast in this world; and therefore though thou shouldst be denied of eternal mercy hereafter, yet thou hast cause to tell devils and damned creatures that shall be thy company, that God was very merciful to thee, while thou diddest live in this world.

But secondly, here is all that ever thou art like to have; 1. because there are some men whose names are written in the earth, whereas the Saints are described to be men that are redeemed from the earth. It is their happiness to be redeemed from the earth, and all the happiness thou hast is that thou art written in the earth. 2. here is their portion, because they are vile in the eyes of God; if you should ask the question, why you give bones to the dog, and swill to the swine, and nothing else, why the answer would be, because it is a dog that hath it, and because it is a swine, it is dogs meat; certainly God doth speak exceeding contemptibly of all ungodly ones in the world, let them be never so great in regard, of outwards; a vile person shall arise saith Daniel; what is this vile person? Interpreters generally consent in this, that it is meant of Antiochus Epiphanes, that was a mighty great Prince, such a Prince as when the Samaritans did write to him, they write Antiocho magno Deo, to Antiochus the great God, and his very name shows him to be a great one, Antiochus Epiphanes, as much as Antiochus the illustrious, and the famous, and yet when the holy Ghost speaks of him, it is Antiochus a vile person, they are vile in the eyes of God; if there be any in a family that you care not much for, you make no great provision for them;

doth God take care for Oxen? Somewhat they have but little; doth God take care for ungodly men. 3. Here is their portion, it is confined to this life, why they chose it themselves, and in that they have no wrong, they make choice of this portion themselves; Moses speaking to the people saith he, I set before you life and death; so do the Ministers of God in preaching to you, they set before you life and death, what do you choose now? You choose the way that goes to death, you have but your choice; you choose vanity to be your portion, God does you no wrong to give you vanity; now you that will indent with God for your penny, you cannot take it ill, if when the end of the day comes, God puts you off with your penny.

You know those in the vineyard, that agreed for their penny, they began to murmur indeed, when they came to receive their wages; but saith the Mr. of the vineyard, did you not agree with me so? So you agree with God; all you intend in God's service is, that you may have some present comfort in this world, you dare not trust God for the future, and here is that that God will show his infinite displeasure against the sin of distrust by, that when the Lord propounds now in this day of grace, such glorious and blessed things to the children of men, and for ought you know, any of you may have your portion in them, as well as others, and yet you dare not trust God for these gracious things; you think rather with yourselves, let me have somewhat now, somewhat for the present, that for the present is real, that which you talk off, is to come, and I know not whether they be imaginations or no; Therefore you mean it seems to serve God for your present pay, and present pay you shall have and no more; there are some servants that are your day laborers, that expect their pay at night, and if you give them that there is an end, but there are other servants, that will serve you in expectation of a reversion, and expectation of preferment, especially when they serve noble men and Princes, though they have no present pay given them at night, yet

they go on cheerfully in their service, they expect some great reversions and leases, and preferments afterwards; and now though they have nothing at present, yet when the other befalls them, they and their posterities are enriched; this is the direct difference between the men of the world and God's children; the men of the world will do nothing without present pay, that which is just before them they must needs have, their hearts are upon that; but the Saints they hear what a blessed thing God hath revealed in his word, what a blessed Covenant of grace there is, what rich promises of glorious things to come, now they believe God, and trust in God for these, and they say, Lord let me have my portion in the life to come, and whatever thou doest with me here, I care not; as it was the speech of Austin, Lord, here burn, here cut me, but spare me hereafter; I am content (Lord) to be burnt, to be cut, to endure anything in the world, only hereafter I look for somewhat else, and I will wait for hereafter.

You'll not wait for hereafter, but you must have it for the present, and that is the reason you are put off here; O it is a serious thing, I speak off to you, many a soul will wring its hands, and curse itself eternally, that it was not content to trust God for hereafter, but would have present pay; you that are great Merchants, if you buy a thing that is but a trifle, you pull out your purse, and give the money down presently, but suppose you go to the exchange and bargain for 1000 l. there you may give a little down now, but the great pay must come upon pay days afterwards, it is not expected it should be presently done; so there are some men in the world will trade with God, but they trade with God for piddling things, for their credit, and applause, and for their preferments and estates: God gives down the pay presently, you shall have it, there is your money presently, it is done; but now there are other of God's Saints that trade with God for great things, for immortality and glory, and a Kingdom, and the

Crown of eternal life, now they expect not to have it down presently they are content to stay; O these are the best Traders, the best Merchants, that will trade with God for great things, and be content to stay.

Further these things that are here, they are the only suitable things to your hearts, and what will you do with anymore hereafter, these things do exceedingly please you, and give you content as agreeable to you, and the things that are to come, are disagreeable; what would men do that are carnal and wicked now, what would they do in heaven, certainly if you hate God's Saints now, that have but a little grace, you would hate them infinitely more afterwards, when they are perfect in grace; and when all your common gifts shall be taken away, for so it shall be; now the things of God are unsuitable to you, though you have now many common gifts, and you now abhor the grace of God, though it be imperfect, what then, when all common gifts shall be taken from you, and grace made perfect, how unsuitable will it be then to you; therefore expect nothing hereafter.

Again 5. You abuse your portion you have now, what will you do with more, who will trust you with the true riches, you abuse that you have; indeed men of the world that are wicked, and very rich, and preferred to places of honor and power, O what a deal of mischief they do in the world, what dreadful evils are they unto the earth; such men, how do they abuse their portions; why now as it is with a tooth in a man's head, a tooth indeed is preferred to have an eminent place in the head, but when the tooth comes to be rotten, painful, what do we, but pull it out, and throw it away: so though God prefers men to eminent places, when through their wickedness they grow rotten, and do hurt, the Lord plucks them out in his anger; they abuse their portion, and do a great deal of mischief, therefore must expect to be thrown away.

But above all, the argument is, because they have no interest in Jesus Christ; the rich treasures of the infinite grace of God, are let out in Christ; God hath divers conduit pipes, (as I may say) of his grace, to let out unto his creatures; there are some lesser conduit pipes, and those conduit pipes may be opened through the general bounty of God; but now the Lord hath the great current of his eternal mercies, for some that he doth intend eternal good unto, and this great current of his, it is stopped by justice, the infinite justice of God doth stop this great current, so as it cannot be opened to have any drop of that mercy let out, until the divine justice comes to be satisfied; in the meantime the other smaller pipes run, the general bounty of God still flows; Christ therefore out of pity to mankind that they may not be put off, with these general outward comforts, he comes and satisfies God's infinite justice, that he might open the current, the sluice of his infinite and eternal grace to others; now happy are those creatures, who have interest in the Lord Christ, for this is his work to satisfy the justice of the Father, that so the great pipe may be opened, and then flows in all grace, infinite eternal grace, when that comes once to be opened, no marvel though we hear of such glorious things, that the Saints of God have in the life to come, no marvel, why Christ doth come and opens the great sluice of God's infinite grace and mercy to them; as for the men of the world, they have but a little of the drizzling's of God's general bounty through some crannies, but the floodgates of God's grace are opened in Christ: therefore till divine justice be satisfied, there can be no further good for poor man, but merely the fruits of God's general bounty, and patience.

There are some creatures, whom the Lord hath left to the course of justice, they shall have what they earn, and no more; others there are, whom God hath set his heart upon, and whether they earn or no, God intendeth eternal mercies to them, here is the difference of the Covenant of works, and the Covenant of grace, and therefore the one



is left to himself: and the other, Christ the head of the Covenant comes to undertake for him what he cannot do; they who are not children, and must not expect children's portions, as many of you rich men, when you die, you will leave your servants some legacy; perhaps you'll give every servant in your house 5.l. or so, but when you come to your children, to write in your will, what such a son, and such a daughter shall have, that is another manner of business, then 40.s. or 5.l.? Great things you leave to them.

So the world may be divided between children and servants, for though the truth is, all men are at defiance with God, yet God maketh them servants one way or other, and there is some little legacy that servants shall have but they must not expect the children's portion; therefore they have it here, but must not have it hereafter.

Thus saith the Lord, if the Prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance shall be his sons, but if to his servant, then it shall be but till Jubilee; this was God's law, that if a Prince gave a gift to his son, his son should inherit it forever, but if he give it to a servant; it should continue with him but for a while; Here is the difference of God's administration of all his gifts, he giveth some to servants, and these shall continue for a time, with in a little while all will be called for again, all the good and all the comfort thou hast, God will call for it again; but now that which he gives to his children, they shall have forever, their pleasures are durable and their mercies everlasting.

Again the portion that the world hath here comes from God's patience, now there will be an end of the manifestation of the glory of patience in this world; as there are some graces of the Spirit of God in the Saints, that shall have an end in regard of their exercise in this world, so there are some attributes of God that shall have an end in regard of the manifestation of them in that way that God doth now

manifest them in this life, and that is the patience of God towards ungodly ones, now if they hold all upon patience (mark, they hold all upon patience) when that expires, then all their good is at an end.

And ungodly men, shall have to deal with God immediately in the world to come (I beseech you observe but this answer) now they have to deal with God through creatures, and while they have to deal with God through creatures, they may get a great deal, and may make shift for much, but when they shall come to have to deal with God immediately, then it will be otherwise with them, as for example, there are a great many hang-byes at great men's houses, perhaps when they come to have to deal with the servants, they get some bits and scraps, and many things of the servants; but if they know they can have nothing, but from the very hand of the Knight or Lord of the house himself, then they will expect no great matter; so wicked men in this world, they are as hang-byes and all that they have, are but as scraps from the servants, they have to deal only with creatures, they look no further; But hereafter things shall be settled another way, and all things shall be weighed by God himself, in a balance of justice, and distributed by the hands of God himself immediately, and then things will be carried after another manner, the Lord himself will come to dispose of things.

Then it was a speech of a German Divine, though he were a good man, and lived very innocently, when he lay upon his sick bed and apprehended death, he was in great terrors of spirit, mightily troubled, and some of his friends came to him, and asked him, why should you be so troubled, that have lived so good a life as you have done? This was his answer: The judgments of God are one, and the judgments of men are another, I have now to deal with God, it is true, I lived thus before men, and men gave their verdict of me as good, and thought I was in a good condition, but O, I am now to go to

God, and to deal immediately with him, and God's judgments and man's judgments are different things; when God shall come to weigh all men's portions out, as it will be, then so much righteousness, so much happiness; you will say then, Lord what shall become of us all, all our righteousness is as the menstruous cloth; I but for the Saints, the righteousness of Christ will be put into one scale, and their portion into the other, and their portion will be weighed by the righteousness of Christ; Now when thou comest to God, thou must come to the scale, and thou wilt put in thy good servings of God, and thy coming to Church, and some good civil actions and moral things thou hast done, thou wilt put them in the scale, God will say, that thou hast had already, weighs down all those. Hast thou nothing to put into the scales but this? Thou hast had thy reward already for all this, and much more, then, if there be nothing to put into the scale but this, thou art undone, and there is nothing for thee for eternity; and these are the two first things; now then some Corollaries from hence, and then we will proceed unto the other.

Is it so that wicked men have a portion here, and that is all they shall have. 1. Then, we may see a reason, why the men of the world are so cunning in the things of the world, why they can make a better shift for themselves, in the world, then other men can, why, here is their portion, their very happiness, and good is here; no marvel though they speed so well as they do: We have not received the spirit of the world (saith the Apostle,) we cannot tell how to shift in the world, so as other men do, for indeed we look further then these things; you know a swine though it goes away abroad all day wandering up and down, it knows the way to the trough at night; but if a sheep wander a little out of his place, it knows not how to come back again, but wanders up and down till it be lost; swine are not so, ungodly men, though they go up and down wandering, they know how to come to their trough at night, they have better skill in the world they are more

artificial in the things of this life, as the Scripture speaks, the children of this world, are wiser in their generation, then the children of light; why is it? Why, their portion is in this world.

Secondly, here we see the reason, why there are so great ones in the world, that regard religion so little as they do, and the ways of God, and the Church of God, why it is not their portion: those things that concerns another life, is not any part of their portion: they mind what it is that concerns the present life, because this is their portion; when many come into places of dignity, and power, what are their thoughts, why now they think of gratifying their servants; now they think of respect and honor that they shall have abroad in the world, and be accounted somebody, now they think of revenging all their wrongs, of making up of all their broken titles, &c. this hath been heretofore very ordinary in men advanced amongst you, these are all their thoughts as for doing service for God, and for the Church, and vindicating the truth of God, and his honor, that is scarce in all their thoughts, for they do not look upon that as part of their portion; here is the reason, why so many magistrates are like to Gallio, caring for none of those things; they were to him but matter of words, and yet they were about the great fundamental points of religion, whether Christ were the true Messias, and whether he were God or no, but to Gallio these things were but matter of words; and so the great things of God and religion to carnal hearts, are things, of no great consequence; yea, when as Sosthenes that was the ruler of the Synagogue for countenancing of Paul, had the rude multitude of the City, rose up to apprehend him; Gallio cared for none of these things; what did he care for rectifying anything that was amiss in religion.

O let us, (say they, that have their portion here) whatever becomes of things) let us have peace (say they) that we may live peaceably in our houses, and enjoy that we have quietly, they look no further than

that, because their portion is here; As for truth, how do they reject that, and contemn it; such a speech (as is credibly reported) hath come from a Citizen here even in cursing of truth, so, as had he lived amongst the Jews, he would certainly have been stoned to death; let us have peace, and a pox of truth; I say, such a speech as this, among the Jews would have caused him to have been stoned to death, being such horrible blasphemy, but how many are ready to say with Pilate; when as Christ talked to him of truth; truth (saith Pilate) what is truth? As if he had said, what a strange man is this, the man is in danger of his life, and he talks of truth, what is truth? (Saith Pilate) and turns it back upon him presently; just thus for all the world, are the hearts of many, they think what should we look at truth, or at anything now, but to preserve our lives and estates, and outward comforts in the world; what is truth?

They are a company of mad-brained-fellows, that are factious and seditious; who talk of truth, but know not what they say, come let us have peace though it be upon any terms; who is there in this place that desires it not, the Lord knows, peace it is the desire of those that are accused most for want of desires in this thing; yea, we dare challenge any of you, with this challenge; those who have been most at the Throne of grace begging unto God for peace for England, let them carry the day those that have put forth most prayers for peace before the Throne of grace, we are willing they shall have the day; we read that amongst all the tribes, that came up in a warlike-way to help the people of God against oppression in Judges: that of all Naphtali was the only tribe, that joined with Zebulun, that jeopardded their lives in the cause of God, that would take up arms to defend themselves and the people against oppression; surely these two tribes by the others that would not venture themselves, were at that time accounted very factious, and very seditious; what they only, Zebulun and Naphtali? Why, yet that is observable, though there

where none joined with Zebulun but only Naphtali, there is no tribe of which it is so much spoken, to be a tribe full of courtesy and civility, of a peaceable and quiet disposition, as Naphtali was; you shall find that, if you read the 49. of Genesis: there are these two things said of Naphtali, 1. that he was as a Hind let loose, and gave goodly words; I, but they may be but words of complement, and false; nay, when Moses comes with the blessing (you shall find these two places, one in Genesis, and the other in Deuteronomy) when Moses comes with the blessing upon Naphtali; Naphtali filled with favor, and with the blessing of the Lord; what is the meaning? Naphtali was a tribe that had most courtesy, and civility of all, compared to a goodly Hind, of a quiet disposition, and courteous language, one that had the favor of God, and the favor of men, and yet this Naphtali was the tribe that would jeopard their lives, and take up arms in defense of the people of God, against oppression in those times, above all.

And Phinehas that was so zealous, and would make use of the sword, God said, he would make a Covenant of peace with him; even with Phinehas that is such a fiery hot man, a Covenant of peace must be made with him, by God himself, for he did indeed by that way procure peace to Israel; for so the Text saith there in that place of Numbers, that because Phinehas was so zealous, it was (saith God) that I might not consume them in my jealousy; As if he should have said, if there had not been some amongst them, that had been zealous, and as they account fiery, I would have been zealous myself, and fiery myself, and consumed them; and it was well they had such amongst them; and one day those that cry out of them, may come to see cause, to bless God for them; we had such, would not have the world put off, and gulled with the fair name of peace; we know the devil hath made much use of words in former times, and would fain make use of it, as if those that desired truth most, were not greatest

friends unto peace, God forbid, but it should be so, why though it is true, we think not we have our portion here, and therefore we would not have peace upon any terms; Indeed we confess our portion lies higher, and that wherein our portion doth consist, we would have upon any terms; and therefore desire with Paul, If by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead; so if by any means, upon any terms, that I may have peace at the great day whatsoever I endure here; we would be glad that all our mountains were mountains of Olivet, but yet we would be loath to have them mountains of corruption; You read in the Kings of a mountain of corruption, of offense, so it is in the old Latin, now if we compare one Scripture with another, we shall find, that was no other but mount Olivet; mount Olivet was made a mountain of corruption : there Solomon did build idolatrous Temples for the honor of the God's of his Queen, those gods that his Queen did worship, Solomon built Temples for to gratify her, and it was upon the Mount before Jerusalem, which was the mount of Olivet, now you know the Mount Olivet had his name from Olives that did grow there, and were emblems of peace, but yet the mount Olivet may be made a mount of corruption; we would be glad that we might live upon mount Olivet, all our days, but are loath this mount Olivet should be made a mount of corruption.

Give me leave but in a few words, yet to put some considerations to you, and if I speak not reason in them, reject them; 1. because that you are so greedy of comforts in this world, you would fain have peace, but I hope a safe peace, and that is all we do desire; if the peace be not safe, O the blood that may follow after; we read in the 27 of the Acts v. 13. That there was indeed a calm, and the South-wind did blow softly for a while, but presently there did rise a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon; take we heed (my brethren) that we be not deluded with the softly South-wind, take heed that

there be not an Euroclydon, that blows presently after; were we sure to be delivered from that same Euroclydon, we should be glad of continuance of soft blowing's of the South-wind.

Can you think of a safe peace, to live under any arbitrary governments; no, that you will say; and therefore we account our condition ill now, for we have arbitrary governments amongst us still, do not the Parliament themselves govern in that kind?

Give me leave in a word to answer this; consider of the difference between the arbitrary government the Parliament complains off, and what now you feel; 1. that was then when the Kingdom was in a settled way, and especially when there was no contra arbitrary power to oppose it, yet then it went on, and surely then it did but make way for worse arbitrary government, but now it is in a way, when the Kingdom is unsettled, and in a way where there is a necessity of some help beyond the ordinary course of law, because of a contra arbitrary power that is opposed; and is it possible for any man that hath any wisdom, or understanding not to see the difference between these two?

But I will show you a greater difference then this, that that was before, those that governed then, suffered nothing in it themselves; but gained all; now those that are accused for the present, if that be arbitrary they suffer themselves as much as we do, and their posterity suffers as much as ours, therefore the thing is far different from what was before.

And yet further, if you would not be carried away with words, but judge righteous judgment, consider this: can you think that if the adversaries should prevail, you should be only at the dispose of the King? Do you not think that those that are with him, and give such strength and assistance to him, that you must not lie at their mercy



too, and will that be safe for you; I put it to every man's conscience, whether he can think that it is safer, for Church, or Commonwealth to be governed by the King with those that are now about him, and an army of Papists, or to be governed by the King with his two Houses of Parliament, which is the safest way in the consciences of any men living.

Yet further, consider, if you have your eyes in your heads, that perhaps what you aim at as your end, your adversaries may aim to be as their means, and what will become of you then, if that that you would have as an end, they shall look at but as a medium; consider what consequences, may come of that.

And lastly, you that do desire so much peace to preserve your own portions here, would not you willingly have such peace, as those that have appeared for you in houses of Parliament, in City, in Ministry, that have been most active be preserved too? Are you so desirous of it, as to be willing to leave them to the fury and rage of their adversaries? Were not this one of the horriest wickedness's that ever was committed in a Kingdom, when men from a desire to save their own estates particularly, should betray those that have been faithful to them in their places of trust.

It was a speech of Demosthenes, to one that would fain have peace. It is a vain and preposterous thing to desire peace with the flock, upon this condition, that the keepers of the flock may be betrayed; The fair name of peace will never prevail with a wise man, when this shall come to be the condition of it, (the good people in Chrysostom's time) thought it such a thing, to have but the mouth of one Chrysostom stopped, that they professed, if the Sun should turn back, and keep in her rays, it were more tolerable, then that the mouth of John Chrysostom should be stopped; they had such a high

esteem, of a faithful Minister in those times; therefore if you would be faith full to God, and to his Kingdom, and to those that have appeared for you, look after such peace, wherein you and they may be safe.

God knows they would have been willing, to have been as silent as you, but suppose all the Ministers of the Kingdom, and men that had ability to appear publicly, had all been silent, so as the business had been wholly betrayed, and at length an army of Papists had risen, when you had had no help to have resisted them, would you not have cried to Ministers? Would you not have cried to Magistrates? Would you not have cried to Parliament men? If they have ventured themselves to be faithful for you, know, you can have no peace except they have it; and it were an unworthy thing to think of your safety without theirs.

But you will say, we would not have our estates, and peace, thus (as you speak) upon any terms, without any regard to religion, we have our portion in religion, as well as you, and we have our consciences to look after as well as you; and God forbid it should be otherwise, but that religion should prosper too with our peace, but we would not have such Sects to be maintained in the Kingdom; let us have truth and religion, but away with the sectaries.

First understand, who they are, you speak off; do you know wherein you and they differ? You cry out of them, as if they were of another religion, when as when it comes to be scanned, the difference between you and them will prove not to be so great.

But 2. further, I put this to you; do you spend as much breath in praying for these kind of men, as you do in railing upon them? Then somewhat may be said.

But 3. it is a vain thing to think, that true religion can be maintained, and have the liberty of it, without some difference of opinion amongst us; indeed the Turks have as much peace in their religion, as any religion hath in all the world, and there is as little difference of opinions amongst the Turks, as there is in any religion whatsoever; but well may that coat have no seam, that hath no shape; if the truth of religion comes to appear, certainly it is impossible, but many differences of opinion must come, and it is a most intolerable pride of heart and tyranny in any whatsoever to think, by violent means to force all, to be of the same opinions that they are of in matters that are not of the foundation, and that may stand with the peace of a Commonwealth, too; you take upon you in that, more than Christ doth, more than the Apostles ever did.

But you will say, if men be in an error, why should they not be forced, shall every man be left to his opinion, to do what he will?

No, I plead not for that neither; therefore I except all opinions. 1. against the foundation of religion. 2. and that are against the foundation of civil government; take those two aside, and then for other opinions that are of a lower, inferior nature, (I say) there you take too much upon you, whosoever you are, if you should think to force men to be of the same opinion as you are, and there is no such way to make a disturbance in Churches, and Commonwealths, then to force men to be of the same opinion in things, that are of an inferior nature.

