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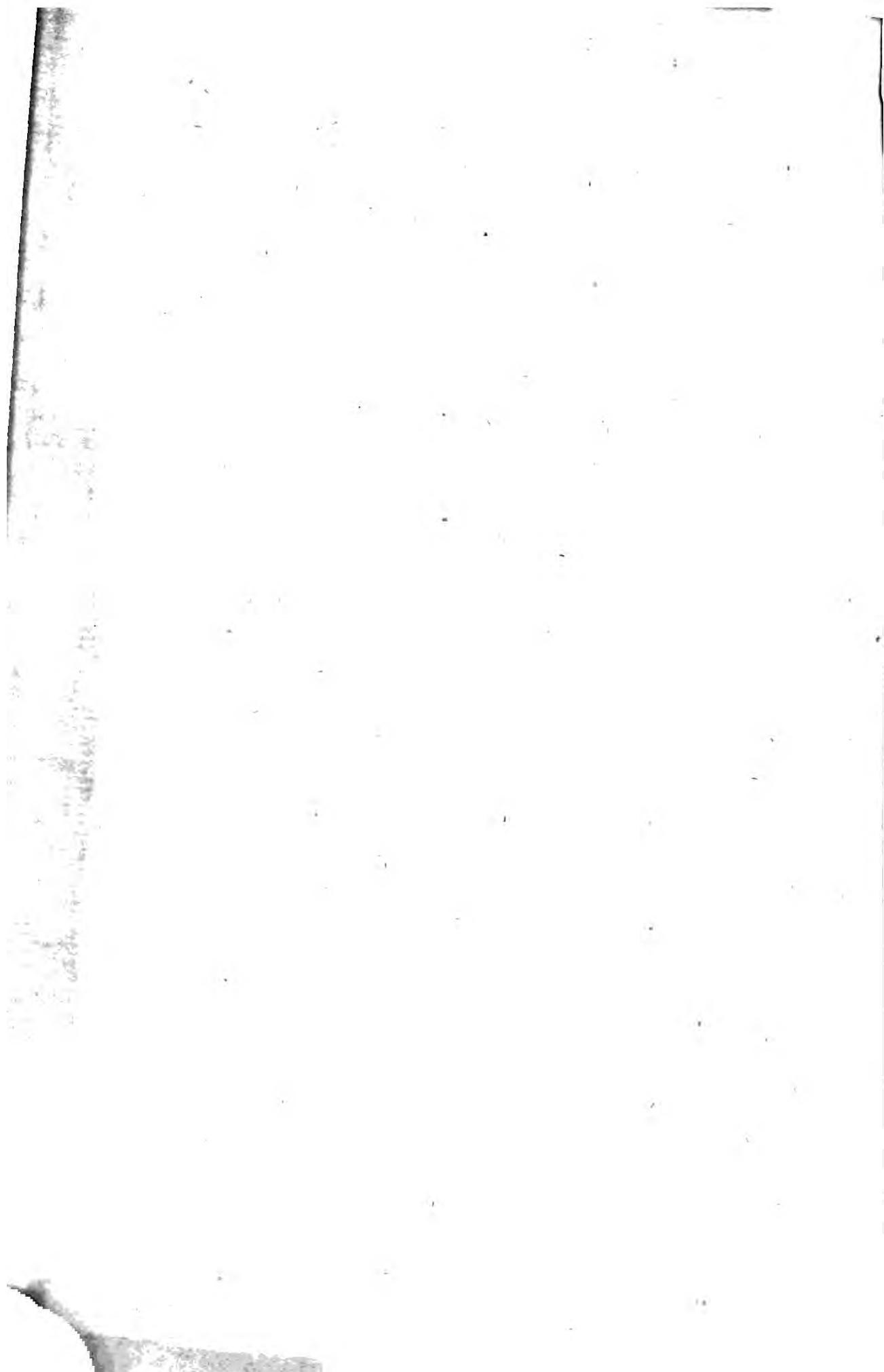