I, but you will still say, if it be an error, they must not be left to live in it, if it be an error; nay stay there, a man may be in an error; and yet you have nothing to do to offer violence unto him, to bring him out of his error; you may seek to convince him as much as you can: but to offer violence, you undertake more, then God hath given you

commission to do, whatever you are; and I give this Scripture for it, with is clear in the Romans: One believeth that he may eat all things, another eateth herbs, let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for who art thou that judgest another? Who art thou that judgest? Certainly one of these was a sin at that time, but yet, though one were a sin, yet they that were in the right must not by violence force those, that were in the wrong, to their opinion; but they must leave them to God; (I say,) in matters of such consequence as these, it is a point of Antichristian tyranny, and notorious pride in men, that have taken so much upon them, as to force all to be of the same opinion; this is not the way certainly for true peace; but thus much for the 2nd Corollary; The 3rd follows.

If men have their portion in this world, here is the reason why there is such a stir in the world by men, to maintain this their portion; what rending and tearing is there among men to preserve their estates? Especially if they have a higher portion in the world than others; O, what a deal of stir is there to keep up their honor and reputation. There was such striving for the Popedom in Henry the fourth his days, that it cost many thousand men's lives. Such blustering men make to be great in the world, it cost the blood of twenty thousand persons merely to satisfy the wills of a few; certainly one day the world will be wiser, and understand that they are men, and not dogs, to be subject to the humors and lusts of others, and that no man hath now any further power over them, but what they have by agreement from them, I hope men will be wise enough to understand this, and not sacrifice their lives, for the satisfying of the wills of a few men in the world; it is their God, and do you say what ails me, when you have taken away my God's? Here is the ground of all the stirs and combustions in the world, because carnal hearts look upon what they enjoy as their portion.

But how comes it thus to pass, that men should be so greedy of this their portion? It is such an excellent portion, that they are so greedy of it? Is it worth so much, that they contend so about it? This maketh way for me to slip into the fourth particular, to inquire, what kind of portion this is, that these men of the world have, therefore consider. 1. what poor things they are, that they make such a stir about; secondly, consider the tenure upon which they hold, whatever they enjoy; and thirdly, consider the mixture of evil that there is in that they enjoy; and fourthly, the blessed portion that they lose, and lastly, the dreadful end that there will be to such men, that have their portion here.

First, the poor things that men have here in this world, what are they? Their comforts for the most part, are but imaginary; in the 8 of Hosea, Ephraim feeds upon the wind; and when a bladder is full of wind, one prick lets it quite out: so when death comes, it lets out all their comforts; wilt thou set thy heart upon that which is not, it is not, it hath no reality in it; in the 25 of the Acts; when Bernice and Agrippa came in great pomp, to the assembly; that which you have in your books translated, great pomp, it is in the Greek great fancy; all the pomp and jollity of the world, is but a mere fancy, this is their portion.

And two, that they have is of a very low nature; this would be an argument we might Philosophize in, if it were fit, or if we had time, but I will quickly pass over these things; it is of a very low nature, and not much concerns the soul, all the portion they have here, therefore saith the Text here, thou fillest their belly; it is but a belly full, and what is that to the soul? Indeed the rich man in the Gospel, could say, Soul take thy ease, eat and drink, &c. Soul take thy ease; because you have goods laid up, and because you may eat and drink; what is all this to the soul? Ambrose hath such a speech upon the

place: if the man had had the soul of a swine, what could he have said otherwise; for indeed these things were suitable to the soul of a swine; you shall find that a man is not the better, because of outward things not a whit; the heart of the wicked is little worth; his estate may be somewhat worth, his house may be somewhat worth, his lands may be somewhat worth; but the hearts of the wicked is little worth, saith Solomon. And would, not you think that to be a great evil, that when you go up and down abroad, you should certainly know, that there is no man gives you any entertainment, or any respect, but it is for your servants sake that tends upon you, would not that trouble you; indeed you come to such a man's house, and he seems to make you welcome, and you have entertainment; I but you come to know afterwards, that it was not for your sake, but for your servants sake, that he loved you, would not this discourage you? The truth is so, all that you have in this world, it is for your servants sake, for your goods, your house and lands: it is not for any worth that is in you. It was a speech that Socrates spake once to one — when he had a fine house, and a many brave things; what (saith he) there are many come to see thy house and thy fine things there, but nobody comes to see thee, they know there is a worth in thy fine house, and in thy fine furniture, but they see no worth in thee, indeed all these things are not souls meat, it is not man's meat they feed upon, it is but ashes, it is nothing to the soul of a man.

And further, suppose it were for thy soul; what thou hast here is but a very poor pittance, thou hast not all the world neither, though thou hast thy portion in this world; if thou hadst the whole world at command, yea, if God should make a 1000 worlds more for thee to command, that were all but a poor pittance, to put off an immortal soul with all; but what thou hast is but a little minuin in the world. All the nations of the earth are but as the dust of the balance, and a drop of the bucket to God, what is thy dust then? What is thy house

and land then? As Socrates wittily rebuked the pride of Alcibiades, when he was very proud, that he had so much land lay together, he brought the map of the world to him, and (saith he) pray show me, where your land lies here, one prick of a pen would make a description of all.

England, Ireland, and Scotland, are but three little spots unto the world, and what are your farms and your manors? You have but a little portion, if you had all it were no great matter; the truth is all you have in this world, cannot be enough to make you live in fashion in the world, like a man; it is not enough (I say) for to live like a man in the world, to live like one that hath an immortal soul, like one that hath the image of God upon him, and was sent hither into the world, to do so great services, as every one of you were sent hither to do, and therefore it is but a mean thing, little cause you have to rejoice in it.

It is true they that are godly, account themselves unworthy of the least thing they have here in the world; but I will tell you a mystery of religion now, a practical maxim of religion, that is a great mystery to the world, which is this, that a gracious heart, though he thinks himself unworthy of the least crumb of bread, yet all the creatures in heaven and earth, will not serve him to be his portion, will not satisfy him; though he hath a heart that will be satisfied with anything, as counting himself unworthy of the meanest condition in this world, as a present gift of God; but if God should give him heaven and earth, he had such an unsatisfying heart, as he would not be satisfied with heaven and earth, except God gives him himself too; therefore certainly thy portion, it is a but a very little portion.

Besides those things thou hast, are things that will vanish, and quickly come to nothing; it is said of the whole world, that it hangs

upon nothing; so all the things of the earth do: therefore it is said of Abraham, that he sought a City, that had foundations; all other things, are as things that have no foundation at all; there is a worm in every creature that will consume it in time; and the Scripture calls all our riches uncertain riches.

Christian, thou art made for an eternal condition; these things are fading; when thou comest to enter in upon thy eternal estate, if thou shouldst then ask, what shall I have now, I have now thus much, and thus much in my whole life; but what shall I have now I come to enter in upon my eternal estate? Truly nothing at all. If a man were to go a great voyage to the Indies, and all the provision he makes is this, he gets a vessel that can make shift to carry him as far as Gravesend, that he will do, and what need he hath of provision to Gravesend, or perhaps to the Downs he provides for, he goes on, and should go on now from the Downs, and begins his voyage, to go to the Indies, and is gotten into the Ocean; alas, his vessel is a rotten vessel; were not this an unwise man? Truly this is the condition of thousands in the world; man, woman, thou art made for an eternal condition, God intendeth eternity for every mother's child that is here this day, and God expects that thy life should be spent in making provision for this eternal estate of thine, and thou thinkest of nothing, but that thou mayst provide for a few years here, and live in some fashion, and be somebody in the world. O when thou comest to enter upon the Ocean of eternity, thou wilt give a dreadful shriek, and cry out, I am undone, I am undone, I have nothing provided, for eternal life.

Again consider whatever thou hast in this world, it is no other, but what may stand with the eternal hatred of an infinite God towards thee: it may be the portion of a reprobate, and will this serve thy turn? Will this satisfy thee? Will that satisfy thy soul, that may be the



portion of a reprobate? There are many that are now sweltering under the wrath of the infinite God, that have had twenty times as much as any of you have that are here before the Lord this day, they have had greater estates then you, and lived merrier lives then you, and yet are now under the wrath of God, will a reprobates portion serve thy turn: therefore consider that to enjoy the dominion of all the world, may stand with God's eternal hatred, but to have the least dram of saving grace, entitles men to the favor of God which is better than life. What a difference is there then, between the having the least dram of grace, and the enjoyment of all the world, and what a goodly portion is there here that thou so much rejoicest in? Certainly, thy heart is strait, that thou thinkest these things to be so big, as in a narrow vessel a thing will appear big, but in a mighty wide vessel it appears little; so when the Lord by grace shall widen and enlarge thy heart, then all the things of the world will be little to thee.

Indeed if a man be below here, he looks upon that, which is next to him, that hath any bigness in it, as somewhat great, but if a man were advanced on high, on the top of a pinnacle, then that which seemed great appears but little to him; so the men of the world that are here, lie graveling below, and the curse of the serpent is upon them, and they think the things of the world great matters, but grace lifteth up the heart on high to God and Christ, mounts it up to eternity, and then we look upon all things here below as mean, this was the reason that Luther, when he had great gifts sent to him by many of the great men of Saxony, he began to be afraid, least the Lord should reward him here in this world, and he hath this expression, I did vehemently protest, God should not put me off so; that is his word, according to the manner of his language: thus he speaks, when there came in things of the world, and he began to be tickled with honor, and great men did respect him, O (thought he) I shall be somebody now in the

world; thus corruption began to work, but grace did prevail, and he breaks out with this expression, I did profess, God should not put me off so; the Lord shall not put me off with worldly honors and dignities; there are other things I look for, things that are better and higher, these are poor pittances, for this soul of mine to be put off with all, there are other things I must have from the Lord, or else I cannot be satisfied; that is the first thing, the poor things of the world, which is the portion of wicked men.

Secondly consider the tenure by which they hold it; all you have in the world, you hold it not by very good tenure, it is not held in Capite. I confess this, I think not the men of the world to be usurpers, for what they lawfully get in the world: I think not they shall answer merely for their using what they do, merely for their right to use what they have; but they shall answer for their not right using the same; they shall not answer (I say) for their right to use, but for their not right using; they have some right, but what right is it.

There is a three-fold right. 1. a right of justice, that we may claim to a thing as a due: what is not your right, you cannot claim. 2. there is a right of Creation, that God gave to man at first: you have lost that right now. 3. there is a right of promise; God hath promised all good things to his people; you have not that right neither: you have neither the right of justice to claim, nor the right of your Creation, nor the right of promise; what right then?

There is a fourth right, and that I confess you have, which is a right of donation; God is pleased to give to you. And thus you hold all your honors, and estates, that are ungodly men; just thus, even as a man that is condemned to die, and there being a little reprieving for two or three days, before his execution, the Prince out of his indulgence

gives order to have provision made for him, according to his quality, that if he be a Gentleman, he should have such provision, if a Knight, or a Nobleman, he shall have provision according to his quality, till his execution; now no man can say, this man usurps, though he hath forfeited all his right to his lands and estates, yet if the King will give him this refreshment, he is no usurper, but it is a poor right he hath, it is a right of donation; and thus God gives the ungodly men in this world their right to outward comforts; you have your portion, but you see how you hold it.

The next thing to be considered, is, that this portion here, as it is poor in regard of the mean things, and the Tenure; so there is a great deal of mixture there in, and the truth is, all the good things wicked men enjoy in this world, will scarce bear charges; that is, there is so much trouble they meet withal in this world, with their portion, that what they have will scarce bear charges; and if a man goes a voyage, we use not to count anything he spends by the way, to be part of his treasury; now all we have here in this world is but spending money to bear our charges in religion: God knows we shall be at a great deal of charges, and afflictions we shall meet with here; but besides, there is a mixture of Curse in every portion of an ungodly man; if any of you think you get such a rich match, you get an heir that is a very rich match, and you get her portion, and if it be in money, there you go and fetch away the bags of gold, that are her portion, but if it should prove that every bag of gold, you have of your wives portion, had the plague in it, it were but a poor portion; certainly it is thus with all ungodly ones in the world, that all the while they live, whatsoever they enjoy, (continuing wicked men) they have a curse of God that goes along with it, and makes way unto eternal misery for them; as those that are godly have the blessing of God in outward things that makes way for their eternal good; so thou hast the curse of the Lord

mingled with all thy outward things that makes way for eternal evil unto thee.

And then consider what portion thou loosest, thou hast got one, but thou loosest a great deal more; if a man had been at the exchange and made a bargain about some petty thing, and afterwards when he comes home, knows that by not being at home, he hath lost a purchase that would have made him, and his posterity: he hath little cause of rejoicing in that bargain; so though thou hast got a portion, that may seem to satisfy thee somewhat, know thou hast lost a portion of infinite worth and value.

It is impossible to show you, what this portion is; for the devil could show Christ all the glory of the world in the twinkling of an eye; but if I should come to show you the glory of Heaven, I had need have eternity to show you, what the portion of the Saints is; but though I cannot show it you all, I will only give you a hint or two, that you know somewhat what it is.

1. It is such a portion as is fit for the spouse of the Lamb, as is fit for the spouse of one that is to marry the Son of God, the second person in Trinity; 2. it is such a portion as is fit and suitable to an heir of life and glory, an heir of Heaven and Earth; yea, it is such a portion, as God doth give men, to this very end, to declare what the infinite power of God is able to do, to raise a poor creature to the height of happiness; what think you this must be, that (I say) it must therefore be done, that it might declare to Angels and all creatures, what the infinite power of God is able to do, to raise a poor creature to happiness and glory; this must be somewhat.

Again, it must be such a one as in which, God must attain unto the great design, that he had from all eternity, in making of Heaven and Earth, which was to magnify the riches of his grace to a Company,

that he had set apart to glory; it must be such a portion; and guess you what this must needs be.

Yea, it is such a portion as must require the infinite power of God, to support a creature to bear the weight of that glory; and all this must be now to all eternity; I remember when Esau did but hear Isaac his Father, tell what a blessing he had given unto Jacob, he fell a weeping; O that God would so strike unto the hearts of men, that have so little minded anything, but the world: Thou hearest but a few words, to what the Lord hath reserved to all eternity, for his Saints; and compare but that with what is thy portion, and thou hast cause to weep.

I, but more cause you will have to weep, if you consider the last thing, and that is, what is like to be the end of all thy portion in this world; if indeed thou couldest ruffle it out in this world, and enjoy thy hearts desire, and there an end: it were somewhat; O, but there is somewhat else remains afterwards; as. 1. O, the perplexity of spirit, that any worldly man will have when death comes, when he shall see an end of all the comforts of this world, now farewell house, farewell lands, and farewell friends, farewell acquaintance, and all merry meetings, and jovialities, I shall never have comfort more in you; as it was the speech of Pope Adrian, when he was to die, O thou my soul, my soul, whither art thou going? Whither art thou going? Thou shalt never have more jests, nor be merry, nor be jocund anymore; where art thou going? So may a man that hath his portion in this world, say at his death, where is this poor soul of mine going? I have lived here thus many years, and I have had many merry meetings, I have eaten with the strongest, and have drunk the sweetest, and gone in brave array, but now my day is gone, what shall become of me, what peace have I now, when all is gone.

I remember Latimer hath a story in one of his Sermons, that he preached before King Edward, of a rich man, that when he lay upon his sick bed, there came one to him, and tells him, that certainly by all reason they can judge, he was like to be a man for another world, a dead man: as soon as ever he hears but these words, what must I die, send for a Physician, wounds, sides, heart, must I die? Wounds, sides, heart, must I die? And thus he goes on, and there could be nothing got from him, but wounds, sides, heart, must I die? Must I die, and go from all these? Here was all, here was the end of this man that made his portion in this world.

Another rich man that lived not far from the place, that I myself lived in heretofore; when he heard his sickness was deadly, he sends for his bags of money, and hugs them in his arms, O must I leave you? O must I leave you? And another, lying upon his sickbed, laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then bids them, take it away, it will not do, it will not do; Another, when he lay upon his sickbed, his servants came to him, and said, what lack you? Would you have any beer? What do you want? O (saith he) I want only one thing, peace of conscience, that I would have, it is not beer, nor friends, nor an easy pillow I want, but ease of conscience; O consider, whether there be not like to be perplexity in your spirits.

And then (brethren) you must be called to an account for all, though (as I told you before) not to account for the right to use; but for not right using; and do but think with yourselves, if you now have so much as you cannot reckon, how then will you be able to reckon for it, if now you cannot count, how will you be able to give an account at the last day, especially when you have had no thoughts of this beforehand.

There will be a dreadful portion indeed at the day of judgment, O the shame and confusion that will be upon the faces of the men of the world in that hour, when they shall see their poor neighbors have their portion with Christ in glory; perhaps, a poor servant in the house advanced to glory, and they stand on the left hand to be cast out; perhaps some of these poor hospital boys shall be advanced to eternal glory, when as some of you, that are their great masters, shall be cast out eternally; what an infinite shame and confusion will this be to you.

O now I see what it is to trust in God, and not to trust in him; those are happy that would trust for the future, but I miserable, that dared not trust in him: The Lord will rain snares, and fire, and brimstones, here is the portion of the ungodly at last; appoint him his portion with hypocrites, saith Christ, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; that is the portion of hypocrites in the conclusion; Now here thou seest the end of all, what dost thou think then of thy portion now? Think but of one Text, and I have done.

What hope hath an hypocrite though he hath gained, when God takes away his soul? Mark, there are many hypocrites that aimed to get estates in the world, but cannot thrive, God crosses them: well, but suppose thou aimest to gain, and hast got all thou wouldst desire; what hope hath an hypocrite, though he hath gained ? Though he hath grown never so rich, and got all he desires, when God takes away his soul? This time is coming, it will be ere long, and it may be suddenly, the portion of some that are here present, and perhaps this Text of mine, may then ring in their ears, when they lie upon their sick beds, perhaps within a month, or six weeks, when God's time shall be, and then conscience may repeat in your ears; I heard such a day there were a generation of men that have their portion in this world, and now I am afraid, I am one of them; and there is an end of

my portion, only I must go to my other portion, that will be very dreadful.

I but who have you spoke too all this while? Who is the man that hath his portion in this world? It is a poor portion, as you have set out to us, but everyone will go away and say, I hope it is not I, I hope God hath a better portion for me then this; therefore give me leave to speak in the name of God to you, and out of his word, to point out the man and woman that is like to have their portion here, living and dying in such a condition.

First, that man to whom God gives in this life, nothing but what belongs to this life, that is the man apparently; if God give thee thy estate, and if he gives thee not somewhat besides thy estate, that is a principle, that is a seed of eternal life in thee, certainly he never intends good to thee in the world to come. There are many men have a great deal in this world and they say they hope, God will be merciful to them in the world to come. Now this is a certain truth, that man to whom God denies spiritual mercy in this world, God will deny eternal mercy to him in the world to come; this therefore should be thy care, doth God increase my estate in this world? O that the Lord would give a proportionable measure of grace, or else it is nothing; Lord, thou givest me here a great estate, if thou givest not to me together with it, a proportionable measure of grace to use it to thy name, I had better have been without this.

Is this thy care? I put it to thy conscience; as thy estate increases, art thou solicitous at the Throne of grace, that the Lord would give thee a proportionable measure of grace, to manage thy estate for his glory; then peace be to thee, thou art not the man.

You may further examine it, by the workings of your hearts about your present portions; As. 1 whether you enjoy what you have for



itself, and whether your hearts be terminated in what you do enjoy; one that is godly hath his portion beyond these things, he enjoys the creatures. I but it is God that he enjoys in them; that is sweet to me, that I can see, and taste the love of God in; I but a Carnal heart enjoys the creatures, and runs away, and is terminated there; looks much at the creature, but at little in God; as divers of your hospital children here, look more at the men that were their friends, to bring them into the hospital, when they were Fatherless and Motherless, and shiftless, then they look at the founders of the Hospital, they little think of them, to thank God for them, but if they meet with him that was the next cause to bring them in, they will thank him for his kindness; so it is with most men, they look at outward means and secondary causes, but a godly heart looks at the root of all things; I remember one that came into the Treasure house of Venice, where he saw Tables of gold and silver, and he pointed down, looking at the bottom of the Table, whereupon one asked him, why is your eye so at the bottom? O (saith he) I am looking at the root of all this; Alas, it is a small matter for a man that hath a great trade, to have a great stock.

A godly man though he hath but a little, yet he looks at the root, at the love of God, and the Covenant of grace, which is the spring of all, and the chief thing that satisfies his heart, it is the goodness of God that satisfies a gracious heart, and not the bare creature.

Therefore examine, how your hearts are set upon these things of the world, whether your hearts go out with full strength to them; if you make your bellies to be your God, then your end will be destruction: That man that hath his heart swallowed up in the world, like Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, that were swallowed in the earth; if the things of the earth be a gulf to swallow thy heart up, there is another gulf to swallow thee up hereafter. Consider how do the loss of the things of

the world, take thy heart; dost not thou account thyself an undone man, when thou had lost some comforts? Dost thou not come home to thy wife and children, I say, I am an undone man? Why what is the matter? I have lost some part of my estate; O carnal heart! one that is God's child may have some crosses, but no losses at all; because he enjoys all in God, and hath God still. The truth is, if thou wert truly Godly, whatever afflictions thou meetest with all, (as we say, a man may put all his gain in his eye; so you may,) if you be godly, put all your crosses in your eyes; you are so far from being undone.

Examine then whether these things of the world, be not the only suitable things to your hearts? Whether you bless not yourselves in these, as in your happiness; the Ivy will clasp about a rotten tree, and cannot be taken off it, without tearing; and so the heart of a worldling, will clasp about these rotten comforts, as the only agreeable things. You may hear them sometimes tell with joy that we were in such a place, and were so merry, and had the bravest meeting, and what was there? There was singing and drinking, and blaspheming of the name of God, and yet it was the bravest meeting that could be.

When did you ever come from an ordinance of God, and say, O it was a brave day to me, the Lord hath spoken to my heart this day; did you never go from the word, with as merry a heart, and rejoice of it amongst your friends, as you did from a merry meeting? You may fear you are the man that have your portion here.

If I were to give but one evidence. whether a man hath grace or no? I would give this as soon as any one; Suppose thou hast got some estate in the word, I put this to thee, what dost thou account to be the chiefest good of thy estate, more than thou didst before. A man that hath got an estate more than he had before, thinks with himself, now

I may live at a better fashion, then I could, now I may have more freedom then before, now I may have more credit in the world then I had now, I may have my own mind, and satisfy my lust more than I did, or then another man can do; is not this the thing thou most rejoicest in; nay, is not this a truth, that some of your hearts (if your hearts were ripped up, this would be the language of them) most rejoice in, because hereby you have most fuel for your lusts; a poor man hath not so much fuel for his uncleanness as you have, nor so much fuel for his pride and malice as you have, and many rich men account the blessing and happiness of their estates to consist in this very thing, that now they may have a larger scope for their lusts then ever they could before; alas, a poor man cannot go abroad, and drink, as you can do; a poor man cannot lay out so much upon a whore, and an unclean wretch, as you can do, and you rejoice in this, if this man hath not his portion in this world, who hath? The Lord strike thy wretched heart.

A gracious man, when God blesseth him in this world, though there be but a little grace in him, it will work thus: the Lord hath raised my condition above my brother, and why? The Lord giveth me a larger opportunity to do him service, then my brother hath, or then I had before: there is such a poor man, he is an honest man, but (God knows) he can do but little in the place where he is, he hath but little means; but God hath given me means, and this means enlarges my opportunities to do God service, and for this my soul blesseth God, I account my estate happier than before, I now may be of more use, and do God more service then otherwise I could do; have you such workings in heart, you rich men if: you have not never be at quiet till you get your hearts working in this manner; this will be a blessed testimony, that God gives you a portion here, and intendeth another portion for you in the world to come.

Again, what is that thing that you strive to make most sure? That which a man strives to make most sure, that he counts his happiness to consist in; O for thy Land, and debts, thou strivest with all thy might to make them sure, but as for the matter of thy salvation, and peace in Christ, thou hast a good hope thereof, but takest no pains to make it sure.

See what thou dost most admire men for? O such a man is happy, he hath so much coming in, and hath so much a year; but dost thou call the vile man happy? This is a sign that thou hast not thy eye enlightened: canst thou look upon those that are poor and mean in this world, as most happy creatures, because the Lord gives them the grace of his spirit? And think, well, it is true, I have a greater estate then such a poor man that is my neighbor, or then such a poor kinsman, but God knows, he doth God more service then I do, he prays more, and more heartily in one day then I do in a whole year. O, the Lord hath other manner of prayers, and sighs come from his poor cottage, then ever he had from my brave palace: I have my city house and my country house, but they were never so perfumed with prayers; some that live in poor cellars, send up more prayers, and God hath more honor from them, then he hath from me; in my family (perhaps) there is cursing and blaspheming of God, in such poor cottages, there is (perhaps) blessing and praising of God, now canst thou look upon them, as the most happy people in the world.

Lastly, what art thou most careful to lay up for thy children? If the things of the world take up thy care for thy children most, it is an argument thou thinkest, thy children shall have a good portion if thou canst leave them so many thousands; and it is like it is thy portion too; if thou countest it theirs.

Examine also thy services what they are; dost thou put off God with slight services, then know thy portion is like to be of God's slight mercies; Again, art thou hypocritical in thy service, dost thou aim at the praise of men in outward duties, that is a sign thou hast thy reward here; and are thy services forced, that thou art compelled, it is merely conscience compels thee, and not an inward agreeableness between the frame of thy heart, and holy things: then it is like, a servants portion will be thine, and not a child's portion.

Further, hast thou heretofore been a forward professor in religion, and hast now forsaken the ways of God; I will give you a dreadful Scripture for this, in the 17 of Jeremiah: All you that forsake the Lord shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me, shall be written in the earth; if thou hast been forward heretofore, and now thou comest to be more ancient, and now thou art dead, and dull, and cold; here is a Text for thee, go home, and tremble, least thou be a man, whose name is written in the earth. And doth not God for the present curse thy portion? Thou findest the more thou hast, the worse thou growest; as if a man should eat meat at one's table, and as soon as he hath eaten it, begin to swell, he will conclude certainly the meat was poisoned, so when thy estate rises, thy heart rises with pride, surely it was poisoned with the curse of God that was in it.

Again I will only name one sign more; what sayest thou to this, that man that spends his days without having some fear, least God should put him off with the things of this world: there may be some danger of that; it is said of some, that they feed themselves without fear; you can go to a merry meeting, and feed upon the cheer, and eat without fear; but never have such a thought as this in your heart, what if God should put me off with these things? I hear indeed there are some men are put off so, what if that should prove to be my portion what a miserable creature were I? I fear there were some men never had

such a thought in their lives, what if it should prove so with me, what a miserable creature were I.

I have one word of exhortation to you all, and then I have done, and this exhortation must be divided: First, unto you that have some evidences that God hath given you a better portion, that God hath not put you off with the portion of this world; O bless the Lord for his goodness to you, that ever he hath showed you better things then the world affords, your line is fallen into a good ground, you have a goodly inheritance; though thou hast not so much as others have, yet thou hast that that will make thee happy forever.

I have read of one Didimus, a learned godly Preacher, but he was blind, whereof he complained, and was much troubled for his want of sight, whereupon a Christian friend rebuked him sharply; what (saith he) hath God given you that that is the excellency of an Apostle, of a Minister of Christ; and are you troubled for want of your sight, that a pismire may have, that a brute beast may have, for the want of thy sight, that the rats and mice may have, are you troubled with that, and rather not taught to bless God, that hath given you so great a mercy, as to make you such an instrument of his service? So may I say to you that are godly, hath God given you Jesus Christ? Hath he given you his Son, hath he given you his Spirit, hath he given you himself, to be your portion, and are you troubled that you have not more of that, that beasts may have, as well as yourselves? O be ashamed of any mournful discontentment's for want of the comforts of this world.

And do not envy wicked men for their outward prosperity; I remember a story of a poor soldier that was condemned to die merely for taking a bunch of grapes from a Vine, for there was a strict law that whoever should take anything from that place they went

through, he should die for it. Now he had taken a bunch of grapes, and was condemned to die, and as he went to execution, he went eating of his bunch of grapes, and some came to him, and said, dost thou go eating thy grapes, thou shouldst think of somewhat else; he answers, I beseech you (Sir) do not envy me my grapes, they will cost me dear; so may I say of all the men of the world; we have no need to envy them of anything they have, it will cost them very dear one day.

Thirdly, live like such as God hath not put off with the portion of this world? Manifest in it your conversations that you look for higher and better things, then what this world affords; show they are but slight in your eyes; look upon your estates as despicable, be willing to improve them all for public good, yea, to jeopard not estates only but your names, your liberties, and your lives in a public cause; and those that shall do so, however the world may look upon them in a sad condition, and say, O such a man is like to be undone, and his life is in danger; I tell you such a one that shall out of a good principle, be willing to venture life and estate and appear for God, that man shall be most honored, and be found the most happy man at last; and indeed herein he shows himself to be a man that looks for a higher portion, then these things here; as those in the Hebrews: By that they said and did, they showed plainly, they looked for another Country; so see you men that might live as comfortably in outward things as you, and (did their consciences give way) they could be as quiet as you; but conscience puts them upon it, that seeing God calls them to a public place, they can be content to put all at God's feet.

Now though you may think that such are in most danger, they show plainly they are men of another country, and should be most honored; and take but this principle with you, the more anyone gives up his estate to God, the more comfort he hath in his estate, whether in the enjoyment of it, or in the loss of it; I express it thus: when one

resigns up all he hath, his estate, liberty, name, life to God, the oftener it comes into God's hands, the better it comes, when God gives it him again; a carnal heart when once he hath these things, he will not trust God with them, but he will have them in his own keeping; but a gracious heart, though he hath all these from God, yet every day he is willing to give up all to him, and to trust God with them again; though he be a rich man, he is willing every day to come and beg his bread at his Fathers gate, and give up all; now he gives up all in the truth of his heart to God, and God gives it him all again; as long as in a lawful way he enjoys it, he hath it a fresh from God; now this (I say) the oftener anything comes out of God's hand, the sweeter and the better it is; wicked men's estates come but once out of God's hands, and therefore there is not so much comfort in them, but a godly man's estate comes 100 and 100 times from God; for every resignation gives it to God, and God gives it him again; and therein is comfort, and O blessed are they that live so, as that they declare they look for another Country, and that their portion is not here; let the men of the world think them foolish, that will venture themselves so, God and his Saints have declared that their portion it not here.

And now to you all, the word of exhortation from God is, that everyone in this place, would put on to make more sure of another portion, besides the portion of this world; put on, I say for you are all made capable of higher and better things, then the things of the world; and never a one here but hath an immortal soul, and is capable of Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that is another manner of business, then to eat and drink, and have pleasure with the flesh, here for a while; God hath made your natures capable of such glory, do not debase yourselves, to rest satisfied with husks, when you may have meat enough in your Fathers house; and therefore put on, and let the poorest sort put on, that have but a little



portion here; yet there is as fair way for you to have the God of Heaven and Earth to be your portion, to have whatsoever Jesus Christ hath purchased by his blood to be your portion, to have eternity, and immortality to be your portion; (I say) there is as fair a way for it, as for the greatest Princes in the earth; you may come to have a portion here.

Indeed many a poor apprentice may say; my Father is dead, and hath left me no portion: I, but you that are poor apprentices, and others, and the poor Hospital boys, that live upon charity, it is possible some poor wretches there may come to have their portion in God and Christ, and immortality, as well as the greatest, and richest of all; therefore raise up your hearts here, you that are the poorest and meanest, and know you are born for high things.

If I should come and tell one that is a poor boy in a blew coat now, whatever you are now, there is such a rich man will adopt you to be his child, and make you his heir, that would raise up his heart; well, however meanly you live now, you may be a glorious creature hereafter, if so be you have now a heart to put upon it, and to seek after it for your portion.

But you'll say, Lord what should we do, that our portion may be a higher portion, then in this world; the first thing I would put you upon, is this; let the whole course of your life be steered (as it were) with the fear of God, have a continual jealousy, least God should put you off with the things of this life; hold forth this in every action, that any one may see by your conversation, surely this man, this woman hath some fears, least God should put him off with a portion in this world; and especially you that have great portions in this life, and have done God little service; you know there are many poor people that live upon alms, have done God more service then you; you have

most cause to fear; they that are Rulers and Governors have mighty cause to fear, unless they have good evidence in their hearts; Chrysostom upon the 13 of the Hebrews, speaking of those that are Governors; saith, I wonder that any Governor should be saved; he hath such a speech there: I will not say so, but there is a great deal of hazard; Christ tells us, that a man that hath a great portion in this world, (though it is possible he may have more hereafter,) yet it is doubtful; whether he shall inherit heaven.

It was the counsel of one to a King; saith he, I desire but this favor, that every day you would think of this Text, what profits it a man, to gain the whole world, and to lose his own soul? Spend some little time in considering of it every morning when you arise, and every night when you lie down, what will it advantage me to be great here and miserable hereafter. The same council I give to you, daily pray to God, to make you understand, what there is in this Text, that there are a generation of men, who have their portion in this world only.

Secondly, if you would not have your portion here, labor to take off your hearts from all outward comforts; he that will be rich, shall fall into many temptations; know it is not necessary, you should have an estate in this world, but it is necessary, you should make your peace with God; it is necessary I should provide for my soul; but how things go with me here, is not so much necessary.

Thirdly, set the glory of Heaven and eternity daily before your eyes, and be trading for higher things then the world affords: many poor people go up and down the streets, crying some mean thing, and think it well, if they get 18.d. in a whole day, but a rich Merchant can go out in the morning, and make a bargain, and perhaps get 500.l. in an hour, he trades somewhat like; so the men of this world labor for the meat that perisheth; but a godly man hath communion with God,

and in a quarter of an hour gets that, he would not loose for thousands.

It was a speech of Cleopatra to Anthony, thou art not to fish for Gudgeons and Trouts, but thou art to angle for Castles and Cities; so may I say, if thou hast an immortal soul with thee, thou art not so much to angle for meat and drink, and clothes, to make provision for the flesh, but for heaven and immortality.

The next thing is this: Honor God with thy substance. Lay out thy portion here for God. O, that I could but convince you of one principle of divinity more, and that is this, that there is more excellency and good in one virtuous action, then there is in all the creatures in heaven and earth, (besides the blessed Angels, and glorious Saints above, I say others of the Saints, excepting these) take all creatures, Sun, Moon, Stars, Seas, Earth, all the Pearls and Jewels of the world, Pearls, put them all together, yet this is true divinity, that there is more excellency in one virtuous action, then there is, if thou hadst all these things to be thy possession; if men were convinced of this, they would be abundant in good works: Thou thinkest it a brave thing, to have so much coming in by the year, do but one good action for God, out of an upright principle, And there is more excellency in that one action, then there is in thy great revenue, if thou hast 1000 times more added to it.

Me thinks this should make them that are rich, to be rich in good works; so saith the Scripture, Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works, O, there is a richness in good works, as well as in great revenues; O, improve, lay out thy estate now for God; Ambrose saith upon that place, of the rich man: is it not more honor, that so many children shall account you as their Father, then that so many pieces of gold shall call you their Lord? These pieces of

gold, do (as it were) call you Lord, and there are two or three children shall call you Father; and is it not more excellent to have a couple of poor Orphans, while you are alive in this world, to call you Father, then to have so many bags of gold call you Mr.? O, therefore, give a portion to six and to seven.

Again, if you would not be put off with a portion in this world, be sure that all the services you perform to God be choice services, if you expect choice mercies, let your services be choice services, be sure all your works be supernatural works; you'll say how shall I know that? If I had time, I could make it out clear. A supernatural work is that that hath a supernatural principle, done to a supernatural end, and in a supernatural manner; A supernatural principle, that is grace, which makes it suitable to my heart, not that I do it out of conviction of conscience only, and a supernatural end, that is, when I aim at God, and not at myself in any duty.

But what is this supernatural manner of serving God? I shall explain it thus. Seneca in giving his rule how to know the affections, when they are natural, and when not; saith, you shall know a natural affection by this, if it be kept within bound, it is natural, if it be out of bounds, it is not natural; I will make use of it in another way; when you come to the service of God, if you think to limit God in his service, this is but a natural service, you will go so far and there stop, but if it be a supernatural service, you will let out your hearts, if it were possible infinitely to God; you cannot be infinite, that is true, but you will propound no bounds, nor limits to your service, and this is indeed the truth of grace, when it hath the impression of gracious infiniteness upon it; infiniteness is that whereby God is without all limits; so when the soul is without all limits and bounds in the way of grace, it is desirous to honor God, if it were possible in an infinite way; these are supernatural works.

Lastly, would you not have your portion in this world, be willing to cast away whatever of your portion you have got sinfully; this in the name of God, I declare as a special thing; therefore take it home with you; whatever man or woman in this place would not have his portion in this world, but would have his portion in the world to come; whatsoever of thy portion, thou hast got in a sinful course, cast it away presently, never sleep with it, lie not down one night with it, rest not till thou art cleared of it.

It is an old rule, but a true one; all the repentance in the world, and all your sorrowing for sin whatsoever, will never obtain pardon without restitution, unless you restore what you are able, you can never have comfort of the pardon of that sin; If you have got it when you were young, being an apprentice, or at first setting up, away with it, else it will spoil all, and you will never have any other portion from God; these hands of mine, had that once given them, to restore that was got wrongfully 50 years before; the wrong was done 50 years ago, yet after 50 years space, the conscience of the man troubles him, and he comes to make restitution, and satisfy the wrong, he had done desiring me to convey it to such a man whom he had wronged in such a place.

Know therefore that all the sweet morsels, that at any time you have so delight fully got down, they must up again; therefore willingly part with them; resolve before thou go out of this place, whatever thou hast got wrongfully, not to keep it one minute: and do it willingly, else thou canst have no comfort here or hereafter: if there be any true divinity in the world, this is true divinity; and yet it is hard to convince covetous men that have got their means this way.

If there be any that have done wrong in things entrusted to them, as those that be Masters of Hospitals, be sure you keep not that, for

certainly you will curse the time, you ever took it; therefore let the charge of God be strong upon you this day, cast out whatever you have got falsely. I have read a story of one, who hearing that place of Scripture read; Woe to them that join house to house, he burst out in a loud cry, woe to me, and to my children then. So you, that are enriched through fraud and circumvention of others, have cause to say, woe to me and my family, what shall become of us if this be true? Oh cast away this lumber, this trash, prefer your soul before all things whatsoever.

And if you would have your portion in another life, be willing to join with the sufferers for Christ; so Moses did, though he were in the way of preferment, yet he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Prize the Saints, associate with them, rather than with the jolly blades of the world. It is safer joining with sufferers, then with those brave spirits that scorn goodness, jolly blades of the world, it is safer to join with the sufferers, then to join with those that are the jolly, and the brave spirits; And so I have done; only desiring that the Lord would settle all home upon your spirits, if it may be, because something may not be so pleasing to the palate of everyone, as some other, but if for that, you should reject what hath been said, and go away and slight this word of God; know that this Text one day may prove to be as scalding lead in your consciences; and that what is said concerning Doeg, in Psalm 52.7, may prove to be your portion. It is spoken of Doeg; This is the man (saith the Psalmist) that did not make God his trust, but trusted in his great riches; this is the man. So you may be pointed out one day, this is the man; Doeg was a great courtier, and because he was an Officer to King Saul, and because he had his favor, he trusted in the favor of the King, and in his riches, and what did he care for David? Yet by the Text it appears? He was one that made some show of religion too; in the first of Samuel 21.7. He was detained before the

Lord; Tremellius thinks, either out of some religious vow, or to keep the Sabbath; or somewhat concerning that law, he was detained before the Lord; and yet he was a vile malignant against David, and all because he trusted in the great countenance he had at Court; now this is the man that made not God his trust, but that trusted in his great riches. The Lord forbid, this Scripture should be made true of any of you; I leave this Text with you that are rich men, take heed. I leave this Text with you that are in places of dignity and honor, take heed. I leave this Text with you that are voluptuous men, given up to your pleasure. Take heed you hear not one day this, Son, remember in thy life time, thou hadst thy pleasure; I leave it with all that will not trust God, for a portion to come; and above all, I leave it with all hypocrites, let them take heed, it be not said to them, here is your reward; Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding.

FINIS.

## **The Saints Inheritance.**

But to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. - Psalm 16.3.

They that understand the whole Psalm to foresee the Messiah, and foretell of Christ, make this place parallel with that of John 17.19. And for their sake I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. But here in the beginning of the Psalm, David prays to God for preservation, and for deliverance out of some great

evil, that it seems was upon him, or that he was in danger of. The argument that he useth, is, First his trust in God, as in the first verse, Preserve me O God, for in thee do I put my trust. And it was not an ungrounded and unwarranted trust, but that which proceeded from his interest he had in God, as in the second verse, O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord: thou art mine, and my only God, in whom is all my confidence. But what if David should now perish in this distress, should God be any looser by it? David seems to acknowledge this, that though he should not be preserved, yet God was bound to preserve his own name, and his own cause; as it follows in the second verse, my goodness extendeth not to thee. Though I should live, yet it is little that I could do for thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, Though my goodness extendeth not unto thee, yet may I be of use to thy people, and unto thy Saints while I live; for it extends to them, and they are those that my soul closeth with and hath delight in. O, therefore do I desire to live, and to be preserved, that I may be useful to them, that are thy Saints.

It is a great argument to prevail with God, when any of you are in danger, and seek for preservation, if your hearts work thus to God, that the desire you have to be preserved is, that whatever you are, and whatever you can do, may extend to the Saints, that you may live to be of use and service in the world to God's people. Many of you when you apprehend yourselves to be in trouble, you then cry to God to be preserved: but to what end? Wherefore would you be preserved? Wherefore would you live? If we may judge of your ends according to your practice, you would live that you may have more time to satisfy your lusts, that you may have more time to dishonor God, that you may have more time to do mischief in the places where you live. There is this in the heart, and God sees it: God sees whatsoever will be after in your lives; God sees before what was in your hearts when you cried to be preserved. But now one that is



gracious, he desires therefore to be preserved: O, saith he, that I might live to be of use in that place where God hath placed me. If God should take me away now, my conscience tells me that it is little service that I have done for him. I have been of little use in the place where God hath set me, O, that I might be preserved for this end, that what I am, or have, or have been might extend to the Saints on earth, even the excellent in whom is all my delight. Thus you have the scope of the words, and the dependence of them. And in them there are these two things observable.

1. Observation.

First, the high esteem of the Saints; They are the excellent of the earth.

2. Observation.

And secondly, the sweet delight that David's heart had in them; in whom is all my delight.

For the first, the high esteem that David had of the Saints, and the Saints that were on earth, the Excellent. The point is this, that the Saints of God, those that are godly, are the excellent in the earth.

Then secondly, from this that he saith, in whom is all my delight. Observe this, that a gracious heart above all things in this world, takes the most contentment in the Saints of God; he is much delighted in them.

The first is but a preparation to the second: therefore I shall pass it over briefly. They are the excellent in the earth, therefore my delight is in them.

They are the excellent in the earth. Let them be what they will in regard of their outward meanness, yet there is an excellency in them. Job scraping upon the dunghill; and Jeremiah sticking in the mire in the dungeon, yet they had more glory and beauty upon them, then the greatest Potentates of the earth when they sat upon their thrones. Though they lie among the pots (as the Psalmist saith) yet are they as Doves, their wings are the wings of Doves, whose feathers are of gold, and silver; Psalm. 68.13, beautiful and glorious. You know the judgment that the holy Ghost passeth upon the Saints in old time, that were outwardly mean enough, there is as much meanness on them as the malice of the world could put: the Text saith, they had trials of mocking's, of scourging's, of bonds, and imprisonments, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they wandered in sheepskins, and goats skins: destitute, afflicted, tormented. What kind of creatures were these, surely they were some wretched men, and women that were thus hunted up and down to wander in sheepskins and goats-skins, destitute, afflicted and tormented? No such matter, they were such of whom the world was not worthy: v. 38. that is the judgment of the holy Ghost upon such, the world was not worthy of them.

The men of the world would have thought, and did think that they were such as were not worthy to live in the world: but the judgment of the holy Ghost was such, that the world was not worthy of them. I remember Chrysostom hath this interpretation of the phrase, they are such as are worth more than all the world, more than many thousands of the world; one of them is worth more than all the men of the world besides. It is a truth so; one Saint of God, though never so mean, one poor youth, one servant that is truly gracious, is worth more than all the men of the world besides that are not so. All the Monarchs and Princes on earth, have not that excellency in them

that one poor child or servant hath that is gracious, and belongs to God.

But the ordinary interpretation is thus, they are such as have that excellency, as that the world is not worthy to enjoy them, they are not worthy of their presence, that they should so much as live among them; they are rather fit to be set as stars in heaven, and be before the Lord in his glory: the world is not worthy of them.

But what is there in the Saints that makes them the excellent in the earth? The Saints that are the excellent. The word in the original signifies the magnificent ones; those that have magnificent spirits, and are exceeding glorious.

There is this in them (that I may briefly pass over this first.)

They have the image of God upon them, and therefore they must needs be the excellent on earth. The image of God makes them to resemble God in that which the creature is able to conceive of; That which is the height of God's excellency: though it be true, whatsoever is in God is God himself: yet we conceiving of God according to our manner of speaking, there is something of God that appears most excellent, and glorious. And it must needs be in regard of that expression, because grace is called the image of God. Now when we draw the image of a thing, we draw it as near as we can according to that which is the most proper excellency of that thing. If I would draw the image of a man, I do not draw the likeness of a piece of flesh, a beast hath that as well as a man; or I do not draw feet or legs, or the back parts of a man: but when the image of a man is drawn, his face is chiefly looked after to be drawn, which is the most excellentest part of man; and there we endeavor to express his life, and spirit as much as can be: for that is the most excellent part; and though the spirit cannot be drawn, and there can be no picture of it;

yet because it is shown most in the face, that is, as near as we can go, that is drawn there.