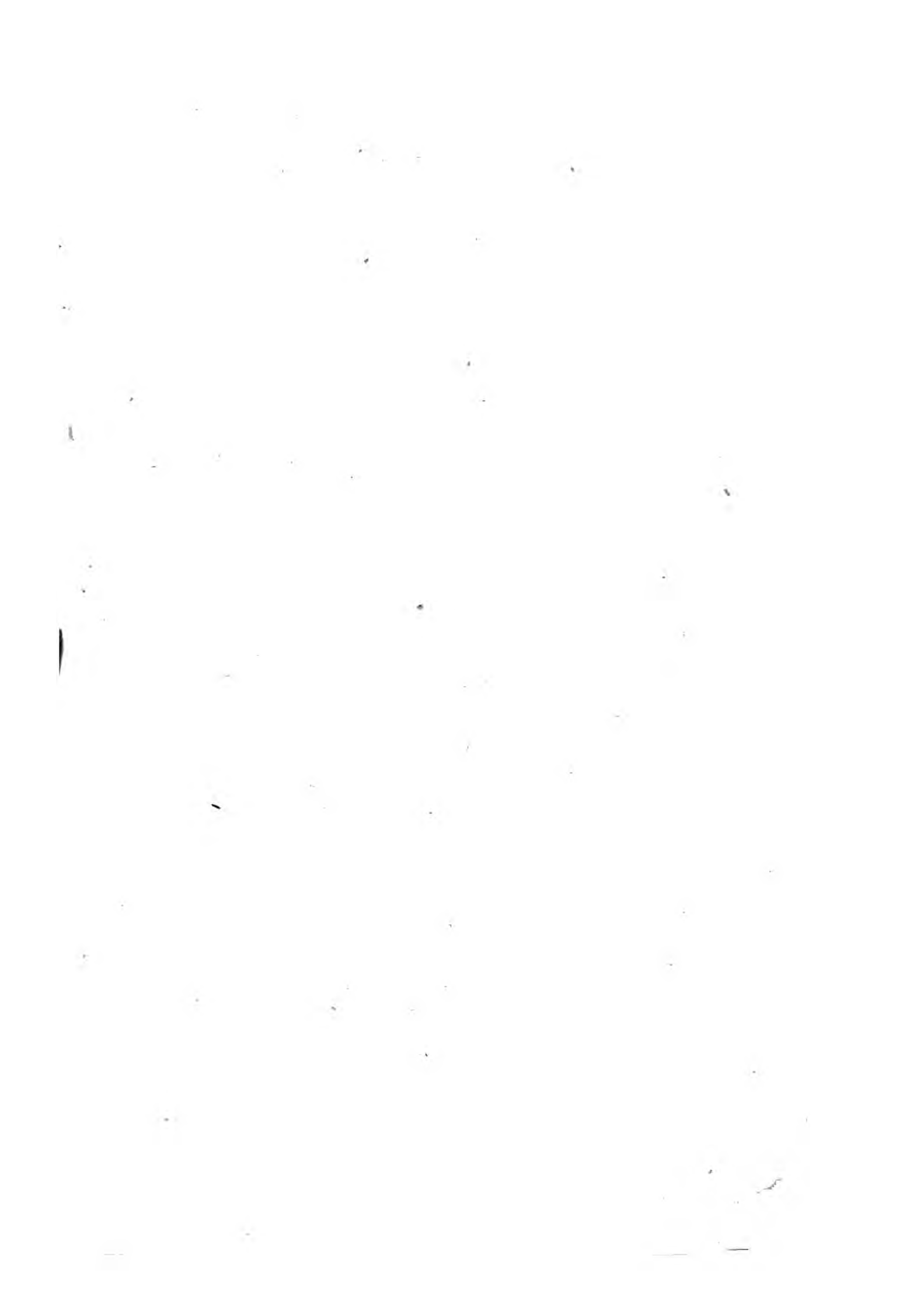
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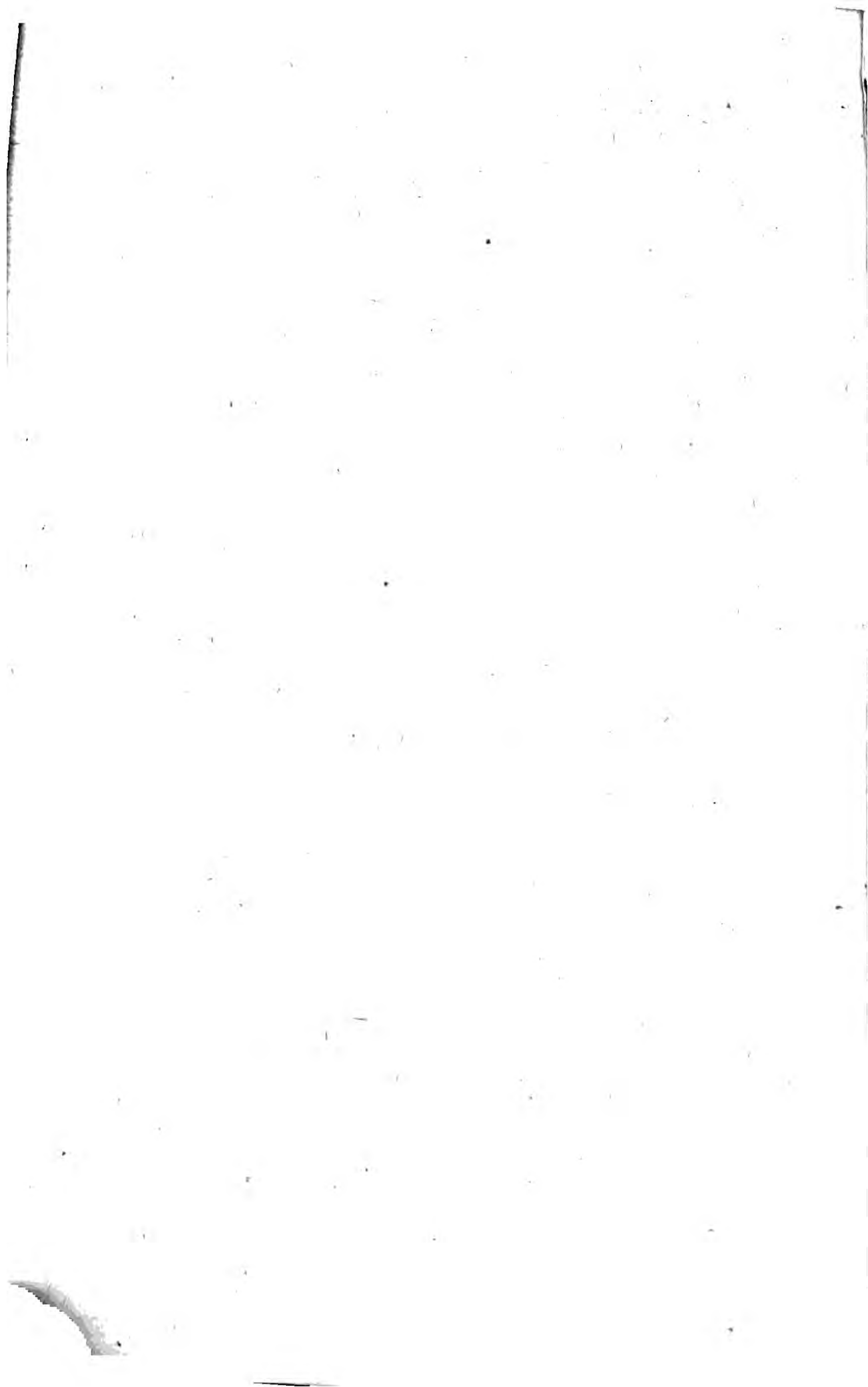
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THE
WORKS

OF THE

Most Reverend Father in GOD,
Sir WILLIAM DAWES, Bar^t.
Late Lord Archbishop of YORK,
Primate of *England* and Metropolitan.
Containing all that were publish'd by
His GRACE Himself

V O L. III. and Last.

To which is added,

A SERMON at the CONSECRATION
of *William*, Lord Bishop of *Chester*; by
the Rev. Mr. WILLIAM MILNER,
Chaplain to his Lordship.

Likewise

A SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

DUTIES of the CLOSET:

Consisting of a Regular Course of DEVOTIONS,
both stated and occasional; collected and
revis'd by the Rev. Mr. STACKHOUSE.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WILFORD, near *St. Paul's*. MDCCXXXII.



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set; consisting of a Regular Course of
Devotions, both stated and occasional:
In pursuance to the Directions laid
down by Sir William Dawes, in his
aforesaid Book. Collected and Revis'd
by the Rev. Mr. Stackhouse.*



T H E

THE
DUTIES
OF THE
CLOSET.
BEING AN
Earnest Exhortation
TO
PRIVATE DEVOTION.



To his very much
Esteemed Friend, the Rev.
Mr. C. *BLAKE*.

DEAR FRIEND,

I Am very sure that nothing can be unacceptable to you, which tends to the promoting of religion, and reviving the decayed spirit of piety. I know with how much compassion and concern you behold the prophaneness of the present age, how vigorously you oppose it, and how truly and sincerely you mourn for it. And therefore I could not tell to whom I should rather dedicate these papers than to you, by whom I know they will be kindly received, if for no other reason, yet for this, that they were well and honestly designed, and aim at a great and noble end.

A 4

I do

Epistle Dedicatory.

I do not intend to make a long epistle, but only to let you see, by these few rude lines, that where-ever I am, or whatever I am doing, you are still in my thoughts; and more especially then, when I am engaged in any religious work, it being almost impossible to think of religion, and not to think of you who are so nearly related to her. But I hate any thing that looks like flattery, especially between friends; and therefore I shall add no more, but what I can add with a great deal of sincerity, that I wish you all the happiness both of this and another world, and that I shall always rejoice, when I can meet with an opportunity, of shewing you how much I am

Your faithful Friend,

and humble Servant.

W. D A W E S.

T H E

T H E
P R E F A C E.

*T*WO Things are generally expected from the author of every book. First, That he should tell the world why he wrote it; and secondly, how he has wrote it.

I am very sorry that I am able to give so good a reason for the writing of it as I am; and I heartily wish there had been no occasion for it. But the general neglect of devotion that is too visible, calls loudly for it, and makes all apologies for writing on this subject needless.