So the image of God, is that wherein the creature resembles God in height of excellency and glory. It is not every resemblance of God that is God's image: there are some things that set out some of the glory of God, and they are but called God's footsteps, or his back parts. All the resemblance of God in his creatures; and the expressions of his power, and wisdom; the invisible things of God that we see in the creature, they are all but his footsteps, and back parts; they are not his image, Why? Because they do not resemble God in that which he hath set out to us to be the height of his glory. What is that? The holiness of God, that is the height of his excellency. Therefore it is said of God himself, holy and reverend is his name. God's name comes to be reverend by holiness: were it not for his holiness, notwithstanding all the rest, (if it were possible to separate them) his name would not be reverend. Therefore when the Saints in heaven glorify God for his chiefest excellency, it is thus holy, holy, holy. We find not in Scripture any of God's Attributes thrice repeated, Wise, Wise, Wise, or Almighty, Almighty, Almighty, but holy, holy, holy, because the excellency of God consists chiefly in Holiness: the LORD only is Holy.

Now because where grace is in the creature, resembling this holiness of God, there is that principle whereby the creature is able to act as God himself acts: for that is holiness, the working of God to his own end in all things suitable to his nature. So when the creature works to God as his last end, and in some measure is suitable to that God with which the creature hath to do, here is the Image of God.

Therefore the Scripture expresseth grace by these four things, as;

The Image of God.

The Life of God.

The glory of God, and

The Divine nature.

There are these four expressions for the work of grace.

The Image of God, it resembles God in his excellency. The life of God himself, Ephes. 4, alienated from the life of God, that notes acting like God himself. And then it is the glory of God himself; and the divine nature, 2. Pet. 1.3. So that there must needs be excellency in the Saints that have grace that is of this nature.

Certainly, there is more of God in the meanest Saint, in the meanest gracious man or woman; there is more of the glory of God, then in all the world besides, then in heaven and earth. Take all the creatures, all the glory of God in the heavens, in the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and put all into one. Take all the glory of God in the seas, those vast Oceans, and put that into one; take all the glory of God that appears in the earth, all the riches of the earth, and all arts and sciences, and what you will; put all into one, and the meanest youth or servant that hath the least degree of grace, hath more of the glory of God then all this is. There is more of the shining of God in the least degree of grace in the poorest Christian in the world, then there is in all these creatures. If there were a quintessence of all the excellency, and glory, extracted, and drawn, and put into one, yet there were not so much of God, God could not see so much of himself in that one creature that should have the excellency of all creatures put together, as he sees in the meanest Saint that hath the work of grace.

And surely then they are the excellent of the earth, if there be so much of God in them.

The work of grace is that which hath most of God in it; and wheresoever it is, it is that which is the proper work of God's eternal love; it is a beam of it, therefore there is a great deal of excellency in it. Take all other creatures, and it is possible to enjoy all the good that is in all the creatures in heaven and earth (excepting this only, the grace of God) through the bounty of God, and the pleasure of God.

There is nothing that the creature hath, but may be communicated as a fruit of God's general bounty except spiritual blessings in Christ: but where ever this is, though in the least degree, it is of that nature, that it cannot come but only from the eternal election of God. It is that which is the principle of Eternal life, wheresoever it is, it is that which will grow up to eternal glory.

All common gifts will never grow up to glory, though they grow up to the height of glory, but the grace of God, true grace, it is of the same nature with eternal glory. Therefore for the kind of it, it is the greatest good that ever God did, or that ever he will communicate to any creature for all eternity. I say, where ever God hath communicated any dram of grace, that is the greatest good that ever God did, or ever will communicate to all eternity, to any of his creatures, therefore it is exceeding excellent.

Only excepting the work of God in the hypostatical union of the two natures, wherein he joined the human, and the divine nature together in one person; excepting that, the work of grace in any soul is the greatest work that ever God did from all eternity, or that ever he will do, for the kind of it.

Now that which hath so much of God in it, and comes from the eternal election and love of God; and is the greatest work that ever was done, or ever shall be done; and the greatest good that ever was,

or shall be communicated to any creature forever, truly this must needs be the greatest excellency. For God made the world for that end, that he might communicate his excellency, and glory to the world, to the creature. Now that which was the greatest thing that God intended from all eternity; for the communicating of all his glory, it must needs make the creature excellent. This is the first thing, that the Saints are the excellent on earth in regard of the image of God upon them, and the work of grace in them.

But secondly, they are the excellent of the earth, in regard of the separating of them for God: they are those that God set his thoughts upon from all eternity, that they might enjoy him. The great counsels that God wrought from all eternity, especially were set on work upon this great thing of separating of certain creatures for himself from the rest of the world.

Now when God shall set as it were (to speak after the manner of men) his thoughts and counsels on work from all eternity to set apart a few creatures for himself; if these can be known who they are, certainly, we cannot but look on them as the excellent on earth: Now wheresoever we see the work of grace in any, we may by that know that these God hath separated for himself, as setting his infinite wisdom on work from all eternity above that. That was the thing he was most exercised in before the world, about the work of separating such and such for himself. The Psalmist saith, O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing? But know, that the Lord hath set a part him that is Godly, for himself. Psalm. 4.2.3. Here you see that God hath set apart the godly for himself, they are those that are dedicated, and consecrated to God, therefore there is a wonderful excellency put upon them.

As you know anything that is dedicated and consecrated, though it be never so mean in itself, yet being once dedicated, being once made a consecrated thing, there is a great deal of excellency put upon that thing. As in the law, if it were but a piece of wood in the Tabernacle, if it were but a Badgers skin; if it were but brass or goats hair or any such thing that were mean in itself, yet if it were once consecrated and made holy to God, they looked upon it as having a great deal of excellency on it.

Now I reason thus; if a piece of wood, or a little hair, or leather consecrated to God had an excellency in it: what then hath an immortal soul, that hath the graces of the spirit, as so many pearls in it, when that is consecrated and set apart to God to the glory and praise of his grace to all eternity; here must needs be much excellency and most eminent preeminence's.

When a thing is consecrated we look on it no more according to the quality of the thing, but to the consecration. As I remember I read of some people in India, that when they have but lost an Apes tooth that was consecrated to their god, they will give an unspeakable sum of money for the redemption of it again, because it was a thing that was consecrated to their god. So I read of another that being raised from a mean birth, he took this way to make himself to be highly esteemed of the people, he had a golden bason that he used to wash his feet in, he took that and made an idol of it, and consecrated it, and then everyone fell down, and worshipped it when it was consecrated. Nay, saith he, if this which was mean before it was set apart to this use, comes so to be honored, then I that am mean by birth, being set apart to the government, may as well be honored by you.

Thus then if the superstition, and will of man having consecrated a thing, thinks he puts so much excellency on it, how much more when



God himself, and the great and special work of the holy Ghost that he is designed to, it is a special work of his office to consecrate souls to God, and to set them apart to himself, what an excellency must this needs be that is put upon them? They are the excellent of the earth. That is the second.

Thirdly, if we consider that relation that the Saints have to God; they are the nearest relations that can be expressed. Of children to parents; they are the children of God. Of a spouse to her husband; they are the spouse of Jesus Christ, the second person in Trinity; and in that regard they are more nearly united to God than the Angels themselves are, in being the spouse of the Son of God. Yea the very members of his body, they have a nearer relation in that respect to the divine nature, to the second person in Trinity than the Angels themselves: for they have not such a relation as this, therefore they are the excellent of the earth.

Again, fourthly, if we consider the great privileges that the Saints have, we shall see them the excellent of the earth. Not to speak of their deliverance from sin and guiltiness, and those immunities that they have from others. But consider they have this privilege, that God in all his attributes and works, he is continually working for their good.

There is this excellent prerogative of the Saints, there is no attribute of God but it is continually working good to every Saint of God. There is no work of God's providence, but it works and acts continually for their good.

It would be a mighty excellent honor put upon any man, if but such an honorable assembly as the Parliament, should take thought for such an one, and all their purposes and plots, and councils all the time they are sitting should tend to the good of such an one in

particular, taking notice in particular of him. It is that which I said, all your wisdom, and power and mercy, and faithfulness, and the infinite all sufficiency of God is continually every moment working, not only for the good of those that love God in general, but for every particular Saint of God. God takes special notice of them, and sets all his attributes continually on work for their good, and wellbeing.

And the heavens continually work for them. They have this privilege, that the whole world is made for them, God hath given them the world, they are the heirs of the world; as it is said of Abraham, he was the heir of the world. Rom. 4. Abraham had little himself, yet he had the world. Now the children inherit their father's estate; if the world were Abraham's inheritance, then it is the inheritance of every child of Abraham: for so the children of Abraham are heirs to all that Abraham had, that is, as far as concerns them, therefore they that are his heirs, are heirs likewise of the world, so the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 3.22,23. All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. So that God, and the creatures are theirs, here is a mighty privilege indeed.

Again, the privileges that they have in all the good of the Covenant of grace, Whatsoever good there is in the Covenant of grace, all the rich promises in the Covenant of grace are the privileges of the godly Saints. It is admirable privileges that the precious promises in the Scripture speak of, to have interest in them all.

Besides, not only the promises, but the immunities that come from the Covenant of grace, as this; that they are not to stand or fall for their eternal estate, by anything that they are able to do themselves, they are freed from this, their eternal estate hangs not on that which they can do. Whereas others, that are not saints, that are not in the Covenant of grace, their eternal estate hangs on their endeavors, and

actions, God dealing with them according to the Covenant of works, being in that condition: though they may be such as may after come to be Saints, and as God hath elected, and in love may look on them as he intends towards them: but for the present they are in such a condition, as that they know not, but that their eternal estate depends on that which they do themselves. Now to be delivered from this, to have this immunity that such a thing of such a consequence, as our eternal estate should depend upon a sure foundation, upon that which is done by Christ, and done already; it is an infinite privilege. Others cannot challenge to themselves this privilege, that God will accept of their endeavors; do what they can, yet not being in the Covenant of grace, those endeavors are not accepted. That it pleaseth God to accept the will for the deed; it is one of the privileges of the Saints, that comes by the Covenant of grace: but it belongs not to others, they have not to do with this immunity and privilege. So I might name divers others, but then I should go out too far.

Again, this is a glorious privilege of access to the throne of grace, to come to God in prayer. God gives them the key of all his treasures to come, and open them, and take what they will; it is a glorious privilege that belongs to the Saints in any condition. God gives them a gracious praying heart, and that is the key of all the treasures of God, of all the excellencies of God, that they have liberty to come and take out what they will, be it unto thee as thou wilt. These are the excellent of the earth, that have these privileges.

Again, they are the excellent in earth in regard of that which comes from them. As the work of grace is so excellent as hath been spoken of: so every gracious action that comes from a gracious heart there is a wondrous excellency in it. There is not any one gracious action, but it hath more excellency than heaven and earth. Not only grace itself,

but any action that comes from grace, hath more of God in it, and God more delights in it, then in all other things in heaven or earth.

It is an expression of Luther, (though he were a great advancer of faith, yet he was also an advancer of holiness as well as of faith; therefore speaking of any gracious work of a godly man or woman, saith he, *preciosa &c.* it is more precious than heaven and earth. And then he goes on with another expression I had rather be able to perform any one gracious act, of the poorest woman, or maid; of the poorest Christian that is, then to be able to do all that ever Alexander, or Julius Caesar had done. The least act that comes from faith, from a sanctified heart, he had rather be able to do it, then to get all the victories of Julius Caesar and Alexander: all their triumphs and trophies were nothing to the least breathing of the work of grace in those that are godly, that which comes from them are exceeding excellent. Now I reason, they must needs be excellent, that have such excellent things come from them. As when there were such excellent things came from the body of Paul, that had such virtue in them, that had such virtue in them, that noted that there was a great deal of excellency that God conferred upon that Apostle, and a great deal of honor that was put upon him: So when there comes flowing such precious liquor, such precious things from the Saints, as an holy action is, it shows that there is a great deal of excellency in them.

Which (by the way) should teach us to abound in holy duties; though our actions as they are from us corrupted, we look on them as despicable, yet know that God looks on them as the most glorious things in the world, any breathing of a gracious heart, therefore he despiseth not the broken heart, nor the sighing of a contrite spirit. Psalm. 51.17. God can despise Monarchs, and Princes of the world: but God cannot despise a broken heart, nor any breathings from it. Though thou mayest despise it thyself, and look on it as despicable,

the Lord cannot despise it: he sees so much excellency in it, though it be mixed with thy corruptions; yet there is that remainder of excellency in it, if there be but so much as may denominate it a gracious act, it is a glorious thing in the eye of God.

Lastly, (to name no more) the excellency of the Saints appears in this, the great use that they are of in the world. As especially this is one thing that God attains in them his great aim and end in creating the whole world. Were it not for a few gracious men, and women, what glory should God have in all the world? They are those that hold up the glory of God in the world, by which God hath his glory actively; for that is that God aims at. It is true God can force glory in spite of men's hearts, he will be glorified in spite of Devils: but God hath no active glory, but from gracious, godly people (I speak of the inferior world) it is only the godly that God hath glory from. Therefore were it not for them God (in some kind) had made all the world for nothing. Now those that are employed in such a great work, and are of this great use in the world, as to bring to God that which he made the world for, the main, and great end that he made heaven and earth for; certainly these are principal in God's esteem, and excellent. God can say I have my end in these: Take any town where there are but two or three that are godly, what glory hath God but of these? So for other places where hath God glory but for a few contemptible ones? They are these that God glorifies in high and great services: these are the lights of the world, the salt of the earth: they are these that are the blessings of the world wheresoever they are; they are these for whom the world continueth so as it doth. There is a notable expression in Isaiah, In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the Land, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance. Isaiah 19.24.25. Wheresoever they are in a Kingdom, or

a family, or a town, they are a blessing in that Kingdom, in that town, and in that family. Israel shall be a blessing in the midst of the Land. These are they that are the excellent of the earth.

I would now willingly be over this that I may come to the other, but only there is a word or two of application. And that is.

First, to show what a vast difference there is between those that are godly, and those that are wicked. Many things I might show that the Scripture expresseth of wicked ones in all their glory: let all the glory of the world be put upon them, yet the Scripture speaks exceedingly contemptuously of them. I must not spend time in those expressions, only one, and that is Daniel. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the Kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the Kingdom by flatteries. Daniel 11.21. It is spoken (as most Interpreters carry it) of Antiochus Epiphanes, he is called a vile person, we may observe that David doth here more fully set out the love and affection he bears towards those that fear God by the contrary effect of hatred wherewith he doth prosecute the wicked, as in the 4. v. of this Psalm, and in the 4 verse of the foregoing Psalm, the Psalmist saith, In whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. Psalm 15.4. Of this Antiochus there are three things observed, yet he is called a vile person. First, he was a great enemy to many sins. Secondly, when the Jews wrote to him, because they feared his wrath, he being a persecutor of the Jews; there were some that lived in Samaria that were Samaritans that wrote to him to desire his favor, that were not their own selves Jews, but Samaritans: and Josephus saith, they wrote to him in this style, To Antiochus, &c. Antiochus the mighty God; they gave him this title of honor. He was a great man on earth accounted where he lived; among the Samaritans, a mighty god; yet the Scripture calls him a vile person.

And then his name Epiphanes, which is as much as illustrious or glorious. He hath that title of almighty god, and illustrious, and glorious, and yet he was a vile person. Thus it is, where God sees not the work of grace.

The consideration of this might give us some hope that there will be a time wherein God will appear for his Saints. It is not probable that God will always suffer his Jewels to be trodden under feet in the world; that God will always look upon such as are excellent on earth, and see them so abused in the world, and so contemptible as they are; surely this will not be always, God hath this time to make it manifest to the world, that they are the excellent of the earth. They are now Jewels, yet they are such as are in the dirt, and so are despised and contemned: but there is a promise, that the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his Land. Zach. 9.16. As the stones of a Crown, God will lift them up and make them honorable.

And there is another Text which is very observable; for everyone to take notice of God's intention to make these excellent ones famous on earth. The governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. Zach. 12.5. There was a time when the governors of Judah despised those that were gracious and godly; but God hath promised that the governors of Judah shall be convinced of their error, and shall say in their hearts the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God: However now through the calumnies of the world; however now through the reproaches that are cast upon the Saints of God, it falls out many time, that even the governors of Judah despise and contemn them, and say they are seduced people, that they are factious and turbulent, and so their

hearts are against them, and hate, and abhor them, and look upon them with such an evil eye, as those that they name puritans: yet there is a time promised when the governors of Judah shall say in their hearts the inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts. O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, God's Church and people, his sanctified ones (for Jerusalem typified the estate of God's people under the Gospel; God's sanctified ones under the Gospel) shall be such as the governors of Judah in their hearts shall say, My strength is in them. I see they are my best subjects, my chief strength is in them, and they are of principal use for me, and my Kingdom is upheld in peace for them, and there is the blessing of God on them, they shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God. Now I see God is their God; God hears their prayers, and hath done much for them, we are convinced of it. O this will be a blessed time, when it shall be that the governors of Judah shall say so.

Blessed be God that they do say so in any measure, that the governors of Judah say at all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, of the godly, that their strength is in them: that they may see those that are the excellent of the earth, in any measure to be truly the excellent of the earth.

It were a rueful spectacle, and would draw tears of blood, to see the excellent ones to have that usage that they have had. But now to see those excellent ones countenanced in a public way, especially in public courts of Justice, it is glorious, when the governors of Judah shall do it. And this we are to pray for, that it may be more and more seen amongst us, and to say no more; let us learn to honor them that God hath honored: since they are excellent ones, and God hath put excellency upon them, do you so too, look on them according as God esteems them. It is observed, that God in the time of the law did not require them to offer in sacrifice, Lions and Eagles, those brave



creatures; but Lambs and Doves, mean creatures, he would have offered in sacrifice. So God doth not regard the brave spirits of the world that strut it out; but if there be any that be gracious and godly though they be never so poor and mean, as Lambs and Doves, God honors and respects them, they are a sacrifice to him; the broken heart is a sacrifice to God. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise. Therefore when God would lift up himself in glory, he saith, He that dwells in the high and lofty place. What of him? He looks to those that are of humble, and contrite hearts, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. As if there were no other subject in the world worth looking upon, he looks only to them. As a thing that is before ones eye that he prizeth, his eye is fastened on that: so God looks on them as if they were the only object to be looked at; therefore let them be looked at by us with reverence in our hearts: it is fit that we should honor those that God honors.

Therefore it is observed in the message of the King of Babylon to Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32.31. When Hezekiah was sick, and God had given him a sign of his recovery that the sun did go backward: It was a wondrous honor that God put on him that the sun should go backward. The ambassadors of the king of Babylon came to congratulate with Hezekiah after his recovery: but what was the business? Not only to congratulate with him for his recovery; but to inquire of the great miracle, so the Text saith, the ambassadors of the Prince of Babylon were sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land; Why did they inquire of this wonder? There were many wonders done, but they were not sent to inquire of others but of this. Because they worshipped the sun for their god and because their god had put such an honor upon Hezekiah; they perceived the altering of the sun that it went backward, and they inquired of the matter, concerning the alteration in the sun, and after

enquiry there was news that it was for the sake of Hezekiah. Now because they worshipped the Sun as their god, and so apprehended that their god had put such an honor upon Hezekiah, they honored him too. Though Hezekiah were king of the Jews, and they were enemies one to another, Jerusalem and Babylon, yet when God had honored him, they sent to congratulate one another, then they put honor and respect one upon another upon that occasion.

That should teach us, if the heathens when they see their God put honor on any, they honor such as God honors, then when you see or hear that God honors gracious and godly men, and women, do you so too; prize them, let them have high esteem in your hearts. You have heard this day what honor God puts upon his Saints, therefore learn you to honor them. And much might be said, to draw the hearts of all people to the love of the people of God. Somewhat for the people of God; to walk as excellent ones, not to defile one another. And for others, if they would be those here in the world that be excellent and glorious; it is not the outward things of the world that hang on you; as clothes, and riches that make you excellent ones in the eye of God, but it is grace, and godliness. By faith the fathers obtained good report.

Some think there is no way to get esteem, but by outward bravery, great livings, fine clothes and the like; and men think that the way to be accounted more eminent than others, is to be rich, and to wear fine clothes and get honors and such like; but these are fading and not permanent. So there are many ministers that think to get esteem if they be honored before great ones, and go brave. But you know by experience, that a faithful godly minister, that walks faithfully, and conscionably, he gets more esteem in the hearts and consciences not only of those that are godly, but of those that have enlightened consciences, then a hundred of those; and they vex at it that they

should do so; Why? They go a way to work to get more esteem, but they are deceived; they look at excellency where it is not. It is not such things, but in the work of grace, that prevails with the consciences of men. Boniface the martyr when he was asked the question, if he might have the sacrament, if he would drink it in a wooden chalice? Saith he, the time was that there were wooden cups and golden priests, but now there are golden cups and wooden priests. There was a time in the primitive times, they were very mean, they were content with wooden vessels; but the men were gold in regard of grace, and godliness, and so they were highly esteemed; but now they have golden cups, that is a great deal of bravery and glory; but they have wooden priests, those that have no true excellency in them. The heart of the wicked is little worth. It may be his estate, his houses, his lands may be somewhat worth, but what is his heart worth? He hath nothing in himself to commend himself. But now the excellency of God's people is in that, it is in the soul and heart.

It were an uncomfortable thing to any of you, if suppose you have a servant along with you where you go, and all the respect you have is for your servants sake; if any entertain you into their house, it is not out of respect to you, but respect to your man; they love your man, and for his sake they entertain you; this would deject your hearts if you should know that you have no respect for any good in yourselves, but for your servants sake. So the men of the world, they have respect, but what is it for? For their riches, for their honor, for their brave clothes, for their money; all servants under them, they have no respect for anything in themselves, they have no spiritual excellency; especially when they are to deal with God, and the consciences of men, they have no respect. But godly men have not so many servants to gain respect by outward things: but that respect they have of God's

Saints, and in the consciences of men they have it from an internal excellency. But we let this go.

The second point follows, The excellent of the earth. In whom is all my delight.

It is but little that can be done I see, though it were the point I intended most. That that hath been said already makes way abundantly into the heart, that if they be the excellent of the earth, there is cause that we should delight in them. That is the point, that a gracious heart takes great delight in the Saints on earth.

First in their persons.

Or secondly in their society, and communion with them.

Or rather thus; they take delight in them, severally and jointly.

If they look upon any one Saint of God, they have delight in him, but they have more to look on all the Saints together jointly; so they can say their souls delight in them, there is a sweet complacency taken in them jointly. And that is that which I shall speak to at this time; The delight that is to be taken in the Saints jointly together. There is delight in the Saints in regard of the sweetness of their society and communion with them. For so this delight of David is to be taken in a large sense; not only in one particular, because of the good that he saw in their persons: but in regard of all the good he saw in them, and by them in joining with them take them altogether jointly. All the good that came from them; so he delighted in them. There is a great deal of delight and contentment to be had in the Saints of God, especially jointly.

If you look at one sometimes (though in never so mean a condition) there is a great deal of delight there. As Doctor Taylor the Martyr, that we read of in the book of Martyrs coming to Bradford, he professed that it countervailed all his trouble in prison, that he was acquainted with that Angel of God John Bradford, meaning him in particular. And another that professed that he had rather be with Cato, (a heathen) for his moral excellencies, in prison then with Caesar in the Senate in all his pomp. To be shut up with one godly man is a great deal of delight and contentment: what a great deal of delight is there then in their being together, and in that way wherein most of their excellencies appear? Such delight is in them jointly.

First, because the most comfortable communion that possible can be is enjoyed with them, and in them: for

First, is it not a most delightful thing to see a company of godly people together to behold the resplendent beauty, and glory of the graces of God's spirit? If there were nothing else, what a delightful thing is it saith the heart? The very sight of good men is pleasing and delightful to those that look upon their faces: wisdom makes their faces shine. The seeing of the resplendent grace of God in them is very delightful. What is the delight of God, but the seeing of the shining of his glory in his works? Especially when God sees that which is the shining of his highest glory, as his own grace and holiness, that God delights in most. So when a gracious heart sees his own image, and that grace that God hath wrought in him, he sees it resplendently in others, it is a delightful object.

Again, there is a comfortable communion with them in regard of the fragrancie of grace. The beauty of grace is delightful, but the fragrancie, the breathings of grace, are sweet in the heart. The beholding of it is delightful to the eye, but the workings of their grace

is exceeding sweet, and comfortable to the heart: Therefore saith the Church, Let my beloved go down into the gardens, among the beds of spices to feed in the gardens, and to gather spices. Cant. 6.2. All the Churches of God in the world are as the garden of Christ; and every particular Church in that garden is as a bed of spices; and every particular Saint is as the several parts of that bed, and especially the fragrant smell is very sweet.

It is said of Alexander, his very body was of such a constitution, that where ever he went there was a sweet savor came from his body. Certainly, where there is but one of God's children, there is sweetness from him; but where there is a company jointly, there is a wonderful unspeakable sweetness comes from them, it is exceeding comfortable to a gracious heart to be among them.

Again, their communion is comfortable and delightful jointly, in regard of the nearness; there being no communion under heaven, wherein there is that nearness one to another, as of the Saints. Observe, (that you may see how near they come together, and are made one, and so are exceeding delightful one to another) anything the more spiritual they are, the more they are united; the more corporeal they are, the less union. A heap of stones are not united, as the several beams of the sun, a thousand of them are united in one point, because they are of a spiritual nature. So it is with the spirits of men, the more carnal any men, and any society is, the less union: therefore the reason why the people of God many times are divided, and not united is, because they are carnal, Are ye not carnal, saith the Apostle, when there were divisions? Were you spiritual you would be more united one to another, but carnal men are carnally minded.

It is with spiritual society in regard of spiritual union, as it is with the society of wickedness. There is bodily, fleshly wickedness, and there is spiritual wickedness. Now those that join together in gross bodily wickedness, they are not so closely united as those that join in spiritual wickedness. A companion of drunkards or whoremongers, they take delight in one another, and join in wickedness, but it is corporal, therefore they soon fall out, and fly in the faces one of another. But those that join in spiritual wickedness, as politick ambitious men, men that join in mischief in a spiritual way, they keep mighty close, and you cannot easily break their bond of union; they will suffer much before they will discover one another, and break union one with another, because their union is in a way of spiritual wickedness. So on the contrary, when any are united in the spirit of holiness, they are mightily united, there is no such union under heaven as that.

We read of the curtains of the Tabernacle, Exod. 26, there were some of them that were made of purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and their teaches that held them together were pure gold. There were others of goats hair, and their buckles were brass. So it may set out the different condition of men in the Church: There are some in the Church that are truly gracious and godly, that excel in grace; and they are united by tacks of gold; their union is mighty strong and glorious in their hearts. There are others in the Church, outward professors that are carnal, that are goats hair, goats in the Church; and they maintain a union too, but it is but brass, the ground and bottom of the union is but mean; it is not such a golden union, as the union of the hearts of God's people; there are no people under heaven so united as they.

It is true, through their corruption, there is a great deal of dissention (as there is corruption in the best) but that is as far as they are

carnal; the more spiritual they grow, the more near is their union one to another, and the more entire is their love, My beloved is one, saith Christ to his Church, she is the choice of one of her that bare her, and the daughters saw her and blessed her. There is a oneness, and entireness in the hearts of the Saints, and this makes them to be blessed by those that behold them, and makes their communion very delightful.

That is the first particular, their communion is most delightful of all other communions: therefore David saith, all my delight is in them, taking them together.

But then in the second place, A gracious heart must needs delight in the Saints, if you take them jointly; because that when they are together, there God is worshipped: the solemnest worship that God hath is from the Saints joined together. As I told you before that the glory that God had in the world was from them all: but the solemnity of God's worship cannot be but from them jointly together. Therefore the great delight of a gracious heart is to be with the saints when they are jointly together: because there the name of God is honored, and they worship God in a solemn way; God is honored among them.

Christ himself much delights in the Saints when they are joined together in the duties of holy worship, do but compare two Texts of Scripture, that will both make us in love with the Saints, and delight in joint communion with them. Compare Psalm. 22.22. with Heb. 2.12. The Psalm is a prophesy of Christ; and generally all interpreters go this way, that it is so, it appears by the Psalm that Christ especially is meant: the Text saith, I will declare thy name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. It is the promise of Christ to declare the name of his father to his Church and people, and in the midst of the congregation he shall praise God. Mark it, in



Heb. 2.12, the Apostle applies it to the Saints joined together, saying, I will declare the name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church, will I sing praise unto thee. This was after Christ had been in the flesh, yet the Apostle applies this to the Church, in the midst of the Church, will I sing praise unto thee. This they gather hence, that Christ he delights in being with his people when they are jointly together, because of the solemn worship of God, that is tendered to God by them, and he joins with them in it as a delightful work: as they are together to praise God, Christ is praising him; as they worship, Christ is worshipping. Now every Saint of God hath the spirit of Christ in him, and so he delights in the society of the Saints on this ground, because there is worshipping of God, and God is praised solemnly among them. If there be any place in the world, wherein God hath solemn worship, it cannot but grieve a gracious heart, that he is not with them, for his heart is with them, he delights to be with them, especially in such a work as that; it grieves him that he cannot be there.

It is a note of an Interpreter that I have met with upon Isaiah 6, where the Angles cry Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts, the Prophet cries, Woe unto me for I am undone, &c. saith he, upon this ground, because he could not join with those blessed creatures, and so magnify, and praise, and worship God; that he through his sinfulness was not able to join with them, he cries, Woe is me, I am undone. So when any gracious heart doth but hear, that there is a people in the world that are precious ones, the excellent on earth, that join in the worship of God, and honor God in his own way, and enjoy communion with God, and I cannot join with them, woe to me that there should be any let or hindrance that I cannot come and join with them: for my heart is there, my delight is in the Saints when they are jointly together: because God's solemn worship is there.

But thirdly, my delight is in the Saints jointly, in regard of the wonderful delight God hath in them. A gracious heart must needs delight in them, because God himself takes so much delight in them: but especially when they are jointly together. There are special expressions in Scripture of God's taking delight in the Saints jointly, as in Zephaniah Zeph. 3.17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. What expressions are here of God's delighting in his people! The Lord thy God will rejoice, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will love, he will rest in his love, and joy, and joy over thee with singing. And in Isaiah, you shall find that the Church is called Hephzibah, God's delight: Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy Land anymore be termed, Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land, Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. Isaiah 62.4, it is a wondrous delight that God hath in his Saints.

There are wonderful expressions in Scripture for the manifesting of God's delight, even to admiration; especially in the Church jointly together. They are such expressions as we could not think or invent: as namely, that he calls his people his portion, his pleasant portion, for the Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut. 32.9. God calls them his inheritance, the lot of his inheritance: Jer. 12.7, he calls them the dearly beloved of his soul; Exod. 19.5, he calls them his peculiar treasure. Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. God hath treasures in the world; the creatures that are called the good treasures of the Lord: Deut. 28, but his people are called his peculiar treasure, there is a particularity: There is another kind of excellency in the people of God's delight, then in all other creatures; they are his common treasure, but his

people are his peculiar treasure. God calls them his glory, I will glorify the house of my glory, I will place salvation in Zion for my glory. Isa. 46.13. The crown of his glory, Isa. 60.7, he calls them the Throne of his glory, Isa. 62.3. Thou shalt be a Crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. In several places that I cannot stand on. His glory, the House of his glory, the Crown of his glory, the Throne of his glory. He calls them the royal Diadem, he calls them his ornament, an ornament set in Majesty and glory. There are the expressions, and more I might name of God's delighting in his people. Therefore if God delight in them and find satisfaction, much more should we.

Christ's speaks of his Church, O my sister, my spouse, my heart is ravished with thee. It is a strange expression, for Christ himself to be ravished with his people. It is an expression beseeing the Church, to have said so to Christ, but for Christ to say to the Church, it is wonderful. And again, My love, my dove, my undefiled one, Cant. 2, and at that very time when the Church was in a state of security, that Christ should call her his love, his dove, his undefiled; all to express the abundance of delight in his people. Well if God have such delight in them, much more should the Saints.

Again, if we consider further, the presence of God among his people, it is another argument why the Saints of God should take so much delight in other Saints, especially when they are joined together, because God is present there. The Lord is here, is the name of all their assemblies, The Lord dwells, and hath his tabernacle in Zion. It is a strange expression concerning the presence of God, in that he makes his people his habitation. As the people of God call God their habitation: so God calls his Church his habitation. God dwells in Zion. Psal. 90. Would you not delight to keep house with God? Where God's people are, God keeps house: and we should long to

have it our own house, and not come as strangers. A man may come as a stranger, and take a bit, and be refreshed in a family; but it is not his house, But now God's people when they go to others of the Saints they see God there, and they have that house for their house. It is called (as I told you) the house of his glory; that house that God desires to dwell in; he hath a mighty love to that house, to dwell among his people. In Psalm 132, there are many great and excellent expressions. For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation, Psal. 132.13, 14. God desires Zion; what is Zion, but only his Saints and people joined together? Zion was a type of the Church: so now all the Saints of God together are Zion. Now God hath a desire to this habitation. God dwells in the high and holy place, the highest heaven is God habitation; but though God have such a house in heaven, yet he is not (as it were) contented with that house, but he desires another house: he hath a desire to Zion to be his habitation, and the house where his honor dwelleth. You know a Prince may have some houses of meaner regard, when he goes to his sport, he may have a mean house to lodge in for a while: but his palace where he shows his Majesty, and honor, that is more glorious. So the people of God, and the Church, is called the house of God's honor, it is not a mean house, but a house of honor.

Further, it is that house that he means to dwell in forever, he loves it so well. This is my house, I will dwell in it forever. I am so well pleased with it, I will rest in it forever. Surely, we have cause to rest our hearts in God's people, when God finds rest there, and forever.

It may be some of you are sometimes acquainted with the people of God, and at the first delight in them: but your hearts being carnal you soon grow weary of them. It is not so with God, he delights in his people, and rests there, and rests there forever.

But you will say, how is God present with his Saints more than in other places; why is God said to dwell among his people, his Saints?

I answer, in two regards God is said to dwell among his people in a special manner.

First, because he makes himself known to his people, more than to all the world besides. There are none that know the counsel and mind of God, so as his Saints do. God is known in Judah. Psal. 29.9. There God opens himself, in his Temple every man speaks of his glory.

Secondly, because God communicates himself most among his people, God is said to be in heaven. Why? But because there he manifests his glory more than in other places; therefore heaven is his habitation. If that be his habitation where he manifests himself more, then his people are his habitation, because he manifests himself most there.

Secondly, heaven is the place of God's residence, because he communicates himself most there: then also God's people are his residence, he communicates himself there. And he communicates himself to them in a special manner, in four regards.

1. He communicates to his people more choice mercies.
2. He communicates mercies more fully.
3. He communicates mercies more powerfully.
4. More universally, then to others.

1. He communicates goodness among his people and Saints more choisely, more choice mercies of God. There is a remarkable place in

the Psalms, The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion. Psalm. 143. ult. He saith not the Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee, either out of heaven or earth, but out of Zion, as nothing that the choice mercies that God hath to communicate are out of Zion; among his people joined together in the way of worship. Would you desire that God should bless you with the chief mercies that he hath? Look upon God as blessing out of Zion; out of Zion God communicates his choicest mercies: therefore it concerns all to be in Zion, that they may have God to bless them out of Zion; there runs the sweetest of God's mercies indeed in Zion.

Again, God communicates his mercies more fully among his people than any other way. Psalm 36.7, 8. How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. They shall be abundantly satisfied; how? Not with the creatures, but with the fatness of thy house. Neither with thy communication to them alone. God hath abundance of mercies for his Saints alone: but when they are among the Saints jointly together, then they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and he shall make them drink of his rivers of pleasures. While they are alone in corners, they may have many sweet drops of pleasure from God, but when they are joined with the Saints, there are rivers of pleasure, and delight that come to their hearts: therefore there is great delight to be had in the Saints of God when they are joined together.

Thirdly, he communicates them more powerfully, mark, in Psal. 133.3. As the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded a blessing, even life forever more. There was blessing, and the Lord commanded it:

there went a powerful work of God's grace upon the hearts of people there, when they were joined together in Zion: there God commanded the blessing. If you would have God speaking powerfully to command a blessing on your souls you must be among his people, you must join in a holy fellowship with his people; there God commands it.

In the last place, more universally all the goodness of God is communicated among his people, therefore the Church is called the perfection of beauty; Psalm 50, that some translate, the universality of excellency and beauty. There is a universality of all among the Church and people of God. And in another place, All my springs are in thee. Psalm 87. speaking of joining with the people of God, that is, all my springs of truth that are revealed to me; all the springs of comfort that I have communicated to my soul, all the springs of grace that I have; to quicken me, they are all in thee in the joint society and communion with God's people, I find all. Thus we see the presence of God among his people in regard of the communication of himself to them, and therefore what a great deal of cause there is to joy, and delight in the Saints jointly together.

Again further there is abundance of cause to delight in them joined together, in regard of their admirable privileges as they are joined together. They have privileges as they are alone, but as they are joined they have committed to them the oracles of God, Rom. 3.2, all the ordinances by which God conveys himself. To them are committed the seal of the covenant, you cannot singly have the seal of the covenant, but joined with the people of God, closing with them. To them is committed the very power of Jesus Christ: saith the Apostle, When ye are together with the power of Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 5.4, a glorious privilege. Yea, further, take this one thing they are inheritors to all the promises that ever God made to the Church from

the beginning of the world. There is no society of Saints that join in Christian fellowship, but they are so. See a remarkable place for that in Isa. 54.17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn: this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. That promise that God made to the Churches before, this is their heritage. And conceive of this one now that is of great use, that all that is said in Scripture concerning God's delight to be among his people, and in Zion, all were but to type out the excellent condition of God's Church in the times of the Gospel. The most of the expressions are of God's delight among his people in the time of the law: but know that all those expressions were but mere types, and there is a great deal more in the Antitype than in the type: therefore the Saints of God joined under the Gospel have abundance more of the glory of God, of the presence of God, and of privileges, than Zion had, or Jerusalem could have; because that was but a type of their happy condition under the time of the Gospel.

It is an observable place that we have in the Hebrews, it is said concerning the state of the Church, that the law had but a shadow of good things to come. Heb. 10.1, and not the very image of the things. It is not so much as an image: observe, a shadow is not so much as an image; but an image is not so much as the thing itself: but that was not an image, but a shadow. As a Painter that takes an image, he draws first the dark shadow with a coal, there is a great deal of difference between that shadow, and the image in beauty: so much difference there is between all the glory of God in the Church in the time of the law, and that glory of God that is among his people in the time of the Gospel. We may safely say, there is the like difference between God's manifesting of himself to his people then, and now; as between a dark shadow drawn with a coal in comparison of an image.



But mark, it was but a shadow of the image; that which we have now is but an image. As there is not so much in a shadow as in the image, so there is not so much in the image as in the thing itself. The presence of God and all his goodness to his people, and his glory to his people now, it is but an image to that which shall be; there shall be another presence of God, another communication, and revelation of God hereafter, in another kind then there is now; all that we have now is but an image of that which shall be; all that was in the law was but a shadow of that image: therefore we should have a great deal of delight in the Saints.

Much might be said further, for delighting in them now, because they are those that we shall live forever with in heaven hereafter. Look to the Saints especially together, they are those that we shall live eternally together with in heaven, therefore they are those that we should delight in. They are those that we shall be joined with forever in everlasting hallelujahs, before him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb. Look upon any Saint, though he be never so mean in gifts and abilities, thou and he shall always joy in the presence of God in glory.

Yea to be among God's people is heaven itself, they are not only those that we shall be with in heaven, but it is heaven. Behold, saith the Lord, I create a new heaven and a new earth. Isa. 65.17. The state of the Church is called heaven, For what is there in heaven but is here? I might show the resemblance of heaven, and that which is in heaven is here among us, and therefore if heaven be a place to be delighted in, the Saints are.

Therefore have a high esteem of the Saints, close with them, and come into as near communion as is possible. If they be so excellent, and to be delighted in, then especially when they are joined together

labor all to come in, and join with the Saints in the nearest union that is possible, in that fellowship wherein you may (as near as can be) have fellowship only with them, especially that have the appearance of such.

The mixture of our communion doth much hinder our delight. Cast dirt into the fire, and it will damp it: so the mixture of ungodly ones, their spots and blemishes hinder the delight of God's people one in another. But now to come among those that your hearts may close with, that you have comfortable evidence, that they are not mere talkers of religion and professors at large, but that the image of God is on them, O what closing is there with their hearts, and what admirable good might we enjoy in the communion and society of them. Therefore know that it is one of the greatest blessings that you are capable of in this world to have the nearest communion with the Saints next to your immediate communion with God himself; it is that which you should so esteem; and your hearts should work after. Mark that Text Psalm 36, what is said of our joining with the people of God, how excellent is thy loving kindness, wherein appears the excellency? They shall be satisfied with the fatness of thy house. It is a fruit of the excellency of the loving kindness of God for people to be of God's house, and to partake of the fatness of it. To have abundance of God's creatures, and to have an estate, and friends, it is a fruit of God's kindness: but to join with God's people in a way of worship and in the nearest union, that is a fruit of the excellent loving kindness of God to admiration. How excellent is thy loving kindness? It was so excellent that he was not able to express the excellency of it.

It is made in Scripture to be the proper inheritance even of the elect of God; to enjoy communion with the people of God, in the type, it is a fruit of the very inheritance of the elect of God; so as it is opposed to all the vanities of the world. Mark what God saith by Isaiah, Vanity

shall take them away, but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the Land, and shall inherit the holy Mountain and shall say, cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people, For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Here is a firm inheritance indeed, the Saints shall possess the holy mountain. God dwelleth on high, in the highest heavens, and the Saints that are of a contrite and humble spirit with him. Do you not perceive a joyful revolution of the Saints, they shall be dwellers with God himself in eternity. Job saith, I shall see my Redeemer with these very eyes; though for a while, they be as it were, closed up in darkness, yet at last they shall be glorified. Nay, every part of the bodies of the Saints shall be glorified, Christ shall make our vile bodies like his glorious body, saith S. Paul. There is no question, but his body is glorified throughout; there cannot be the least shade of darkness, for he is the Sun of righteousness, and so shall all the just, they shall shine as the Sun; every glorified Saint by the reflection, not only of their mind, but if their ocular body upon one another by a mutual reciprocation of their beams, everyone shall shine in everyone. The glory of the soul shall transfuse itself, and redound to the body. Saint Paul in effect speaks as much; as it is sown a natural body, it riseth a spiritual body: As the soul here is swallowed up of the body, to the body as it were shall be swallowed up of the soul, in a word both soul and body shall be turned into glory, and the glory shall be to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight.

FINIS.

## **The Righteous Mans Refuge.**

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. - Jeremiah 33.3

The Prophet Jeremiah in this and the foregoing Chapter, lays down sundry and eminent mercies that he intends for the good of his elect people; notwithstanding their provoking of God by their several relapses and sundry backslidings; and though their enemies also did threaten them with utter desolation, and that they should be desolate without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, yet the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride, the voice of them that shall say, praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his mercy endureth forever; this voice shall be to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. But by what means shall these mercies be bestowed on them? In this Text, he tells them where ever they are afflicted or in any great distress, call unto me, and I will answer thee. And as Christ in the Gospel, having the book of the Prophet Isaiah delivered unto him, when he was in the Synagogue, read a part of it, then closed the book, and began his sermon to the people; this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, Luke 4.21. So may I say of this Text, that we have out of this Prophecy read unto you.

Behold this day hath the Lord fulfilled this word of his in our ears before our eyes. And therefore is it that we are all here this day met before the Lord, that we may witness unto this his good word and promise, Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not. In the two last Verses of this Chapter, the Lord promiseth to establish a Covenant with David

and raise up a deliverance to the seed of Jacob, and cause them to return out of their captivities, and he will have mercy on them.

That which he saith to his people, he speaks it plainly and openly, I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. The heathen God's did speak darkly and ambiguously to their worshippers, that they knew not what to make of their words; but I have not done so to you, saith God. They would have you worship them, but they cannot help you when you have so done; it is not so with me, Thus saith the Lord, if my Covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, that is, the Church of God, the Saints.

You will say, Why are the people of God called the seed of Jacob, rather than the seed of Abraham, or the seed of Isaac? The seed of Jacob. The reasons may be these two. First, because that all Jacob's posterity were the Church of God; all Jacob's children the Patriarchs, were every one of the Church; All that came from Abraham were not so, Ishmael was not so; All that came from Isaac were not so, Esau was not; But all Jacob's children were: therefore speaking of the people of God, of the Church that should be to the end of the world, they are said here to be the seed of Jacob, rather than the seed of Abraham, or of Isaac.

Then secondly, the seed of Jacob, because the Lord is here speaking of the blessing of his seed, namely in the hearing of their prayers. Call unto me, and I will answer thee. Now because Jacob was the most eminent in prayer, (though Abraham and Isaac no question were mighty with God in prayer yet,) the Scripture doth not put such an eminency either upon Abraham or Isaac for prayer as upon Jacob. You have the most eminent expression for prayer that ever was spoken of any man, never the like. Gen. 32.28. And he said, thy name

shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. O how eminent was he in prayer. Therefore it is rather said, the seed of Jacob, then of Abraham or Isaac.

But you will say, then they should rather have been called the seed of Israel: for his name of Israel was given him upon his prevailing with God.