*When I considered with my self how little devotion is expressed in publick, where it is mens interest sometimes to put on a form of Godliness; I could not help making this unhappy inference, that
there*

The P R E F A C E.

there could be scarce any left in the closet, where only God and our own souls see what we do. For how can we imagine that men, who will not vouchsafe to shew common civility to religion in publick, where it may be for their interest to do it, should receive her into their retirements, and make her their familiar and bosom friend? This was a sad and melancholy reflection to me; I was unwilling to believe it, and yet it was too plain to be disbelieved. What then should I do? Should I sit still and bewail in private this decay of piety? Or should I not rather think on some way to revive the ancient spirit of devotion, and to bring closet-religion into fashion? This certainly did best become me, and this could be done no other way, than by endeavouring, in a publick writing, to convince the world of the danger they were in, by the neglect of the closet-duties, and consequently of the necessity that lay upon them, if they would get out of their danger, to be more exact and frequent in the performance of them for the future, than they have hitherto been.

And

The P R E F A C E.

And indeed I know nothing more necessary, than the keeping up a sense of closet-religion in the world; for if this once fails, sincerity will soon take her leave of us. Publick religion may be, and I fear often is, only acted for worldly interest, and consists in outward shew and formality. But he that is religious in his closet, must be so upon true principles; for nothing can engage him to be religious there, but a true sense of his obligations to serve and fear God, not for any worldly end, but upon a much better account; purely to please God, and to save his own soul.

Thus much for the occasion of writing this book. As to the manner of writing it I have only this to say, that it is written with all the plainness and simplicity imaginable, and with as much brevity, as a discourse of this nature would bear.

*One thing more I desire the reader to take notice of, and that is, that I designed not this book for the ordinary people, but for those who are in some measure masters of their own time, and there-
fore*

The P R E F A C E.

fore I have prescribed much longer devotions, than are suitable to the condition of labouring people.

I heartily and earnestly beseech God, such as it is, to prosper it, and to grant that it may have that effect which it aims at, the making men truly pious and religious.



T H E

T H E
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THE



THE
INTRODUCTION.
S H E W I N G

The Obligations we lie under frequently to retire into our Closets, and the Duties there to be performed by us.



IT being in vain to talk to men of the duties of the closet, till they are thoroughly perswaded that there are such duties; I think it absolutely necessary, before I proceed any farther, to shew the indispensable obligations we lie under, frequently to retire into our closets; and, having taken our leaves of the world for a time, wholly to apply our selves to such acts of religion as I shall hereafter direct men to, as most proper for that place.

The Introduction.

And, for the doing of this, methinks it should be sufficient only to put men in mind that they are christians; and, as such, are obliged, even whilst they live here upon earth, *to have their conversation in heaven.* So that if men would but seriously endeavour to become christians in good earnest, if they would resolve *to walk as becomes the gospel of Christ,* they would soon see the necessity of retirement in their christian conversation. For alas! how is it possible to hold conversation with God and the world together? *Know ye not, as St. James saith, Jam. iv. 4. That the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* If therefore we desire to become friends of God, if we would enjoy his conversation, it must be in our closets; where, when we have shut out his irreconcilable enemy the world, he will most freely communicate himself to us.

But, because we find by sad experience, that all the arguments we can heap together, are scarce sufficient to keep men firm and stedfast in their duties; I shall not rest satisfied with what I have said, but proceed to shew the necessity of closet retirement from these following considerations.

First,

First, From the nature of several christian duties, which can be performed no where but in our closets; so that we must either be contented to leave them wholly unperformed, or else own the absolute necessity of retiring into our closets, where alone we can discharge ourselves of them.

Of this nature, are reading the scriptures, self-examination, and divine meditation.

First, Reading the scriptures, a duty so absolutely necessary, that without it, it is impossible to know what the duties of a christian are. For in these are the conditions of our eternal happiness contained, and if we do not take care to acquaint ourselves well with them, we shall never be able to perform them, as we ought to do.

And in what place, I beseech ye, shall we read these holy oracles, upon which the eternal salvation of our souls and bodies depends? Shall we satisfy ourselves with looking them over in a croud, and in company? If so, I think we shew very little concern for our immortal souls, and the affairs of another world, little indeed, even less than we express for the trifling affairs

of this life. For where shall we find a considering man that will content himself with a slight view of any deed or writing, upon which his whole estate depends? Will not men in this case withdraw themselves from company, and, with the greatest care and attention imaginable, overlook their writings, and weigh every word they read, for fear they should commit any oversight or mistake? And is the soul then of less value than the body, or is our eternal inheritance in the heavens less worth looking after than the short-lived riches of this world? No certainly: We can never read that book, in which are contained the conditions of immortal life, with care and attention enough. We can never need so much to be void of disturbance and distraction, as when we are going to acquaint ourselves with the narrow way that leads to everlasting happiness, and to learn how we may avoid that broad and well-beaten way, which leads to everlasting ruin and destruction. No mistake can be of like fatal consequence, with a mistake in this point; and therefore now, if ever, ought we to free our selves from all worldly incumbrances, and to withdraw into
some

some private place, where, with undisturb'd and watchful thoughts, we may peruse this important book of life and death.

Secondly, Another duty proper to the closet, is self-examination. A duty of that great usefulness to christians, in order to the managing their conversation aright; that, had we no exprefs command of God for the performance of it, as we have, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. yet our own Reason would oblige us to it.

And this can no where be performed but in our closets: for it requires the greatest attention of mind, the greatest seriousness and fixedness of thought, that we can possibly attain to. It is a stating of accompts between God and our own souls; and if through carelessness we happen to commit a mistake in this our reckoning, the consequence of such a mistake may perchance be no less than the eternal ruin of our souls and bodies. When therefore we set about this weighty work, we ought to bid adieu to all wordly cares and perplexities, to free our thoughts from all business of this life, and wholly to apply our selves to this great affair. And this is no more than what we our selves own to be necessary, by our

constant proceeding in our worldly concerns. The merchant, when he has a mind to settle his accompts, shuts himself up close, and will not be disturbed upon any account whatsoever. And shall we then grudge to bestow that care upon our souls, which we so freely undertake for our bodies? Shall our paltry accompts of this life, wherein a mistake is of no great consequence, make us call together all our care and attention, and sequester our selves from noise and company, till our business is finished? And shall we think it hard to spend a little time in private, in stating this grand account between God and our own souls? No surely: If we have any reason in us, as we pretend to have, we shall never dispute it. But, whether we dispute it or no, it is most certainly our duty frequently thus to examine ourselves with the greatest strictness and exactness imaginable, and consequently, it is our duty frequently to retire into our closets, where alone we can be at leisure to attend this weighty work without distraction.

The third and last duty I mentioned, as proper to the closet, was divine meditation, or the contemplation of God and di-
vine

vine objects; which is a very considerable part of that heavenly conversation which christians are obliged to.

And now certainly men ought to shake off all earthy filth and dross, when their souls are preparing to mount to heaven; for these will hinder and retard their ascent; at least, they will make their motion less brisk and lively; nay, perhaps they will be such a dead weight upon the soul, as to keep it from ascending at all towards heaven. When therefore we would set apart any time for this duty, we must, as 'twere, go out of this lower world, that is, we must for a time free our selves, as much as we can, from the thoughts of this world, or any thing belonging to it. And the only way to do this, is to retire into some private place, where there shall be no variety of worldly objects to divert and distract our affections; but our thoughts shall be free and disengaged, and fully and entirely fixed upon the glorious objects of heaven. Solitude is a very great friend to devotion; for it takes our minds off from those mean objects, which the affairs of the world generally present to us, and makes them fit to soar aloft, and to contemplate

such objects as are much more noble, and more agreeable to our rational faculties. But the world is an utter enemy to any thing that is good; it ties our thoughts and affections fast to it self, and it is in vain to think of heaven without renouncing earth. Adieu therefore thou perpetual enemy of all christian duties, but more especially of religious meditation. Behold! I leave and forsake thee, that I may cleave entirely to my God; that my thoughts and affections may follow him alone, and that I may feast my self with the sweet and comfortable contemplation of him and his glories.

Thus must every christian say, who intends to perform the duties I have been treating of. For they all require great care and thoughtfulness, and therefore are only fit works for that place, where men usually, that ever consider, call their thoughts together, I mean the closet.

But, besides the duties just mentioned, which are proper only to the closet; there are others both publick and private: that is, such as are to be performed by us, both publickly in our churches and families, and privately in our closets too.

Of

Of this sort are confession of sins, prayer, thanksgiving, and humiliation or mourning, both for our own and other mens sins. These are by all allowed to be duties of the church and family; and I make no doubt, but that they will appear to be duties of the closet too, to all who give themselves leave to consider what follows.

First, That every man has particular sins to confess, particular blessings to ask, particular mercies to give thanks for, and particular failings both of his own and other mens to bewail; which there neither ought to be, nor indeed can there be, any provision made for in the devotions of the church, or family.

There ought to be no provision for them, because, if it could be, it would be a thing of very ill consequence. It would oblige us to reveal all, even our most hidden, faults to the world; to publish all our wants and necessities, of what nature or kind soever; to make known to every body, who were the greatest favourites of heaven, and received the largest gifts from God; which, to say no more of it, would be very inconvenient.

But,

But, besides the inconvenience, it is a thing impracticable; for it is impossible to make any publick form of prayer, which shall suit all mens particular and private occasions. And therefore our publick confessions, prayers, thanksgivings, and humiliations, all run in general terms, which are suitable to the common conditions of men, but will not answer all their private occasions. Every day almost brings some new unforeseen accident upon us, which could not possibly be provided for in our publick devotions. And besides, the particular and casual wants of men, and their particular sins and mercies, are so numerous and various, that, were it possible to reckon them up, and to digest them under proper heads, and insert them into our publick devotions, it would make them endless.

The closet therefore is the proper place for these duties. Here, every private man has time enough for his work, and may do it without the least inconvenience. Here, he may safely acknowledge his most secret sins, and not suffer in his reputation, by this his acknowledgment. Here, he need not be ashamed to own all his wants and necessities,

The Introduction.

11

cessities, and to ask a supply for them. Here, he may freely return thanks to God for all his mercies, without being envied for them. *Lastly*, Here, he may pour out his soul in tears and lamentations for his own and other mens sins, and need not fear being derided for them.

But, that these are duties of the closet, as well as of the church and family, will appear farther.

Secondly, From the practice of inspired men of old, who constantly performed these duties in private as well as in publick. Thus we may find *Daniel* making a confession of his sins in private, *Dan. ix.* Thus *David*, *Daniel*, *St. Peter*, *St. Paul*, nay, and our blessed Saviour himself too, offered up their petitions to God in private, as we may read, *Psal. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10. Acts x. 9. 1 Cor. xxii. 8. Ephes. i. 16. Matt. xiv. 23.* Thus are we told, that *Daniel gave thanks to his God in his chamber three times a day*, *Dan. vi. 10.* And thus did the soul of pious *Jeremiah* weep in secret places for the sins of his people, as we may read, *Jerem. xiii. 17.* So that, if any argument may be drawn, for the practice of any duty, from the examples of men (as certainly

certainly from those of inspired men, who were immediately directed by God's Holy Spirit, they justly may) we have here a plain and cogent argument, for the performance of these duties in private, taken not only from the examples of good men, but of men inspired; nay, of Christ himself, who was God as well as man.

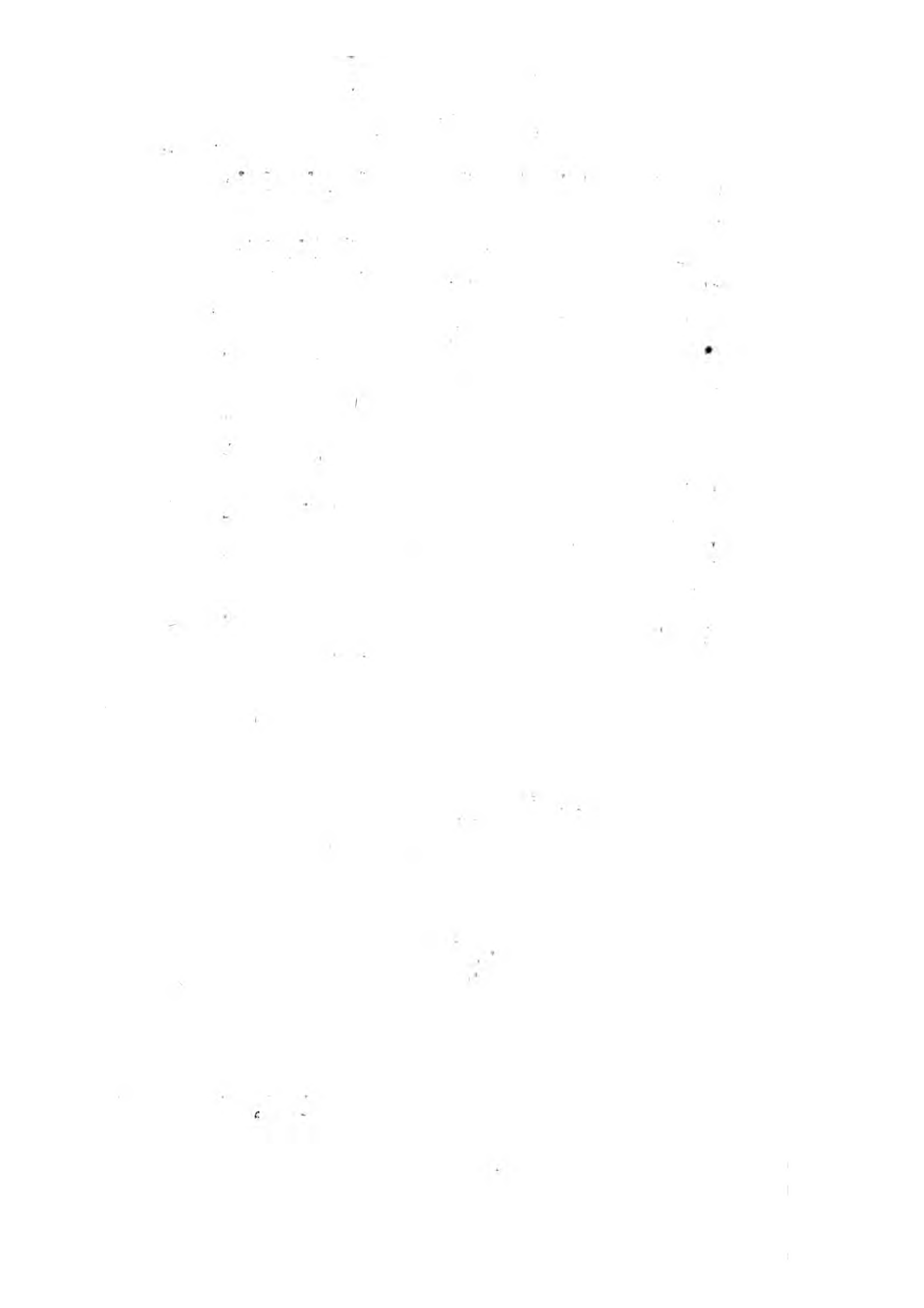
Thirdly, We have the express command of God for the performance of some of these duties in private. And therefore, were there no other obligation, this would be sufficient. Thus Matt. vi. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret.* Where the word *pray* is to be taken in its largest sense, as comprehending confession and thanksgiving. For these being the constant companions of our prayer (though they are not, properly speaking, parts of it, the word prayer signifying only a petition or request) it is very usual, both in scripture and in the writings of holy men, to conclude both these under the name of prayer. Again, 1 Tim. ii. 8. *I will therefore that men pray every where; not only in the church,*