We must not be too inquisitive. These names are used promiscuously. But, this is one reason that is given, and it seemeth to have probability with it.

In Scripture when God speaks of the Church in a low condition, he puts the name of Jacob on them rather than Israel: Fear not, thou worm Jacob: and it follows, ye men of Israel, Isa. 41.14. He puts them in mind of their low condition by this name rather than Israel; Fear not thou worm Jacob: For before Jacob's name was changed, ye know what a low condition, and what straits he was in. So here, the Lord speaking of his Churches deliverance out of distress, he calls them the seed of Jacob, that they might see how by their prayers they were brought from their straits, as Jacob was brought from his straits by prayer. When he was Jacob before he was Israel, he was in great straits: so shall the Church be till they seek God. Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.

That is, first, I did require it of them, and my requiring did prevail with them: I did not exhort them to it, or require it, and my words fell to the ground and they did not call unto me; but what I required of them was effected in them. When God speaks to a people, and they do not what he requires, his word may seem to be slighted, there being no efficacy in his words to prevail. But saith God, Call unto me,

and I will answer thee, that is, I called not on my people to call unto me and they went their own way; but what I spake to them prevailed with them, and in them, and they did that which I required. This is a blessed thing that we do that which the Lord requires of us to be done. That is the first observation.

Secondly, call unto me, and I will answer thee, that is, I did not only command, but I did promise to answer them. They calling unto me in a right manner, by that way and means which I directed them, I promised to answer their desires, when that they should call unto me.

I suppose that the principal scope of the holy Ghost is that which the words plainly present to our view; That we must call upon God, before he will hear and answer our requests. God requires his people to call unto him, and he is pleased to be found of them; and not only to answer them, but to do abundantly for them.

So then this point ariseth plainly out of the words, When God requires a people to him, he will make it good to them that he will answer them.

Before I open this point I will give you a Scripture or two, one in the Old Testament, and another in the new, Deut. 4.7. For what Nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? Here is an experiment of the fruit of calling unto God; and it is spoken to show the honor of God's people, the privilege of the seed of Jacob, and the eminent condition they were in. God is nigh to them in all things they call upon him for: therefore they are not required to seek God in vain. So Matth. 21.22. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. A very strange expression: Here might seem to be a tautology. One would think that it had been large

enough to have said, Whatsoever ye shall ask, ye shall receive: but here is, all things whatsoever. We would not speak so in ordinary language. I will give you all things whatsoever. Yet it may be, this may be intended, and I believe it is; And all things, here is the general promise, that all things that ye ask ye shall receive: and whatsoever, may refer to particulars, every particular thing that ye ask ye shall receive. You will say, any one that understands reason or Logic knoweth that particulars are included in the general. But there is this illogical reasoning of unbelief; that though we agree to the premises in general, yet when we come to particulars, we think they will not be made good to us. I suppose you find your unbelieving hearts so irrational, that though they believe the general promise, yet when it comes to particulars, and you cannot but say that such a particular is in the general, yet your hearts will not come up to it. Therefore our Savior saith not only, all things in general, but also, whatsoever, in particular.

So, Jam. 5.16. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. There is but one word in the original, <H&G>, the working prayer; but it is translated by two, effectual, fervent. Surely then prayer and seeking of God is the ordinance which he hath appointed for the turning about of the great affairs of the world. This is the engine that doth it inwardly, there are indeed a great many outward wheels used, but the spring of all is within, prayer turns all about. God never made use of any created power so much as of this. He never did such great things by any created power as by the ordinance of prayer. The Word is appointed for the converting of souls, but a great part of the blessing of the Word dependeth on prayer.

In the opening of this point I will first give you some evidences of it; Secondly, show you what great things prayer will do. Thirdly,



wherein the efficacy and power of it lieth. Fourthly, the objections of troubled unbelieving spirits against it. And then come to apply all. The evidences hereof are first the many famous records in Scripture of the noble and glorious exploits of prayer. If any of you should come to me to ask, as that King did of the prophets servant, 2. Kings 8.4. What great things hath thy master done? So what great things hath prayer done in the world? Truly we might spend hours and days in returning you an answer, a great part of holy Scripture being spent in this very argument. And it is a very good exercise for you in the night, when you cannot sleep, or at other times when you are troubled, to do as that King did, Esther 6.1, call for the book of the Records of prayer. You that read the Scriptures, mark what you read. The word of God will tell you how prayer hath stopped the Sun in the firmament, opened heaven, and shut it again, raised from death to life, opened the prison doors, and what not?

Secondly, all God's people are able to tell you great stories of what they have gotten by prayer. This poor man cried, saith David of himself, Psalm. 34.6, and the Lord heard him. Who is it that cannot tell histories of God's gracious dealing with him upon his calling unto him? To be sure, our Nation hath many things to say this way; and every particular godly soul hath many things to say: they would not lose their income of prayer for all the world.

Thirdly, surely it is not in vain to call unto God: for there was never any soul that ever would leave off, but would continue as long as he lived seeking him: he would seek his face evermore; if he had had no answer, he would have left off. When we see a Bee stick on a Flower, and will not be driven off, or if she be driven off, she will come again, we conclude certainly it finds honey there. So all the Saints of God that have ever sought God truly, they would never be beaten off this way. Let the world do what it will, persecute them, set spies to watch

them in their meetings of prayer, let it punish and imprison them, let all the malice and rage of men be against them, yet they cannot hinder them either from praying in their closets, or from enjoying the benefit of the communion of Saints in prayer. Daniel had rather lose his life than be kept from his prayers, though but for a day: but pray he would, and that openly, yea three times a day, as he was wont; he would not forbear one time. He did stick to prayer finding honey and sweetness in it. Oh how unlike are we to Daniel, though the performance of this duty was exceeding hazardable to Daniel, yet he would not be deterred from it; but every light trifle taketh off our hearts.

It is not in vain for wicked men to call upon God, though they are not able to seek God as they ought. The prayer of the wicked is abominable, saith Solomon. Prov. 15.8. That is not to be understood of the prayer of every man that is unregenerate, wickedness is not so to be taken in that place. For we know that God hath regarded the prayers of men unregenerate. The prayers and fasting of Nineveh were regarded of God: the praying and fasting of Ahab was regarded of God. God hath granted the wicked some mercies, he hath looked on them as his creatures. Though God seeth enough in their prayers to cast them off, yet God hath manifested his regard to them. Therefore if it be not in vain for the wicked to call unto the Lord, much less is it in vain for the seed of Jacob, the elect of God, to call unto him.

Yea, the Lord heareth the cry of the very Ravens and the beasts, Psalm 147.9, and Psalm 104.21, 27, 28. Therefore the people of Nineveh would have the beasts eat nothing, that they might cry unto God, Jonah 3.7, 8. Surely if the brute beasts and the fowls be heard when they cry, it is good for the people of God, to call unto him.

There is very great reason that we should call unto God, because the people of God that have been wise and have conversed with God, and have known much of the mind of God, have given up themselves and all their strength to the duty of prayer. Now it were a weak part and an idle thing for anyone to give up his strength and all his might to that which in reason we could not expect, and whereby there is no great thing to be obtained. It is said of Jehoshaphat 2 Chron. 20.3, that he feared, and set himself to seek the Lord. It is translated *composuit faciem suam*, he set his face, he gave himself up fully to seek the Lord. They know what they do that give up themselves wholly to seek God.

Indeed carnal hearts condemn the people of God because they see them so earnest in those things that they think to be frivolous: For it argueth weakness in any man to give up himself with all his strength to things that are vanity, and have no strength in them. Therefore because carnal men look upon the way of Religion, as a thing that hath no end, they think it foolish for men to be so earnest to give up their strength and their whole souls for it: But the Saints of God know what they do when they give themselves up to seek the Lord, they know if they call unto him, he will answer them.

Again, this is an evidence that there is much advantage by prayer, because men that were wise and holy have so prized the prayers of the Saints, and made such high account of them. Mark the expression of the Apostle, writing to the Saints for their prayers. Rom. 15.30. Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together in prayer with me in your hearts to God for me. The Apostle Paul, so great a man, and one that had a mighty spirit in prayer, writing to private Christians in the Church of Rome, he beseecheth them for the Lord's

sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that they strive in prayer for him: He knew that there was much to be had this way.

Yea further, God is found of them that sought him not, Isaiah 65.1, then surely, the people of God that call upon him, shall receive answer from him.

Yea yet further, God when he intends to show no mercy, giveth a straight charge to his people not to pray, or he shutteth up their hearts that they are not able to pray. This is an argument that prayer is prevalent, because when God will not show mercy, he would not have such a precious thing lost and spent to no purpose.

Lastly, it is not in vain, because if it should, then a praying heart were not always a mercy from God: but certainly it is. Therefore though perhaps you cannot find the thing granted that you pray for, yet to have a continual praying heart, know that it is a great mercy from God. And those that are spiritual, prize more the continuance of a praying heart many times, then the granting of the thing they pray for. All these put together are full evidences, that it is not in vain to call unto the Lord.

There be many other evidences which I pass by one purpose, that I may have as much time as may be for application.

But now, wherein doth it appear that it is not in vain to seek the Lord? What doth prayer do?

First, it is not in vain to seek God, if there were nothing else in prayer but the right exercise of the faculties of our souls and of our graces; this alone were worth our time. The graces of our souls must be exercised about somewhat: Now prayer serveth for the exercise of all graces.

Secondly, it is not in vain if it were nothing but the performance of our duty as creatures to God. There are many people that are weary of prayer, because they have not that by it that they expect: But know that there are two arguments to prayer; the performance of duty, and the obtaining of mercy: If there were but only the former, that alone should suffice to keep thee praying as long as thou livest.

Thirdly, it were not in vain if it were nothing but the tendering that homage and worship that we owe to God. Prayer is not only a duty, but a great part of the worship that God hath in the world. While we are worshipping of God it is worth the time.

Again, it is not in vain, if there were nothing but this, that we come and show what side we are of, that we join and side with God against his adversaries and for his people. But these are not the things here intended.

Further, it is not in vain, because there is no faithful prayer that ever was made but God accepts of it in heaven. There was never one of the seed of Jacob, that ever put up a faithful petition to God, but God took it in his hand and read it. A King or any superior, when you come with a petition may refuse to take it, but God never refuseth to take any petition from a faithful soul. Therefore saith the Psalmist, Psal. 6.9. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord will receive my prayer. He will take it, and look on it, and read it; and not only so, but he will also accept it, and take pleasure in it: A Prince may take a petition, and look on it, and after frown and show anger in his countenance; but God doth not so with the prayers of his people: The prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. 15.8, he never reads a petition that his people tenders, but with a smiling countenance. If it be a faithful petition, he accepts it of them and receives it graciously. It is an expression of Luther speaking of the prayer of a contrite

heart, The least sigh of a contrite heart so fills heaven with noise, that there is no noise of anything in heaven or earth heard at that time, but only the noise of prayer. Certainly a faithful prayer taketh the heart of God very much, yea every faithful prayer is recorded in heaven. You keep your letters upon the file, that you may readily find them, when you have occasion to look on such a letter sent from such a country: so God hath his file in heaven where all faithful prayers are kept upon record. As Princes have their paper offices, where transaction between one State and another are kept, so the Lord hath his prayer-office, where he keeps all the prayers of his Saints that ever were put up to him. Revel. 8.3. Another Angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer, and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints. Where were those prayers of all the Saints that he must take a censer and offer incense with? God had them recorded with him, and now they were to be offered to him. And see what great things follow upon the offering of the prayers of the Saints, verse. 4. The smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angels hand. And the Angel took the censer, &c. and there were voices, and thundering's, and lightnings, and an earthquake. These followed upon the prayers of the Saints. It signified the time wherein all should come in remembrance before the Lord, as if an Angel were offering, yea, Christ the Angel of the Covenant, hath a time to take the prayers presented long ago, and to offer them to God with his own incense. They are all recorded in heaven, therefore they are not in vain. When a petition is taken and put upon record, the petitioner petitioneth not in vain, his petition is not thrown out. God doth take all the petitions of the Saints and recordeth them; they are all filed up in heaven.

Yet further, there is no faithful petition but God puts his fiat to the bottom of it, at the instant that it is put up to him. There is a decree

in heaven issued out for mercy, at the very instant that the petition is put up, God dealeth not with us in this kind, as men do who are counted very gracious, if they please to tell us they will consider of our petition: no; but your petition is presently granted. A petitioner when there is time taken to consider of his petition, trembles and shakes for fear it should not be granted: but the petitions of the Saints of God are granted presently. When Daniel had been seeking God at the evening sacrifice, an Angel comes to him, and tells him, that at the beginning of his prayer there was a decree to grant it, and that he was sent to him at the beginning of his prayer, Dan. 9.23, and Psa. 56.9. When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know, for God is for me. Did not David cry oft, and yet his enemies did not turn their backs when he cried? He cried oft when his enemies prevailed: yet he saith, When I cried then mine enemies turned back: and this I know, why? For God is for me. The meaning must be this, that at that instant that he cried, there was a decree in heaven; the thing was done. He looked on it as done, even as certainly as if he had seen it with his eyes.

This is the reason that the Saints after they have prayed, though the thing be not actually done, fall to praising and blessing of God. We have a notable example in Jehoshaphat, of whom we read 2 Chron. 20.3, that being in a great fear bad set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. He did not seek God slightly, but set himself to seek the Lord. And what his prayer was, ye may see from verse 6. to 12. And Jehoshaphat said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven, and rulest over all Kingdoms? Mark how he pleadeth with God for the Covenant he had made, verse 8. Speaking of the Sanctuary they had built for his names sake; If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou

wilt hear and help. He urgeth the promise made to Solomon at the dedication of the Temple. For that prayer of Faith which Solomon made, and God accepted, hath the strength of a promise in it. O our God, saith he, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. Though he professed that his enemies were so many, that he knew not what to do, and that they had no might to resist them, yet after his prayer was done, and before the battle began, when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the Army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth forever, verse 21.

Mark: he had not yet gotten the victory, the battle was not fought, yet as soon as he had ended his prayer, he praised the Lord for his mercy endureth forever. He made account that the thing was done: It was decreed in heaven. Therefore surely the people of God are answered when they call upon him.

Nay, it is not only decreed, but ere long God will satisfy his people, and fill their longing souls with goodness, Psal. 107.9. A time shall come when they shall say their prayers are heard, and that they have enough. Yea the Lord giveth more sometimes than his people mention in their prayer, they ask temporal blessings, and he bestoweth spiritual, yea he giveth them himself, and that is all in all. Surely then the prayers of the Saints are heard and answered.

But wherein lieth the efficacy of prayer? What makes prayer so powerful with God?

One thing is, because God delighteth in mercy, and in communicating himself to the children of men. He taketh more pleasure in doing good, then any can in seeking it; yea, then any can



in enjoying it from him. Our hearts cannot be so strongly set to seek for any mercy from God, as he is to communicate mercy to us. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy, Mic. 7.18.

Another thing that rendereth prayer so effectual, is God's Covenant and promise to his people. It was the speech of Alchimedes, Give me a place to set my Engine in, and I will shake the whole earth. Let prayer have a sure foundation to set foot on, and it will do mighty things. Now the promises are the foundation of prayer, whereof we have great abundance Numb. 23. You shall find abundance of promises to the Saints of God, when Balaam was brought to curse the people. But in Deuter. 33, there are admirable promises. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and on the sky in his excellency. The eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone, the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of Corn and Wine, also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is that sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. Here are promises to the Saints of God. They shall have all things that are good, and God will manifest himself, especially against his enemies. There must be a mighty efficacy in such a plea, when there are such large promises. So in the 14 Chapt. of this book of Isaiah, there are diverse promises for God's people, For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel and set them in their own land, and the stranger shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob, and the people shall take them and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel

shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass that in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, &c. I make no question but some of the people of God have been pleading this promise in prayer where the Lord hath promised to have mercy on Israel, and to give him rescue from his sorrows, and fears, and hard bondage. It was hard bondage that we were made to serve in, not long ago; here is a promise that God will give us rest from it; and upon the pleading of this promise God hath made it good to his people.

And in Isa. 41.8, there are large promises in that Chapter to the Saints of God. But thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend, Thou whom he have taken from the ends of the earth. Here are promises for prayer to set foot upon, no marvel if it hath so much power and efficacy.

There are divers others, and many things behind of the efficacy of prayer, as it depends upon the promise and covenant that God hath made with his people: for every promise is but a several branch and expression of the covenant of God: therefore we are to refer them all to the Covenant. I will give you but one Scripture, Jer. 30.10, 11. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, neither be dismayed O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from a far, and thy seed from the land of their captivity, and Jacob shall return and be in rest and quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. There is somewhat that God doth, but yet still he remembers his

promise in the midst of affliction, that he will leave nothing of that undone: therefore though his people be under great afflictions, the Lord will be good to them according to his promise.

Now again the Lord will regard the prayers of his people; the efficacy of their prayers depends upon this, because it is God's own work. That which is the work of God is not in vain: God made none of his works in vain. Now all their calling upon God, it is from God; it is God's own work, and a most glorious piece of the work of God. Every prayer that comes from the poorest Saints of God; every gracious, and faithful prayer it is a glorious piece of God's work; It is a work of the holy Ghost, and therefore it is not in vain.

Again, as their prayers come from God, they seek God from God; so they seek God for God, they seek the Lord for himself. If the people of God seek God only for Corn, and Wine, and Oil; if they did seek him only for their own ease, and outward liberties, and accommodations, and for the lives of their enemies, perhaps they might seek in vain. No, but when they seek God, they seek God for God, and thence they prevail so much with God, Ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it on your lusts. James 4.3. You pray to God oft to be delivered from enemies, and you think your prayers (if it be in such a time as this) they come in vain: No marvel if so you pray that you may have liberty to trade, and deliverance from taxations; (these may be sought,) but the house of Jacob seeks God for his name, that that may not be dishonored, and for his Gospel, that that be not taken away, and the power of godliness trodden as dirt in the street. When they seek God for God, no question, but God will hear and answer.

But the great efficacy of prayer is this, it is part of the purchase of the blood of Christ: that God might hear the prayers of the Saints, it comes from the merits of Christ, it is a part of his purchase that God

should regard them, it is in his name that we pray; so we are taught. It is by Christ that we have access to the throne of grace, our privilege of seeking God is that which Christ hath purchased by his blood. So that our seeking of God is not only a duty, and beneficial to us, but it is a high privilege purchased by the blood of Christ; by him we have access with boldness, the word is, with liberty of speech: liberty of speech is by the blood of Christ, that we may come before the Lord, and open our minds fully, certainly there is a great deal of efficacy in prayer. Whatsoever our prayers are, as they are from us, though they be vain as they are from us, yet take them as Christ's purchase, here lies the great efficacy of prayer.

Think not that the efficacy of prayer lies in earnestness, or enlargement: though it be a comfort and an evidence that God enlargeth us by his Spirit, (it is not parts that enlarge, but the Spirit) but the virtue of prayer lies not here: the strength whereby prayer doth great things, it lies in secret, in the purchase of Christ.

Again, Christ takes all the prayers of his people, and tenders them up to his Father for acceptance. We have a more glorious way of coming to God then Adam had in innocence, yea in some respects then the Angels themselves, by having such an Intercessor that takes all our prayers and carries them to his father.

Yea, not only so, but he joins with us to the Father. There is a place in the Hebrews quoted out of the Psalms, that shows that Christ praiseth God in the congregation; it is not only the Saints that praise God but Christ himself. Heb. 2.12. I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praises unto thee. Christ in the midst of the Church sings praise to God. When people meet to praise God, Christ praiseth him. It is a mighty encouragement in praising God. So in prayer, when we meet to seek

God Christ seeks him: for he is at the right hand of the Father, making continual intercession for the Saints; Christ himself joins with them in the work that their prayers may be heard and answered.

Again, it is the style and title that God glories in, to be a God hearing prayer, therefore he will hear and answer.

Again, prayer is the pouring forth of the spirit to God; the spirit that is so beautified with the graces of his own spirit; now the pouring forth of such a precious spirit to God so beautified, and principled with the graces of the holy Ghost, certainly this cannot but be answered by God. Indeed, the Scripture saith of the heart of the wicked, that it is little worth: Let their heart be poured forth, God doth little mind, or regard it: but the heart of the righteous is much worth; it is very precious before God: therefore when their hearts are poured out, and God sees the beauty and glory of his graces on them, it is exceeding delightful to him, and such pouring out of their hearts, are heard and answered. If God have a bottle for all their tears, he hath a bottle also for all their expressions, and pouring out of their hearts in prayer.

Further, the exceeding delight that God hath in his Saints must needs cause God to regard their calling unto him. They are his darlings: now there is no man that loves to deny a suit to any that he delights in.

Lastly, it were not for the honor of God, that his people should call unto him, and not be answered, nor receive that comfort they pray for. It is reported of Titus, though he were a heathen Emperor, yet he would not that any man should go sad out of the presence of the Prince. God accounts it an honor that none should go sad out of his presence. Therefore those are called on to rejoice that seek the Lord. Let the hearts of them rejoice that seek the Lord, Psalm. 105.3, not

only let the heart of them rejoice that find the Lord, that obtain that they seek, but those that seek the Lord, while they are seeking should rejoice in seeking him.

But now I will only take away that great objection, and reasoning, that is in the hearts of many men against this point, and then come to the application.

You tell us that the prayers of God's people are not in vain. But when they call unto him he will answer them, and by God's mercy now and then, we have found some comfortable hearing from heaven: but ordinarily we find it otherwise. How many prayers have we put up to God, and find not the issue? We pray, and pray, and the enemies prevail, though now and then God give us help.

Now for the taking away of all unbelieving reasonings against this point, I will not go from the Text at this time.

Therefore the first answer is this: You say you have sought God, and have not what you would have, and therefore God hath not answered when you have called.

Though perhaps this that you now say is something, yet it makes not the text void. Remember what hath been before: heretofore you have sought God, and God had answered your seeking's, remember the times of old, let that for the present a little stay you. It was that that stayed the Psalmist, he began to reason as you do, that he had sought God without answer, Will the Lord cast off forever? And will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? &c. Psalm 7, 8, here seems to be as much unbelief as in your reasoning, but mark what follows, v. 10. And I said this is my death: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high. O, it is my sin, and weakness that I should reason

thus, I consider not what to do when I reason thus: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high, verse. 11. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember the wonders of old. v. 12. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings. Thy way O God is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? Thou art the God that doest wonders, thou hast declared thy strength among the people, v. 14. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph, v. 15 Mark, at length he recovers himself with this, though present things seem to go hard, yet he remembered what God had done; so do thou in this case. In this book of Isaiah, you have a complaint of unbelieving hearts, as if God had been sought in vain. Isa 40.27. Why sayest thou O Jacob, and speakest O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God. Art thou one of the seed of Jacob, and hast sought God and sayest, thou hast had no answer? God reasons the case, and will confute their unbelief. Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. v. 28, 29, 30, 31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as Eagles; they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint. Hath not God done great things heretofore, in 88, and in the powder plot and at other times? And though we be in some straits, remember what God did before.

This should appease your hearts, what though thou have not present audience for the thing thou seekest: yet think, I deal with a God that hath an understanding that I cannot search. God it may be lets the adversary prevail sometimes, I cannot tell what glory God may get by

it, I cannot conceive how God can bring his own glory about when Israel flees before the Philistines. But why sayest thou so O Jacob? There is no searching of God's understanding, God sees further than thou canst see: that thing that thou thinkest will make against his name may make for it: therefore lay thine hand upon thine heart. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might. God stays till men have no might, till they faint, and are ready to fail, and then he comes and helps them. That is the meaning of that Scripture in Luke, where Christ saith, God will avenge his elect that cry night and day to him, though he tarries, he will avenge them, he will hear their prayers, he will answer their requests. But it follows upon it, notwithstanding when the Son of man comes shall he find faith on earth? I verily think that that want of faith, hath reference to that very promise specially, that God will hear his elect that cry: but God may stay so long, as that the very time when God shall come to perform it, and shall intend to do it, it may be a time when their faith is overcome, and fails in the promise, that they begin to give over, and think they have sought God in vain. And usually the time when God comes to fulfill his promise, and to answer the prayers of his people, it is that very time when they fail and are ready to [sink.] Therefore that may be another argument, it may be thou hast not believed this promise. Thou sayest thou hast prayed, and thou thinkest thou hast not answer: hast thou believed this promise in the Text? Hast thou relied on it? God hath commanded it, and hast thou done as he commanded with belief, Call unto me and I will answer thee.

The word of God shall be made good, but how? Upon our faith: it shall be made good to us upon our believing: though we be never so godly, and pray never so well, yet if we will have the promises made good, it must be upon believing. If thou hast not laid the weight of thy soul on the promise, thou hast no cause to say that God hath not



made his word good; it may be thou hast not faith: learn to believe the word, and then thou shalt have it fulfilled. Thou wouldest have it made good, and then thou wouldest believe it; no, thou must first believe the word, and then expect that God should fulfill his promise.

Again, God is a great God that we call unto, and it is fit for us to wait, and to wait long. He is great, and we call for great things, and we are poor, mean, vile wretches. God hath his prerogative sometimes to answer presently, sometimes not so. Elias was a great praying man, he is set for an example of prayer; he prays at one time for fire to come on the sacrifice, and fire came down presently; another time he prayed for rain, and then he prayed seven times, and bowed his head between his knees, and sent his servant, and sent him again and again. At one time God comes in at the first, at another time not till the seventh hour; it is God's prerogative.

And take this note; it is a true sign of a gracious spirit, though God defer, yet still for the soul to cling to God, to think well of God, and of the ways of God, and of the duty of prayer; it is an excellent sign, and the ready way to find favor with God. You have sometimes two beggars follow you for alms; one perhaps hath true need, pure need, and is of a soft tender spirit, the other is a sturdy rugged beggar, you deny them both; he that hath pure need, and hath a soft tender spirit, he thinks he is unworthy that the other man should be bountiful to him and he falls a weeping: yet he thinks well of the man, and will be ready to beg of him upon another occasion, he hath good thoughts of him. But the sturdy beggar rails, and breaks into an angry passionate mood, and he will ask no more; who of them is like to prevail, the soft spirit that hath an ingenious disposition, or the sturdy spirit that soon breaks off? Thus there are many passionate hearts, that are not froward with men, but with God, they come, and ask mercy of God, but their hearts are stiff, and froward and sturdy, if they have not

that they would, they presently break off, and say, why should we wait on God, and cry, it is in vain to seek the Lord. But now a gracious, tender, ingenious disposition, though the thing come not that he prays for, he justifies God in all, and speaks well of God, and well of prayer, and loves that still, and waits on God in that way: this is the soul that is likely to prevail.

But further, (to answer from the Text) it may be thou hast not called unto God, Call unto me, saith God. It may be it is somewhat else that thou hast sought in prayer then God: though thou name God in thy prayer, it may be thy heart hath been after creature-helps, and thou hast made more account of the help of the creature, of Armies, and strength, thou hast made account that they would do it rather than prayer; and if there be no help but prayer, thou thinkest it but a dry business.

A carnal hearted man when he hears of an army of twenty thousand men well clothed and the like, he thinks much may be done, but for the prayers of God's people they think they be nothing. Now if thou have sought help by creatures, rather than by God, thou hast not sought God all the while, Or if it have been but outward safety, that thou hast sought and not the face of God, thou hast not sought God, Seek my face, saith God, Psalm 27. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O Jacob. Psalm. 24. Thou seekest not God, without thou seek God's face, without thou seek God for himself. And ordinarily, God is not sought, but thy estate is sought; and thou criest out for the danger thou art in. Therefore thou hast no cause to say, it is in vain, look to thy prayers, take up thy prayers again. Do as the fishermen do; if they find that there comes nothing up, that they do not catch, they take up their net, it may be there is a hole, a rent in the net. And so the Angler, if the fish do not bite he takes up the bait, it may be there is somewhat wanting on the hook. So look to thy

prayers, it may be it is not God that thou hast sought, take them up and see what is amiss in them.

Another answer is this, it may be thy prayers have been vain and therefore no marvel if nothing but vain come of them. Surely; God will not hear vanity, Job 35.13. If there be nothing but vanity, how canst thou expect that God should hear them? Our prayers are ordinarily without form, and void, that is, there is nothing but vanity in them. Not that God regards so much the setting of a man's words in form handsomely: for the groans and sighs of the spirit of God are accepted, though they be not methodical, as the making of a speech to men; God looks not to that. Many pray, and they know not why, but because others do; but they propound not the true end of prayer.

I appeal to thy conscience; when thou hast gone to pray to God, hast thou propounded this end? I am going to tender up that worship and homage, that I, a poor creature, owe to the infinite glorious first being of all things: you call your families sometimes to come to prayer, and never think what you do, what you aim at. I and my family are now going to seek the great God in prayer, I am now going to join with my father or my master, now that we are altogether in this family to tender up that worship and homage that we poor creatures owe to that infinite glorious first being of all things whereby to testify our high respect, and esteem of him. Now if thy prayer be a customary way of prayer it is vanity, it hath not a right end.

It may be thou goest to prayer merely to satisfy conscience. Or some have this by end in prayer, a wicked end, that is, they think to satisfy God for their former sinful wicked ways. They take liberty in company to drink and please the flesh, and as they served themselves then, so now they will serve God, and set one against another.

Sometimes they will give liberty to the flesh to take contentment that way, but they will not always do so, sometime they will be devout and serve God. There is no man so wicked as to be always in the acts of wickedness, but they think God must have his turn, and they must have their turn sometimes. And this is the prayer of many people, to put their sins in one scale, and so many devout prayers in the other scale, and the one shall poise the other. This is vanity, this is not the end of prayer.

When God doth not see thy expressions filled with the graces of the Spirit: this is vanity; Take heed of vain expressions, when there is nothing but nature in prayer; though there be never so much earnestness in prayer, if there be but a natural spirit it is vanity, we must pray in the spirit as the Scripture speaks.

And take heed of sluggishness in prayer, that makes it vanity. The breath that comes from life in man's body is warm, but the breath that comes from bellows is artificial and cold, some men's breath in prayer is artificial and cold, but the prayer that comes from life, is warm breath that comes up to God.

Again, vanity in prayer is this, when all is eaten out with vain thoughts, thy heart roves in prayer, thou knowest not where thou art, thou canst not call that which thou makest a prayer. A prayer with vain thoughts it like beer, or wine that is dead, and hath lost the spirits. Vain thoughts are worms that eat out the strength of a duty: would you present a dish to your superior that were worm eaten, or that were gnawn on before? When we let out our thoughts in duties, and present them to God, they are worm-eaten, and torn, the strength of them is quite gone.

And after you have prayed, take heed that you make not your prayers vain, by not looking after them, for the accomplishment of them; or

by being proud of your prayers and gifts, by resting in them.

And again it is vanity when thou undoest all as soon as thou hast done, by going contrary to thy prayer in thy life, not adding watchfulness to prayer. If a man take pains to weave a web, and spend so many hours in it, and then ravel it out, this man spends his time in vain. So do most people with their prayers, they pray for mercy, and grace, and as soon as they have done they go quite contrary and ravel and undo all, is not this vanity? No marvel if thou thinkest it in vain, when there is nothing but vain thoughts in thy prayers.

And take heed that you make not the prayers of others vain. Luther writes to Melancthon angrily, in regard of his fear of the power of his adversaries, saith he. You make our prayers void. So it may be said of many that are cold, and luke-warm, and dead-hearted, and do not take to heart the cause of God; that fear the displeasure of this body, and that body; you make our prayers void. You that have praying friends, it may be fathers, and mothers that are dead whose prayers are put up in heaven, take heed that you make not their prayers void; that you give them not cause if they should come to live again from the dead to weep and cry out, O how are our prayers made void by the prayers of such and such.

But you will say; Lord, what will become of us? We have abundance of vanity in our prayers.

Therefore, that you may not be discouraged, know, that though there be many vain thoughts in prayer, yet if there be sighing and mourning, and humbling of the soul, and panting of the heart after God in groaning, and sighing, and though there be a mixture of vanity, yet there is a working of the Spirit of God, and of grace in the heart after God; know that the Lord will not charge this vanity on

thee, the Lord will do away thy sin, therefore let not that discourage thee. The efficacy lies not in the excellency of thy prayer, but in the merits of Christ, and his mediation: Only Christ will have somewhat of thyself in thy prayer, he will have thy heart pant, and work after him: but there may be abundance of vanity, thou drawest a line, and makest a blot, and another line, and another blot, Christ draws all fair again, and presents to his Father.

But another question is this, you say it is vain to pray. Can you make good that you are one of the seed of Jacob? This privilege belongs to them; it may be you are of the seed of Esau.

The seed of Esau, what is that?

The Apostle speaks of Esau what his guise was. Heb. 12.6, and saith, Take heed that none of you be such as Esau, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. Now if thou prove a fornicator thou art of the seed of Esau, or a profane person; what is that? For one morsel of meat he sold his birth-right, that is, to please, and satisfy and content the flesh he sold his birth-right, that was the land of Canaan; and so typified the privileges of the Church of God, and even a type of heaven it was. His birth-right had a spiritual meaning, it had reference to the spiritual privileges, that the Saints of God have to this day in all the ordinances of God.

That man or woman that priseth any carnal contentment before spiritual privileges, they are of the seed of Esau, and not of Jacob. Thou thinkest there is some savor in money, and in a good trade, and in good cheer, and such a day as this November 5, is better than a fast day, because of the good cheer: but for the spiritual duties of this day, to come and magnify God, and to attend upon his word, thou thinkest they are circumstances, and by matters, and thou art

troubled if the Sermon be too long to hinder thee of thy dinner; thou art a profane Esau, all that I have said belongs not to thee, thou dost not belong to Jacob but to Esau, that preferrest carnal things for the flesh before the spiritual privileges of the Saints.

But how shall I know that I am one of the seed of Jacob.

How do you know such an ones child, but by his likeness to his father? One that hath the spirit of Jacob is of the seed of Jacob. There are many things that the Scripture speaks concerning Jacob, and see if you do answer them.

First, Jacob was a mighty man in prayer, he was a wrestler with God, and he wrestled till the day broke, and was as strong at the last as at the first: hast thou the spirit of thy father Jacob? Art thou not discouraged in prayer? Though mercy come not presently, yet dost thou wrestle all night, and resolve whatsoever come, if thou die, thou wilt die wrestling; here is a child like the father, therefore thou art of the seed of Jacob.

Secondly, Jacob was one that feared God, when God appeared to him he looked on the presence of God as dreadful, How dreadful is this place? Genesis 28, because God was there. So dost thou look on the presence of God as dreadful, that thou canst say the fear of the great God is on thy soul: when thou comest into his presence? Mark, for this is that expression in the Psalm, Ye that fear the Lord praise him, all the seed of Jacob glorify him, and fear him all ye seed of Israel, Psalm. 22.23. If you will be sure not to seek God in vain, but that you may praise him in seeking him, fear the Lord all the seed of Jacob.

Thirdly, Jacob's heart was disengaged from the creature, a little of the creature would serve his turn, Gen. 28. Lord saith he, if thou wilt give me meat to eat and raiment to put on. He looked no further, he

mind no great matters. Therefore in Ps. 24, there the generation of Jacob is set out, and one thing is, he that hath not lift up his soul to vanity. The men of the world have great things in their eyes, they are vanity in God's eye, though they be great in theirs, and they lift up their hearts to them. Now the sons of Jacob do not lift up their hearts to vanity, though the things of the world be present, their hearts stir not, they rise not; but if God and Christ, and heavenly things be presented, their hearts are lifted up. If thy heart be lifted up to vanity, if thy heart be as iron and the vanities of the world come and draw it up, thou art not a son of Jacob: a little would serve Jacob though he were a great heir, He was a plain man and dwelt in tents, Genesis 25, and had a plain spirit, he did not look after great things; whereas Esau looked after great things abroad.

Again, he was one of a tender spirit: therefore where it is said he prevailed with the Angel, it is said he wept, and made supplication unto him, he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us. That story of Jacob concerns us how God dealt with our Father. If now thou have a tender spirit as he had; if when thou goest into the presence of God thou find thy spirit yield and melt, and relent, thou art one like thy father Jacob.

Again further, Jacob did in the time of his straits repair to the covenant, that was a great satisfaction to his heart; he looked to the covenant, he fastened on that, and there he held as the main support of his spirit. Gen. 32.9. And Jacob said, O God of my Father Abraham, and God of my Father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. &c. He heard that Esau was coming against him with a great company; and what doth Jacob? He gets him to God, O God of my Father Abraham, and of my Father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me return into thy country, &c. He repairs to the Covenant:



Remember thy Covenant with Abraham and Isaac, and with me to, I went on thy word. Here was the guise of Jacob: canst thou in a straight get thee a word, and a promise, and brood thy soul over it, and clasp it close, and say this is the promise that must, and will do me good?

Again, Jacob was of a humble spirit, I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies. He admired at the mercy of God that he had anything, and God's mercies made him more humble; this is an excellent disposition, we are many times humble and lowly when we are under the hand of God in affliction: but when mercies make us humble, that the more God is gracious the more vile we are in our own eyes, this is excellent.

And he looked back to his former condition, he looked upon his poor beginning and gives God the glory: I passed over this Jordan with my staff; Many of you came with your staff, and God hath given you two bands, you are grown great, are you willing to think of it, and to acknowledge the poor estate that once you were in, and to give God the glory, I was thus, and thus, of poor parentage, and see how God had dealt with me.

Another thing remarkable is, that Jacob contented himself with God alone, he accounted that he had enough in God alone, though all were taken from him, he did not look upon himself as undone, but he had that that might make him forever. In Gen. 33, compare the 9. and 11. verses, you shall find a notable difference between Esau and Jacob, yet the word in our books is the same, but this Scripture is much wronged by the translation. In verse. 8. Esau when he comes to Jacob, when Jacob would have given him his present, saith he, what meanest thou by all these droves which I met? He said these are to find grace in the sight of my Lord: and Esau said, I have enough my

brother. It was a strange speech of Esau: A covetous wretch that is always pining and murmuring for having no more, and thinks, he shall want before he die, he doth not come so far as Esau, and Esau could say, I have enough, are there not many of you that never say you have enough? I pray thee take my present saith Jacob, for I have all things, nay saith Esau, I have enough. The one saith I have enough, the other saith I have all things, for so the word is Col; Esau had enough, he did not want, he had meat and drink, and he saw none to interrupt him, he was satisfied with his estate, as his portion; he had enough, he cared for nothing more, they might talk of other things, but that was enough to him. Jacob comes, and saith I have enough; but this was another manner of enough: Esau's enough is his estate, but Jacob's enough is God, for he saith, I have all, Jacob was meaner for his outward condition then Esau, for he had nothing but what he had gotten in hard servitude. Now Esau saith, I have enough: Jacob saith, I have all: that is, God is enough in the want of all, if Esau should strip him of all he had, yet he had all in God. Now one that is of the seed of Jacob, in the time of want (as some of you may be plundered, and then all is gone you say;) no, if thou be of the seed of Jacob if thou have God thou hast all. There is such a promise, He that overcometh, shall inherit all things. How is that? And I will be his God, Revel. 21.7. Therefore whatsoever thou wantest if God be thine, if thou be God's child, thou hast all.

Further, one of the seed of Jacob is one of the Church of God: for all Jacob's posterity was so: therefore the blessing in Ruth is, The Lord bless thee like Rachel and Leah, which two did build up the house of Israel. Why is it not, the Lord bless thee as Rebekah, or Sarah, but as Rachel and Leah. (It was a blessing upon a marriage condition) the reason is, because from Rachel and Leah, came only those that were of the Church, that were members of the Church of God; but there came others from Rebekah, and of Sarah came only Isaac, but

Abraham's posterity was otherwise. And that Church that was then was but a type of that which should be after; that is of a company of people elected, and called out from the world to be partakers of the Privileges of Jesus Christ. The people of the Jews, the seed of Jacob were the Church of God, as the seed of such a one. And this typified the Church that should be after; a company that are taken out of the world, to partake of the privileges of Jesus Christ. Canst thou say that thou art of the Church? The word that we translate Church is a company that is called out from the world. Canst thou ever tell of a work of God separating thee from the world, that when thou wentest according to the world, God gave thee a mighty call that made a separation between thee and the world? For it is said so of the seed of Jacob, Numb. 23.9. From the tops of the rocks I saw him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, they shall not be reckoned among the Nations. All the seed of Jacob are called out of the world, they are separated from them by a mighty work of God to partake of Christ, and be a member of him.

And upon this, such an one mightily longs after all the outward privileges of the Church, to enjoy all the outward ordinances of Christ after his way, those that are of the seed of Jacob, they prize the excellency of Jacob as the greatest excellency, their hearts are towards it, and they rejoice in that above all the excellency in the world. If you ask what this excellency of Jacob is? It is the joining of God's people in the way of ordinances, and duties of God's worship in the purity of them. This in Scripture is called the excellency of Jacob, Psal. 47.4. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. It is an excellent Scripture. O, it is a blessed thing to give all to God, to let God choose our inheritance. What is our inheritance? The excellency of Jacob whom he loved. What was that? The worship of God, and his ordinances, joining with the people of God in the way of his ordinances, in his temple, those were

the things that were the ordinances of God in those times; those are called the excellency of Jacob; and so it is now the excellency of a people to enjoy God's ordinances.

You have another expression to the same purpose. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountain, and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. Isaiah 65.9. What is the mountain of God? God's Ordinances in his Church, I will bring a seed out of Jacob, and Judah, and they shall inherit my mountain. So that the greatest inheritance of the seed of Jacob is the mountain of the Lord: communion with the Church of God, and his ordinances: if you be of the seed of Jacob, your hearts prize, and rejoice in this, and that you have in Psalm 24. verse. 3, 4, 5, you shall find how the seed of Jacob prize the enjoyment of God in his Ordinances. Who shall ascend in to the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him: that seek thy face O Jacob. It is so in the book; but the particle O, is not in the original: and therefore it may be read thus, That seek the face of Jacob; it may be read in the Genitive case, as well as in the Vocative. This is the generation of them that seek him, even of Jacob, and then he turns to God, that seek thy face: but because his heart was full of this, of seeking God's face, (though he intend to mention what generation it was, the generation of Jacob) he puts in that before, the generation of Jacob that seek thy face: that is, this is the generation that so prize God in his ordinances, and account it such a blessing of God; that join themselves to the Church of God, and set up his ordinances and ways; this is the blessed generation, these are those that seek God truly. We seek not God truly unless we seek him in his own ways,

unless we seek him in all his ordinances, we cannot comfort our souls that we seek him in truth. For as in the way of obedience, we cannot have comfort in our obedience that it is true, except it be universal to all God's commandments, so we cannot have comfort in our seeking that it is true, except it be in all his ordinances, and ways: therefore we must be of the generation of them that seek the face of the Church, that seek thy face O Jacob. So it follows in that place, lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Where should the King of glory come but into his Church? Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and almighty: still the Church is called on to entertain Christ in his glory, so this is spoken of the Church. Thus you may know, whether you be of the seed of Jacob.

Again, if you be the seed of Jacob you have the inheritance of Jacob, and account it your inheritance. What was Jacob's inheritance? Deuter. 33.2. The Lord came from Sinai and from his right hand came a fiery law. The law of God is a fiery law; yet in verse 4. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. So that though the law be a fiery law, a strict law, a severe law, yet it is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. If you be of the congregation of Jacob you account the law of God to be part of your inheritance: not only to be that which you are bound to, that you must obey whether you will or no, but you rejoice in the law of God as your inheritance. For my part I know not a more sure note of a gracious heart then this; one that rejoiceth in God's law as his inheritance: as you know what expressions David hath, he rejoiced in it more than in Gold and Silver, more than in the honey, and the honey-comb. It is one thing to obey God's Law, and another to rejoice in it as an inheritance. If thou be of the seed of Jacob, thou hast the inheritance of the seed of Jacob.

Another is, he that is of the seed of Jacob is faithful in the place that God hath set him. Jacob in serving of Laban, Gen. 31.6. though he were churlish, he professeth that withal his power he served his father. It is an excellent Text for servants; you would fain have time to seek God, and God forbid, but there should be some time allowed the poorest and meanest servant to seek God alone. But art thou of the seed of Jacob? Then be like him in this, to serve with all, thy power, though thou have a froward master or mistress, as Laban was, though they use you hardly, yet show godliness in that relation. And for servants to seem godly, he must go hear, this Sermon, this man, and the other man, and be very earnest: (I blame them not for loving the word and desiring it: but for servants to be earnest in hearing the word, and enjoying the ordinances, and crying out against superstition, and Antichristianism, and yet be sluggish, and unfaithful in their service, and so as to give just offense to their governors, it is a dishonor. Show your godliness in your relation: certainly there is no man or woman godly, but those that are so in the relations and places that they are set in: therefore manifest yourselves thus to be the seed of Jacob.

Again, the seed of Jacob is a taught seed, God teacheth them, Psal. 147.19. He hath not dealt so with other Nations, he gave his law to Jacob, and his word to Israel. So in Deut. 33.10. Levi is appointed to teach Jacob. There is never a one of the seed of Jacob that is ignorant, that is a fool in matters of religion, he is taught.

And then, one of the seed of Jacob, is one that hath a care of his family: so we read of Jacob, Gen. 35.1. God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then said Jacob to his household and to all that were with him, put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, &c.

When he was to go into God's presence, he labored to reform his family. When God calls you to fast days, and to the Sacrament, do you cleanse your families, do you look what evils are in your families, and put out your power to cleanse them?