church, and in their families, but in their closets also.

The sum of what has been said is this; that there are several religious duties which can be performed no where but in our closets; that there are others, which are indeed to be performed elsewhere, but must be performed there also; as we learn, from reason, the examples of holy men, and the commands of God himself.

From hence I conclude, that it is absolutely necessary for every man to set apart some time for the worship of God in private, where he may be at leisure to perform the above-mentioned duties.







THE
DUTIES
OF THE
CLOSET.

CHAP. I.

*Shewing how we ought to behave our
selves, at our first coming into our
Closets.*



HAVING brought you to your closet, I think it necessary to instruct you, how you may behave your self in it, so as to be the better for coming into it. And for this end, I would advise you, before you apply yourself to any particular duty, to reflect seriously upon these following considerations.

First,

The Duties of the Closet.

First, How inexcusable all wandring thoughts will be in this place. The design of your coming hither is, to gain an opportunity of waiting upon God without distraction. For this reason, you have left your business, forsaken your company, and withdrawn your self from the world. You have now no variety of earthly objects to divert your thoughts from heaven; you are shut up from all the charms and temptations of this World, and may be as intent upon the affairs of another world as you please. 'Tis true, your mind may go out of the closet, and you may, even when you are there, be as deeply immerfed in worldly and sensual thoughts, as when you are in the midst of company. But it must be your own fault, if you are so. In our publick devotions we may meet with many accidental diversions, occasioned by the great variety of outward objects that surround us; but we cannot plead this in our retirements. If we keep our minds within our closets, we shall find it an easy matter to fix them upon such objects as are proper for those places; and if we let them go out of them, and ramble about the world, it is not for want of power
and

and opportunity, but want of will and endeavour, to restrain them. Resolve therefore with thy self to set a watch upon thy thoughts, and to make advantage of thy retirement, by sending up thy mind, which may now easily disengage itself, from earth to heaven. Assure thy self, that God will most severely punish thee, if thou neglectest this opportunity of serving him with free and undistracted thoughts, and therefore do not presume to let the world have any part of thy soul, but give it whole and entire to him.

Secondly, Consider how little all hypocrisy and insincerity will avail thee here, *To call upon God with our lips, while our hearts are far from him*, may do us some service before men, who cannot see into our hearts; it may make us appear better to them than indeed we are, and so may be of advantage to us: but to dissemble where no body sees us but God, *who trieth the heart and reins, and understandeth our thoughts afar off*, is an argument of egregious folly, and of great impudence. Men may possibly think it worth their while to put on a form of godliness in their publick devotions, that by it they may obtain

a good reputation among men, who can judge only by outward appearance: but in the closet, where God only sees us, we can have no temptation to it. Nay, we have great reason to avoid insincerity here, because all our time and pains will be lost, if we only employ our selves in a superficial devotion. And it will be much better for us, never to pretend to worship God in our closets, than to deceive our selves with a cold and careless, an external and heartless worshipping of him. Let thy lips therefore and thy heart go together, that so thou may'st reap some advantage from thy devotions, by ingratiating thy self with God, who loves all such as serve him in truth and sincerity.

Thirdly and lastly, Look upon thy closet no more as an ordinary room, but as the temple of God; where he will be in a peculiar manner present, and take especial notice of all thy actions. And let this consideration sink so deep into thy mind, that it may make thee fearful of doing any thing that is trifling or foolish, while you are engaged in the service of God. Let a decent reverence appear in all thy actions, such as thou would'st shew, if
thou

thou could'st see God face to face. For though he does not visibly appear to thee, yet he is nigh, very nigh unto thee, and takes a more than ordinary notice of thy behaviour at this time.

These things I thought necessary to premise, that men might know the particular obligations they lie under to heavenly-mindedness, sincerity, and a reverent awe of God, in their private devotions. If they carry not these along with them, through all their duties, they cannot perform them acceptably; and therefore it behoves them earnestly to endeavour to put on these gracious dispositions of mind, before they proceed to the practice of particular duties. And, that they may obtain these, and so perform their duties, as they ought to do; it will be very proper for them to beg God's assistance in this, or some such form of prayer.

A P R A Y E R.

O *Holy and ever blessed Lord God,*
who hast commanded me to wait
upon thee in secret, grant that I may
behave my self so in thy presence, that
thou;

The Duties of the Closet.

thou, who seest in secret, may'st vouch-
 safe to reward me openly. Take from
 me, O Lord, all worldly thoughts, and
 give me grace so to set my affections on
 thee and all things above, that none of
 the charms or temptations of this world
 may be able to draw them down from thee.
 Enspirit and enliven my earthy drossy
 heart, that it may freely mount towards
 thee; and that I may apply my self to
 thee, with such a fixedness and attention
 of mind, as no wandering thoughts may
 interrupt. Make me sincere in all my
 duties, and let me not deceive my own
 soul; for thou, O Lord, canst not be
 deceived, with a slight and careless, a
 formal and lifeless performance of them.
 Thou requirest truth in the inward parts:
 O purge from me all hypocrisy and insin-
 cerity. Lord, grant I may make my ap-
 proaches to thee, with a reverence some
 way answerable to thy awful majesty,
 and that, while I am in thy presence,
 I may do nothing which may dishonour
 thee, or wound my own soul. Bless me,
 O Lord, I pray thee, in this holy exercise
 which I am now beginning, grant that it
 may be a means of improving me in all
 piety,

piety, and holiness and virtue. Forgive all my frailties and imperfections, and be not strict to mark what I shall do amiss; but deal with me according to thy mercy and loving-kindness, and accept of my imperfect service, for the sake of Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Having thus begged God's assistance by prayer, we may now with some confidence apply our selves to our particular duties, in such order and method as I shall treat of them. And we need not doubt but that, if we are careful in the performance of our work, God will bestow his blessing upon it, and prosper it.





C H A P. II.

Of reading the Holy Scriptures.

THE first duty we must apply our selves to, is reading the holy scriptures. For this is the ground-work and foundation of all our other duties. The first thing we are to do, is to learn the will of God, and the next to perform it.

And, that we may reap that benefit and advantage from them, which may justly be expected; let us take these following instructions along with us.

Before we set our selves to reading, let us consider what it is we are going to read; and this is no less than the word of God himself, nay farther, it is the word of eternal life.

As it is the word of God, it challengeth all reverence and respect at our hands. The majesty of him who speaks is so great, that we cannot hear his words without the greatest awe imaginable. Behold! it is he speaks, *who created us by the breath*
of

of his mouth, and sustains us by the word of his power. It is he, whose voice can shake the mountains, and make the whole earth to tremble; he, who is God over all, and gives laws to the whole world, speaks now to us with an audible voice; and therefore certainly it becomes us to hear what he saith with reverence. We dare not surely scoff at and deride his words, who can in a moment turn us into hell for doing so; we dare not presume lightly to esteem his words, who is a God jealous of his honour, and will revenge all affronts offered to him, even to the third and fourth generation. No, we will receive them with such a respect, as it becomes a poor, vile, dependent creature to shew to his Creator, Preserver and Law-giver.

Secondly, Since it is God's word, it deserves to be read by us with the greatest care and attention possible. When God speaks, it is certainly worth our while to hearken to him; for, whatever infinite wisdom can say, must needs be of great use to man. Hearken therefore unto the word of the Lord, and incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart unto understanding. Resolve before thou readest,

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heedfully to mind what thou readest, or else it will be better for thee not to read at all.

Thirdly, All God's words must be believ'd. Whatsoever comes from him must be true; for he is truth it self, and cannot lie. He cannot be deceived by others, neither can he himself deceive any man; and therefore we may firmly depend upon whatever he saith, as infallibly true. *Thy word is true from the beginning,* saith *David*; and *he that sent me is true,* saith our blessed Saviour. *God is not a man that he should lie,* saith *Moses*; nay, *God cannot lie,* saith *St. Paul*. He cannot be deceived, because he is omniscient, and knoweth all things; nor can he deceive, because he is truth it self, and it is impossible for him to lie. Prepare thy soul therefore to receive whatever he saith, with a firm and unshaken belief. Remember that it is God who speaks, even *the God of truth,* and make no doubt of believing his words. Thou canst not offer a greater affront unto him, than to disbelieve him; for this is to call him a liar. And therefore it will be less excusable for thee, never to look into the scriptures,

scriptures, than, when thou knowest them to be the word of God, to read them constantly, without a steady faith in them.

Fourthly, Whatever God saith, must be obeyed by us. God is the sovereign law-giver of the world, and may impose any laws upon us his creatures, that he pleaseth. And therefore, when he speaks, his word must be a law to us. *The Lord is our law-giver, saith Isaiah.* He is that *one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: Obey his voice therefore, and provoke him not.* As *Moses* said to the children of *Israel*. The scriptures contain the laws of God, *written with his own finger*, and he who reads them, and obeyeth them not, *is a transgressor of the law, and shall perish.* Beware therefore of doing this. For it will be much better for you, never to read a line of scripture, than to read it frequently and not obey it. For to sin against a clear light, which we have constantly in our eye, is the greatest aggravation sin is capable of. Make this resolution therefore with thy self, before thou readest, that thou wilt sincerely practise what thou readest.

Again,

Again, As the scriptures are the word of eternal life, that is, as they offer us conditions, which if we perform, we shall most certainly obtain eternal life; they lay a fresh obligation upon us to receive them with reverence, attention, faith and obedience. For what gift shall we receive with reverence and respect, if not the gift of everlasting happiness? What words shall we listen to, if not the words of eternal life? Where shall we shew our readiness to believe, if we are slow to believe the greatest and most welcome news that ever man heard? Lastly, What commands shall we be willing to obey, if not those, which will reward our obedience with an eternity of happiness?

That therefore thou mayest read the scriptures, and be the better for them; nay, that thou may'st not be infinitely the worse for reading them; it will be necessary for thee, before thou venturest to open these holy books, to resolve that thou wilt peruse them with a most profound reverence and respect; that thou wilt listen to them with a most wakeful attention, assent to them with an unfeigned faith, and obey them with a sincere and ready submission.

Having

Having put on these holy resolutions, thou hast now nothing else to do, before thou settest thy self to reading, but to beg the assistance of God's spirit, which alone can strengthen these thy resolutions, and instruct thee in the things that are of God, in these words of our church.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, Grant that I may in such wise read, mark, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, I may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And now you may safely venture to unfold these sacred books, and look into them; and need not fear not being benefited by them, if in your reading of them, you are careful to observe these following rules.

First, To chuse for your reading such portions of them as are most plain and intelligible, and relate most immediately to your duty. Such as are in the Old Testament.

The whole book of *Genesis*, which gives you an account of the creation of all things
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by God, and of your self out of the dust, and of the fall of man: which will tend mightily to establish religion and humility in your soul. You have here also great instances of God's displeasure and severity against sin; such as were that of the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by fire and brimstone, and of the whole world by a deluge of waters. Here are great examples of piety and faith in God, set before us, such as were those of *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Joseph*, &c. In a word, you will here meet with great encouragements to piety and virtue, from the consideration of the special care God took of his servants, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob* and *Joseph*. But, what is above all, you have here very pregnant promises of the Messiah, who should bless all nations of the world by his coming.

Some parts also of the book of *Exodus* must not be omitted, *viz.* those that give us an account of the birth and wonderful preservation of *Moses*, of God's miraculous protections and deliverance of his people from *Pharaoh*, and of the moral laws established among the *Israelites*. Other parts of this book, which relate to the
judicial

judicial or ceremonial laws, tho' they are of great use for some ends; yet I think they are not so fit to be read by the common sort of christians, as other more practical parts of scripture. *Leviticus* chiefly treats of the ceremonial law, and therefore is not very proper for the reading of ordinary christians. There are indeed many good precepts in it, but those which relate to us, we shall meet with in many other parts of the bible. The same may be said of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*. I would by no means have it thought that I judge these books not to be worth our reading: no, I am far from entertaining any such prophane thought. Our church has taken care, that they shall be read to us in her publick service, where it is our duty to hearken attentively to them. My desire only is, that private christians, may read those parts of scripture chiefly in their closets, which will most tend to better their lives and conversations, and to confirm and settle them in the practice of religious duties.

The books from *Deuteronomy* to *Job*, are chiefly historical, and though there are many occurrences in them worth our notice ;

tice ; yet I think there are several books in the Old Testament, by the reading of which, we may much more improve ourselves, in holiness and virtue. Such are the book of *Job*, the *Psalms*, the *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*.