But there is one more that I may not omit, that is, Jacob, when he was to die, though he himself was to go the way of all flesh, yet this was his great comfort and the comfort of those that he left behind, that God would make good his word to his Church and people, Gen. 48.21. and Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I die, but God will visit you, and bring you again to the land of your Fathers. Behold I die, but I die in faith of the promise: because I am taken away shall I think the promise shall be of no effect? No; God shall bring you to the land of your fathers. Now when God shall cast you on your sick beds can you say, Behold I die; but go you on, God will make good his word, I die in faith that it shall go well with the Churches of God: there will be a time when they shall get the victory, when Christ shall reign, and the Saints shall be delivered from their oppressors? Here was the spirit of Jacob: if you be such a seed of Jacob you shall not seek God's face in vain, but when you call unto him, he will answer you.

But you will say, it is true, some men may call unto God, and he will hear him, but I am a poor contemptible and wretched creature, and if I do call unto him, he will not hear nor answer me.

That place in the Psalm fully answers any objection against our poverty, or the poverty of our prayers, Psalm. 102.17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayers. The prayer of the destitute, the word signifies a poor shrub in the wilderness, a contemptible shrub, that is trodden on by the feet of beasts, and none regards it; God regards such prayers.

If I could make an excellent prayer it were somewhat: No, he doth not despise thy prayer. It may be thy prayer is such as thou despisest, and that others would despise, but God will not despise it.

But this was spoken perhaps to some in those times.

Mark what follows; This shall be written for the generation to come. This Scripture, this promise of God, it is written for the generations to come. And the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord. We that were not made then, but were created since, let us praise the Lord for this Scripture, that God will regard the prayers of poor shrubs, and not despise them.

But they are great things that I stand in need of, and it may be in vain for me to pray for such great things at God's hands; perhaps if I did pray for ordinary things there might be hope, but I am to pray for great things, mercies for the Church and for the Kingdom, and people of God; is it not in vain for such a poor wretch as I to pray for such great things?

We may think that the things we pray for at God's hands are too great for us to beg, but they are not too great for God to give. It is observed of Perilla, when Alexander would have him ask a dowry for his daughter; Alexander presently promised him 50 talents; it is too much saith he, 10 talents are sufficient; Alexander answered him, if it be too great for you to ask, it is not too great for me to give. God loves that his people should ask great things of him: yea he loves that the poorest, and meanest of his people should ask him great things; and therefore he says in this Text, Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things. This is a promise to every one of the seed of Jacob.



But when I pray in the time of affliction, and God's hand is on me, will it not be in vain to call unto him then?

It is true; to neglect God in former times, and then to pray only in affliction, it is a dangerous condition: but this temptation comes upon such as have sought God before. I, now you seek God, but this is in your affliction, and will God regard you now? I speak it only to comfort such as are careful to seek God in the time of their health: yet if thou hast been negligent; it is possible that God should regard thee in the time of affliction. Jonah prayed, and said, I prayed and cried by reason of mine affliction to the Lord, and he heard me, Jonah 2.2.

But suppose it be affliction for sin: for so the objection may arise. It is true, if I did call unto God in the time of affliction that God did send for trial, it may be God would hear me: but suppose God's hand be on me for sin, will God hear my prayers?

That one notable example of David may help the people of God against such a temptation: God's hand was on him for his sin, when he fled before Absalom, God threatened that war should not depart from his house: yet David then prayed against that wicked politician, and counselor, that the Lord would turn his counsel to folly; and God heard David's prayer in his affliction that was for sin, And the Lord turned the counsel of Achitophel to folly. Let us not be discouraged though politicians work never so craftily; though God's hand be on us, and we have conscience accusing us, and say, I this is for your sins that God leaves you thus in the hands of your enemies, that God gives them such power; that they find such favor with the Prince as they do, though this be for our sins, yet let us seek to God to turn the counsel of Achitopell to folly. It shall not be, nor hath not been in vain, we have found it so, that in our affliction, and affliction for sin,

yet crying to God to turn the counsel of Achitophel to folly, God hath done so graciously, and hath encouraged us more and more to cry and call unto him for that end.

But what need I seek to God, God hath decreed and determined what he will do, what God intends to do, he hath decreed from eternity, therefore whether we pray or no it shall come to pass, if we do not pray it shall come to pass. If God have intended to deliver me out of a sickness, it shall be done whether I pray or no; and when anyones time is come they shall die; and so when the time of a Kingdom is come it shall be destroyed, and not till then; therefore what good can prayer do?

Though I suppose you cannot but be satisfied, and think that this objection hath little weight, yet for answer, I will give you a Scripture or two, Psalm. 2. I will declare the decree, The decree of God concerning the advancement of Christ in his resurrection, and so of the success of the work of Christ's mediation. I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said thou art my son this day have I begotten thee: Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. God's giving of Christ the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession; it was decreed of God, yet Christ must ask it of his Father notwithstanding God's decree. And another Text remarkable is in the prophesy of Daniel, where the Text saith Dan. 9.2. In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books, the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolation of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications. Mark, Daniel understood by books what God had determined concerning Jerusalem; what need Daniel go further, he knew God's mind what he would do whether he did pray

or no? But mark, verse. 3. I set my face to seek the Lord. After he knew what God had decreed, and what he would do, and what he had promised. Now we know not God's decree: but if we did certainly know the decree of God in showing mercy to the Land, yet it could no way hinder us, but encourage us to set our faces to seek the Lord, and to seek him more earnestly: therefore that is a vain objection.

Again, it is not in vain to call unto the Lord, if we examine all we have had already: though we have not all we would have, yet if we consider the supporting mercies, the preventing mercies, and the guiding mercies that God hath granted us, we shall find that it is not in vain that we have sought him. There are abundance of mercies that thou hast had already. It is an evil thing to complain of God's grace, when God hath bestowed such mercies. Thou thinkest thou hast nothing, because thou hast not all thou wouldest have; as a froward child because it hath not everything to its mind casts away all. God hath been exceeding gracious to us; other souls would have adored God, and have blessed him with their faces to the ground, if they had had but the hundred part of those mercies that we have; yet because we have not all we desire, we are ready to think it is in vain. O let us take heed of dishonoring the grace of God.

Again, further thou thinkest it is in vain, because God sometimes denies in granting, and grants in denying. Many times God grants that we pray for in denying it, and denies that we pray for in granting it: our denials are grants to us. Woe to us, if all were granted to us that we pray for. Much good may be gotten out of God's denials: and God denies us to do us good, and to prepare us for mercies: therefore it is not in vain that thou hast fought God, because it is not in vain that thou art denied.

But further, it may be God delights more in thy praying, then in thy praising voice, therefore though thou have not that thou hast sought for, give leave to God to delight in thee which way he pleaseth. There is the praying, and the praising voice of God's people, thou delightest that God should hear thy praising voice, it may be God delights to hear thy praying voice, and it may be he should not if thou haddest what thou wouldest have. Saith God to the Church, Let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet. There is no man that will think the King denies his petition, as long as the King loves to read it. If one present a petition to the King, he doth not say he will presently do it: but if he read it, and when he hath read it, calls for it again, and again, will any man think it in vain that he hath put up that petition? As long as the King hears it, and delights to read it, it is not in vain. So, as long as God loves to hear thy voice, and to read thy petition it is not in vain. As for thy praising voice, God shall have enough of that in heaven, but he shall have none of thy praying voice: therefore why shouldest thou not be willing that God should have more of thy praying voice here? All that ever God shall have of thy praying voice it is in this world, and after a little time God shall never hear us pray more. Therefore let us be willing to go on, and continue in prayer, and not to wonder why God keeps us on in a way of praying, because all the time that ever God shall have to delight himself in the praying voice of his people it is in this world: and for our praising voice, we would fain spend all our days in praising God for his mercies, but that is reserved for another world.

Further, it may be God's way to stay till he bring a great deal of mercy together, and not by bits and drops. As when men deal with great merchants, they expect not to have payments, by six pences or shillings or Crowns at once: but though there be two or three or ten pounds due, they stand not on that, but stay for a greater sum. Now little traders that deal by retail, they take it in by pence, and little

sums, Christians that are to deal with God, they deal for great things, and there are great transactions between God and a gracious heart: therefore think not much that God stays with a greater sum. For as God deals with the wicked in the way of justice, so he deals with godly men in a way of mercy. He lets wicked men go on a great while, he comes not to judgment for sin, but stays till all come together, till a great sum of wrath and judgment come together. So he deals with the saints he comes not with less mercies, but he stays till abundance come, and when God's time is come mercies will come to the full indeed.

Further, it may be God hath so much mercy that thou hast not a vessel capable of it. Only know that heaven, and earth and all are working for thee. Is the plowing, and the sowing of the husbandman, and all the showers in vain; because the corn is not in the barn? We account it not so: so we must not account our prayers lost, because the thing we pray for is not presently granted and owe prayers answered. Now for Application.

First, if it be so, that God saith, call upon me, and I will answer thee, certainly there are great things for the Church to build on: God is to do marvelous things for his people in these latter days. Why? Because all the Saints from the beginning of the world have been seeking God, not only for their own times but for the Church to this very day: all their prayers are upon the file, and must be answered one day. O what a glorious harvest will it be! Blessed are they that shall live to partake of it. We have a little, but certainly, there are glorious things for the Church; because every prayer shall be answered.

Secondly, you that are the Saints of God, know your honor, though you be never so poor otherwise, God hath given you that which

makes you rich: you have the key of heaven, you may open the treasures in heaven, and it shall never be in vain. God's people are such as are exceeding honorable in the eyes of God, and in this regard that they have credit in heaven, that their prayers shall be heard and answered. Bathsheba saith to Solomon, 1 King. 2.20. I desire one petition of thee, I pray thee, say me not nay, It is translated by some, Ne confundas faciam, confound not my face. Indeed, the denying of a petition, it is a dishonor, and a confounding of the face: but God will not confound the faces of his people.

O, here see your privilege, and your riches, all the prayers that you have made in your life time they are all trading in heaven, they are not lost. If a man have ventured a stock abroad to the Indies, and do not hear of it in a great while, he thinks it is lost and gone: but if he hear certain news that all his stock is safe, and in the place where he would have it, and those that are there faithfully improve his stock, he is revived by this, it rejoiceth his spirit, and he can say blessed be God; I hope to be a rich man for all this. I say to thee be of good comfort thy stock is not lost, it is trading in heaven, and every prayer that thou hast put up is there. We should account our prayers as riches, as adventures sent to heaven, and not as children that shoot arrows and do not mind them.

And then learn this, it is a great privilege to have a praying friend, a praying companion. Many of you love friends that are delightful, of a cheery nature, and merry; but are they praying ones: praying friends are the special friends: because prayer can prevail with God. To have a friend in the Court, that can obtain any petition, we think it a privilege; to have one great friend in heaven is a great privilege. Many people when they lie on their sick beds, they send to such and such to pray for them: why do they not send to their companions, that they did drink with, and swear with, to pray for them? O, they

dare not. Here is enough to convince any man's conscience, who are the best men, whatsoever they say.

Suppose thy condition were thus, that thou diddest lie on thy death-bed, and thy life did depend upon the prayers of four or five men. If God should speak thus from heaven, thou art at the brink of destruction, only this favor thou shalt find; thou shalt have leave to choose where thou wilt four or five men to pray for thee, and according as they pray so it shall be with thee; thou hast liberty to choose through the world whom thou wilt. I appeal, would a drunkard choose four or five drunkards, or a swearer choose swearers, or unclean ones that they most delighted in all their life time? If all should depend upon it thou wouldest not choose such; therefore thou art convinced in thy conscience, thou knowest that those are not precious in God's eyes, (however thy lust have prevailed) but that the other are better men, that are gracious and have more credit in heaven. Learn to prize praying friends, that can prevail with God.

And let us set the crown upon prayers head, in the mercies we have from God, in public mercies, and private deliverances of friends; attribute it not to second means, to fortune and chance, take heed of denying God his glory.

It is a sign of a carnal spirit, when God hath glorified himself in answering the prayers of his people, to attribute it to any other means.

As I remember, I read of the Porphirian atheists, that followed the atheism of Porphyry, they darkened the work of God in delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt thorough the red sea. They say that Moses had learned of the Egyptians, and they were great Astronomers: and Moses knew when it would be a low tide, and what

constellations there would be at that time, and that the tide would prove low then, more than ever in the age of man, and Moses took the nick of time, and lead them through the sea. Thus atheists would darken the works of God, and put them of to natural causes. So I find it related of the old Prophet in Jereboam's time; Josephus hath it related of him, he sent to Jeroboam to stretch out his hand, he tells us that this was by accident, he was wearied all the day long, and now he had the Palsy, and after it was restored again; that which was done by prayer, he would have it by natural means.

Just thus it is, when God hath so magnified his mercy to England, and wrought such wonders yet many carnal atheistical spirits, say this was an accidental thing, and the policy of such men brought it to pass, they attribute all to natural causes, it is a sign of wretched profane heart: For if God ever magnified prayer he hath done it in these days. There are 2 or 3 Scriptures that since the world began were never more magnified, then by God's working at this day.

One is in Exodus 13. In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, God was above them. Never since the world began was that more fulfilled. A second is that in the 10. Psalm, The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. If ever there were a fulfilling of that Scripture since the beginning of the world, it is as this day. A third is this in the Text. I said not to the seed of Jacob; seek ye my face in vain. God (as I said) hath raised a spirit of prayer among the seed of Jacob more than ever any in the world knew; there was never the like spirit of prayer raised, nor never the like things done for prayer.

And the Lord the rather honored the ordinance of prayer now, because men so dishonored it before and persecuted it, that the people of God could not meet and assemble to fast and pray, but presently it was a conventicle, and they were persecuted as factious



people. Because God saw this way despised, he hath honored it, and the former, and the latter mercies that we have received, we are to attribute to the goodness of God by prayer, they were obtained by prayer. Let us still be encouraged to call unto God for what we would have: for God hath said, call upon me and I will answer thee.

There are many of us now that can do little else: if God have delivered you from sickness, and other evils, know that God hath delivered you to pray, the less you can do otherwise, the more you should do in prayer. I have read of a heathen, Numa Pompilius, that he would never go about anything but he would go to the temple and pray: you that are instruments entrusted with our lives, and liberties, you had need to pray much, go into your closets and sanctify all your thoughts and resolutions by prayer, that your help and assistance may not be in vain to us. And all others had need to assist you in seeking God in prayer. This encouragement we have, that there is not any of us that seek God alone, but we join with thousands: why should our place be found empty? Why should not our prayers join with the rest? We shall meet many prayers in heaven; the prayers of our forefathers; the prayers of those that are dead and gone that did not live to enjoy the fruit of their prayers, yet when we pray for mercies our prayers meet with theirs in heaven: therefore let us be encouraged to call unto the Lord.

And if mercies should come, what a daunting would this be to our hearts, that mercies are come, but we have not sought them? And if mercies come not, conscience will fly in our face that we have been sensual, carnal creatures, and it is for our neglect of calling unto God, that God hath denied us the mercies that we expected.

And then it should be a use of rebuke to those that begin to seek God, and continue not. O wretch, why hast thou left? Whether wilt thou

go? Is it in vain to serve the Lord? Certainly thou wert never acquainted with God and his ways; thou wilt find it a dreadful change, when it shall appear that thou had left God the fountain of living water, and hast sought after vanity, and forsaken thine own mercy.

But the main of all should have been for the applying of it to the present occasion. The Lord hath made good his word this day, call unto me, and I will answer thee. This day testifies it to be true that they are great things that prayer hath done. I have heard many years ago by credible testimony, that on this fifth of November, when we had such a great mercy so many years ago, that very day it was known, that a great many godly people in the city kept in fasting and prayer, so as it was eminently known and delivered from hand to hand of them in the city at that time, and you know what God did.

But what hath he done of late? If our fathers should rise out of their graves, and we should tell them that now the high commission (that they were so troubled with) is down; that there shall be no more star-chamber, that cutting off of ears is gone, they would wonder how this should come to pass. And whereas Parliaments were wont to be snapped in sunder, that this Parliament is to continue by as firm an Act as anything in the land is made by. And for oppressors, all the Courts and Bishops Chanceries, they are down, and gone, God hath extirpated them: they were first cast out of the house, and now out of the Kingdom. And though an army did rise and seek to bring us into slavery, yet God hath given us victory (though some have suffered hardly) and brought the adversaries very low to surrender their towns, and castles and arms. And here we are to rejoice in God, and to bless him for all.

If many of our ancestors should rise, and hear what we speak, how we hold up our hands and bless God, with what hearts would they join in the praising of God, and wonder that ever such things should be done! Let not the grace of God be in vain, as God hath not said to us, seek my face in vain.

What use shall we make of it?

Let us give him real praise, and not only come to repeat it, and tell God of it, but make his praise glorious, put a glory on it; and then we do it, when we make a right use of his mercies, when we receive not his mercies in vain.

What is to make use of the memorial we celebrate?

First, the remembrance of these mercies must humble us; that is a sweet humbling; it is better to be melted by the beams of the Sun, then by the scorching of the fire.

You will say, humbled, for what?

There are three things that we have cause to be humbled for, upon the consideration of the mercy of God towards us,

First, the sin of unbelief, consider, when we were straitened at any time, when we heard ill news, that our armies fled, and came to danger, how our spirits were down as if all were gone. Let us check our hearts, God rebuked us in a kindly manner, we might have had a furious rebuke.

Secondly, be humbled for all our murmuring and repining, and discontent, O we did not think that the wars would have held so long, and O what taxations are upon us, and all our estates rent away? And how many are there that had rather that all the good that God hath

done for his people since these times should never have been done, then that they should suffer in their outward estates. Be rebuked for all your murmuring and repining at such difficulties as you have met with in the great cause of God.

The third thing that this mercy should make us humbled for, and look back to, is that if ever there have risen this thought in any of our hearts, that it had been better for me if I had never appeared so much. I see how things are like to be, the enemy prevails and is like to overrun all: had it not been better that I had not engaged myself so much? That I had not appeared so much? Are they not wiser men that have kept themselves quiet and silent, and done as little as they could, nothing but what they have been forced to? And when the Kings party come, if they tax us, they can do no more than force us. If thou have such a thought, pray to God to forgive that thought: Let this that God hath done rebuke thee. Art thou sorry for what thou hast done? Thou seest God will do it without thee. If thou have been a public instrument, and hast done good and yet if in fear of success thou hast repented? God rebukes thee this day.

Then labor to love prayer as long as you live, as David saith, I will call upon God as long as ever live. Prayer casts the scales, and hath the advantage.

First, the other side they feared not to suffer much if they were overcome; they think they have a head and they would be where he was, and he would countenance them, and make good their condition for them, but this side if they had been overcome, they had been men utterly undone: what a mighty advantage was there one way more than another?

Then the Kings side if he had prevailed he had places of dignity to bestow; if the Parliaments side prevail, we are but where we were, we

do but maintain our own, we cannot expect to raise our condition. But how many broken Gentry expected to raise their condition on the other side? As it is said concerning the Pope, and the general Counsel; the Pope prevailed, notwithstanding the general Council, though that were above him, why? The Pope had Cardinal ships, and Deaneries to bestow but the Council had none; they had the advantage that way.

Again, those that appeared on the one side how were they discouraged extraordinarily? On the other side they were encouraged to the utmost. On the one side how unfaithful have they been? On the other side they have kept to their principles, because their principles are suitable to the flesh: but there are many on this side that have not gracious principles and had a public cause, therefore they have been unfaithful. We have use of men that have not principles to act by, but all the other go according to their own principles. The one part acts that they may gratify men's lusts; now the generality of the world love it; they know if the one party prevail they shall have liberty, and licenciousness, but if the other prevail they shall live under laws. Now men would have their lusts; therefore when they see on the one side they shall have their lusts, and on the other side they shall be more curbed, they strive hard for their lusts.

At the first I wondered that men should be so vile to fight to make themselves slaves: but when I considered, they shall have slaves under them, and have their lusts, and the other side be more curbed, then I was satisfied, and wondered that God should cast the scale the other way, they having all the advantages in a carnal way more than the other. Only here it is, we have people that have prayed, and this hath cast the scale. Love prayer, and praying people, and join with them, be on their side, for God is with them, and will not suffer them to pray in vain: a praying Christian is a useful Christian in the world.

Again, make this use of all that hath been done. Look how far thou thinkest the adversaries would have been hardened if they had prevailed against the cause of God, be thou so much the more resolute in the cause of God. If they had prevailed how would they have blasphemed? And many thousands of Atheist; would have been made more then there was before: what a mighty offense, and stumbling block would this have been? Now since God hath turned it the other way, justify God and his cause; settle your hearts in the love of God, and his cause, and settle yourselves more strongly in the reformation in hand.

Further, let us give him real praise, that we may not receive the grace of God in vain. By this grace we hope that he hath given us our estates that we were afraid would have been rent from us; we have the continuance of our liberties, and of the Gospel. Let our hearts be engaged to God to give up our estates this day; let us renew our engagements to God in secret, between God and our souls. Lord thou mightest have taken away my estate by the spoilers, it was near it; and thou hast done it to other of my brethren, and is mine continued! That estate that should have been spent for their lusts, I am resolved to spend it in thy service that hast preserved it; and I account it a great mercy that I have an estate to honor thy name, I feared I should not.

God expects, that ever henceforward you make a more holy use of your estates then before. And call your hearts to question, what do I do with my estate for God? What honor hath God from my estate more than before? God expects more, or else God may justly say, in vain have I preserved this wretched estate: there are many of my servants, if I had preserved their estates, they would have improved them in the towns and places they lived in, and here is a wretch I have preserved his estate, and he is more greedy and scrapes up for

himself, and all his thought is, how to repair what he hath lost by taxations, &c. The Lord may repent of what he hath done, and the curse of God may follow such a man's estate. Take heed, know that there is an engagement after this time.

And so for the liberty of the Gospel, God expects that you should prize the Gospel more than ever. Lord, we were afraid the Gospel would have been gone, if thou hadst given us up into the hands of our enemies, and our eyes should not have seen their teachers; we should not have heard things that refresh our hearts; shall we have the Gospel, and hope that our posterity shall have it? We hope that we shall never provoke thee as we have done heretofore to take it away. A man that hath been in danger to lose his estate, and hath recovered it, will be careful after. Our slighting of the Gospel because we had it so ordinary might have caused God to take it from us; and hath God restored it? Let us take heed we provoke not God now, but attend upon the word more than ever we did.

Lastly, doth God say to us, Call upon me, and I will answer thee, then when God seeks us, let us be found of him. There is all the reason for it in the world. If God be so gracious to poor base worms, sinful creatures, that if we do but chatter, our prayers are answered: Is it not reason when God calls upon us, that we should call upon him? When God calls out of his word to perform such, and such duties, God seeks thee; then make use of this Text, I have called upon God, and he hath answered my requests. And now I go to hear the word, and out of the word he calls unto me, and seeks me, let me say, Lord what sayest thou to thy servant? The Lord is ready to hear your call, be you ready to receive his answer, and go on, go on with encouragement, the Lord hath encouraged us this day. And let all your prayers and endeavors break through all difficulties, and the Lord's mercy shall break through all oppositions: for he hath said,

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

FINIS.

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