The book of *Job*, from the beginning to the end of it, sets before us such an example of resignation to God's will, patience and contentedness under the greatest sufferings, of an unshaken faith and piety, and an unblemished integrity ; as most highly deserves our imitation. But this is not all ; it gives us an admirable account of the reason and principles of all these duties, and in every line has something that is useful and instructive.

The book of *Psalms* is the best book of devotions in the world ; it is almost wholly composed of confessions, prayers, thanksgivings and meditations ; and it has such a strange power to cure heaviness, to extirpate grief, to lay asleep troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with pain, to move compunction for sin, and to promote fervent and affectionate piety ;
that

that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes.

The book of *Proverbs* was written by *Solomon*, the wisest of men, and contains in it so many admirable instructions and exhortations to all sorts of virtue and true wisdom, as make it exceeding useful; and plainly shew that it came from the spirit of wisdom.

The book of *Ecclesiastes* gives us *Solomon's* Judgment of worldly things, after he had try'd them all. And certainly it must be very valuable to know his opinion of them, who, not only by reason of his wisdom, was best able to judge of them; but, by reason of the affluence and plenty he enjoyed of them, could give a better account of them, than any other man under the sun.

These books therefore I would have thee take often in thy hands, being well assured that they are full of good and extraordinary useful matter.

The rest of the books of the Old Testament are chiefly historical and prophetical; and upon that account, are neither so intelligible, or instructive as the books above mentioned.

In

In the New Testament we must omit no book, but that of the *Revelations*; which being extremely difficult to be understood, even by men of great skill and learning, cannot possibly be proper for unlearned christians:

Thus much I thought necessary to say, to let you know in what parts of scripture you may best employ your time. I would not have you slight the other parts, because they are less useful; they have all their uses, and those very great ones too; and though to thee, who hath neither time nor learning to search into the bottom of them, they may seem of little use; yet assure thy self they are not so. They are all the words of that God, who never speaks in vain; and therefore though thou canst not discover their great usefulness, yet they certainly have it:

Secondly, In your reading make use of some plain commentator to instruct you in the true sense and meaning of the words, and to shew you the connection of them. The five books of *Moses* were lately put out by the reverend Dr. *Kidder* bishop of *Bath* and *Wells*; with such a plain and familiar paraphrase upon the text, as will
help

help us to understand it with ease. The book of *Job*, the *Psalms*, the *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes* have been some time extant, with such a paraphrase of the reverend Dr. *Patrick's* bishop of *Ely*, as all men justly admire for its clearness and conciseness. The best paraphrase we have upon the New Testament written in our own tongue, is that of the learned Dr. *Hammond*. These are the only books I can advise unlearned readers to, and these will be great helps to them.

Thirdly, Consider that the end of your reading the scripture is, *That you may know what you must do to be saved*. And therefore trouble not your head with little impertinent disputes about passages of scripture that relate not at all to this important question. All things necessary to be believed or done by you, in order to your salvation, are set down in plain and legible characters: mind these, and read them over and over. But, if thou meetest with difficulties in other places of scripture, which do not so nearly concern thee, be not disquieted at them. He, who finds enough in the scriptures to carry him to heaven, has answered the end of his read-

ing them, and need not rack his brain to solve those difficulties, which will do him no service when unfolded.

Fourthly, Have a care of perverting the sense of the words, to make them serve any opinion or practice thou hast a kindness for. *St. Peter* complain'd in his time, *That there were unlearned men who wrested the scriptures to their own destruction, i. e.* who abused and perverted the sense of them, and thereby deceived themselves, and became liable to destructions; as we also shall, if we endeavour to corrupt the scriptures. Always remember, that we are first to enquire into the sense of the scripture, and then to make our opinions and practices conformable to it; and that we are not to resolve first what we will think or do, and then force the scripture, right or wrong, to countenance our opinions and practices.

Fifthly, Never allow that to be the sense of any disputable passage in Scripture, which contradicts any other plain passage of it. For God cannot contradict himself; and therefore, when thou seest any interpretation put upon his words, which is directly contrary to some plain
plain

plain words of his in another place, be sure to reject it. For, whatever the meaning of the words may be, it is certain this it cannot be.

Sixthly, Above all things, let us beware of being conceited of our own understandings. Nothing will hinder us so much from learning the true sense and meaning of scripture, as pride and self-conceit. For *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* And therefore, let us take heed of being positive and dogmatical, and wedded to our own opinions. Let us desire to be instructed by others, and let us humbly beg of God, that he would lead us into all truth; for this is the most likely way to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Lastly, Let us take care to be frequent in this duty. The best way to understand the scriptures, is to read them frequently; for when we are well acquainted with them, one place will help us to interpret another. It is impossible, in this case, to prescribe a certain rule for all men; their circumstances being vastly different and unlike. But I would have no man, who is master of his own time, ever pass a day

without reading some part of them; nay, I would have every such man read them constantly when he retires to his morning and evening devotions.

If we perform this duty, according to the abovementioned rules, the benefits that will redound to us from it will be unspeakable. For,

First, We shall hereby keep our selves in a constant knowledge and remembrance of our duty. We are very apt, through a forgetfulness of God's commands, to commit very many and great mistakes: and therefore we are often called upon to *take heed lest we forget the covenant of the Lord our God.* If then we have a mind to resolve, with holy *David, That we will never forget the precepts of God;* we must very often look into them, and by so doing, we shall always keep up the remembrance of them fresh and lively in our minds.

Secondly, We shall in the scriptures find many powerful motives and encouragements to keep ourselves stedfast in the practice of our duty. While with an eye of faith we look upon the great rewards, that are every where promised in scripture

to God's obedient children, we shall never need any other arguments to provoke us to well-doing. For if the hopes of everlasting life and glory will not infuse strength and vigour into us, and make us go on confidently and chearfully in the practice of our duty; I am sure, no meaner consideration will have any effect upon us. Again, if the dreadful threatnings denounced there, almost in every page against sin and disobedience, will not be able to deter us from them, no fear of lesser punishments certainly will work upon us. Here alone have we such charming invitations to obedience, and such strong arguments against sin; as no other book in the world can furnish us with.

Thirdly, These holy Books will be great helps to us in our devotions; not only as they set before us the examples of devout men, but also as they are a rich magazine of such expressions as we shall have frequent occasions to use in our confessions, prayers and thanksgivings to God. No man can pretend that they can praise God, and pray to him, in such an agreeable manner, as those holy men did, who were inspired by the Spirit of God him-

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self; and therefore their prayers and hymns of praise, their confessions and thanksgivings, are very proper patterns for us at all times to imitate, and sometimes wholly to transcribe.

Lastly, They will give us certain ease and comfort under all the pressures and afflictions of this life. *Come hither all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall here find rest unto your souls.* Come hither all ye that are oppressed with the cares and troubles of this world, nay, perhaps overwhelmed with the injuries of it. Here you shall find one that will ease you of your cares and troubles, and defend you from the affronts and wrongs of a wicked and malicious world; *Let not your hearts faint therefore, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you.* This is the language of those sacred books; this is that comfortable language, which will raise our drooping spirits, and administer sure comfort unto us under our most heavy afflictions. Read once again, and thou shalt there find, *That these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee*

thee a far greater and eternal weight of glory. And now surely thou mayest not only bear thy afflictions with patience, but mayest triumph and glory in them. When thy God, the God of truth, calls to thee, and bids thee look up to heaven and see a bright crown there prepared for thee; if thou bearest thy afflictions with patience, surely thou can'st not forbear *rejoicing in tribulation*; at least thou needest not fear fainting, while thou keepest that glorious and never-fading crown in thy view.

Of reading other good BOOKS.

BEfore I conclude this chapter, I think it will be convenient to say something concerning our reading other good books besides the scripture. And this I will do in few words, by advising you what books will be most proper for your reading, and by instructing you how you ought to read them.

The books most worthy our reading, next to the canonical books of scripture, which only are to be counted the word of God, are the *Apocryphal* books, which

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are bound up at the end of your bibles. These the church doth order, *Artic. 6. To be read for example of life and instruction of manners*; and indeed they are very well stored both with precepts and examples fit for this purpose.

Especially the books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus* I would have thee take frequently into thy hands; for they are full of excellent, I had almost said divine, wisdom, and will be of use to thee in all states and conditions of life whatsoever.

The story of the *Maccabees* is a noble story, and richly deserves to be read, with care and attention by us. The others have their several good uses; but these which I have mentioned in particular are most worthy thy frequent perusal.

Few books joined to these, will be sufficient. *The whole duty of man*; *Dr. Hammond's Practical Catechism*; *Dr. Patrick's Mensa Mystica*, his book of prayers; and *Dr. Sherlock's* two excellent treatises on *Death and Judgment*, will make a library large enough for any ordinary christian. If you have time enough to read more, you may consult your spiritual pastor, and there is no doubt but he will

will direct you to such, as are most proper for you.

In reading of these books, or any other of this nature, observe these following rules.

First, Consider that they are wrote by men and therefore do not wonder, if thou findest errors and mistakes in them. The authors of them may be very extraordinary men, but are not infallible. And therefore we must not read these, with the same faith and confidence, that we do the holy scriptures, which were written by God, who neither can be deceived or deceive.

Secondly, Read them without prejudice; let not the man who wrote them, or some particular passage in them, give thee a distaste of the whole. Remember that thou art not to read the man, but his book; and if that be for thy use, it matters not who was the Author of it. Remember again, that it is not agreeable to the rules of wisdom to dislike a whole book, for the sake of one or two, as we think, indecent or unwary expressions in it. If the main of it be good, it will become us rather to overlook a few faults, if there
be

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be any such in it, than to reject the whole for the sake of these few blemishes. No man would throw away a piece of gold, because it has an allay of some baser metal mixed with it. No, he will carefully separate the fine gold, which is for his use, from the drossy and baser particles which accompany it, and make his advantage of it.

Thirdly, Always remember to give thy assent to them only so far as they agree with the word of God. The design of writing good books, is to explain the word of God, and to enforce the precepts by that enjoined us. But, if men go about to set up their own traditions for God's word, we must reject them with scorn and contempt. God certainly is more worthy of belief than man, and whoever offers to contradict him, deserves to be censured by us as a deceiver, but not received, as a prophet. God's book is a perfect book, and whoever offers to add to it, or diminish from it, ought to be looked upon as an impudent prophane wretch, who thinks himself wiser than God.

Fourthly

Fourthly and Lastly, Let us read them with attention, and a desire to improve our selves by them. The end of reading, is to inform and instruct our selves by what we read. And therefore we had better let reading quite alone, than offer to read without attention. He only reads to purpose, who, diligently laying up in his mind what he reads, shews forth the fruit of it in his life and conversation. Let this then be the end of all our reading, and let us shew, that we minded what we read by practising it.





C H A P. III.

Of Self-Examination.

AFTER we have been taking a view of our duty, in the holy scriptures and other good books; it will be very proper for us to proceed to an examination of our selves.

To examine our selves, is to take a serious and exact review of our past thoughts, words and actions, and to try whether they have been such, as our own reason, and the written law of God command they should be.

The end of this examination, or reckoning with our selves, is to prepare our selves for that great account which we must all give at the day of judgment; to correct whatever we find to be amiss in us, and to go on and persevere in whatever we find to be good, that so we may be
ready

ready for the *second coming of our Lord*. Whatever therefore we shall be accountable for, at that day, falls very properly under our present examination. And since we are very well assured that we must then give an account of our thoughts, words and actions, it becomes us now to make an exact and careful scrutiny of them.

First, We must examine our thoughts. For there are laws for these, as well as for our words and actions; and consequently, by a transgression of these laws, we become guilty of sin, which is nothing else but *a transgression of the law*; and if guilty of sin, then liable to judgment. Our Saviour has told us, that *Whosoever looketh upon a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery*; that is, whosoever, upon the sight of a beautiful woman, conceives in his heart a lustful desire of committing adultery with her; tho' he does not actually do it, shall be looked upon by God as an actual adulterer. And in another place of scripture, he condemns the *Pharisees* for *making clean the outside of the cup and platter, and having no regard to the inside*. That is, as he himself afterwards explains it, for endeavouring

deavouring to appear righteous unto men, and, in the mean while, harbouring all hypocritical and wicked thoughts. For this he denounceth a terrible woe against them, *Matt. xxiii. 27, Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwards, but are within full of dead mens bones and all uncleanness.* Our first business therefore must be to enquire, whether our insides are clean; for unless they be, an outward cleanliness will avail us nothing at that day, when God shall judge the secrets of mens hearts.

Secondly, We must examine our words. Because we must be accountable for these at the great day of judgment; as our Saviour assures us, *Matt. xii. 36, 37. But I say unto you, that every idle word, that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* And surely then it highly concerns us to examine whether we have been guilty of speaking such idle words, as will infallibly

fallibly condemn us *at the great and terrible day of the Lord.*

Thirdly, and Lastly, We must examine our actions. For we very well know, *that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or evil.* All our actions must be accounted for at the last day; not only our publick ones, which have been acted in the face of the world; but also our most secret ones, which have been done in our chambers and closets. God, *unto whose eyes all things are naked and open,* will bring every thing, even *the most secret thing,* into judgment. And therefore, it stands us in stead carefully to weigh all our past actions, and try whether they are such as will bear God's severe examination at the day of judgment.

In a word, we must call our selves to an account, for all our thoughts, words and actions, before the bar of right reason, and the holy scriptures, which together contain the full will of God. And we may with assurance conclude, that whatever is agreeable to these, is our duty: And
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on the contrary that whatever thwarts and opposeth these, is certainly sin. These are that rule, which if we keep to, we cannot possibly mistake; but we must be careful never to separate these, lest, by so doing, we make only a partial judgment, and deceive our selves.

But I shall not satisfy my self with this general account of this duty. I think my self oblig'd to give more particular directions concerning it, and to put you in a method of performing it so exactly, that no one sin shall escape you.

And, in order to this, I would have you consider, that a man's thoughts, words and actions, make up that whole duty, which he owes to God, his neighbour, and himself. And therefore, the only way to know when we have discharged our duty, is to enquire whether our thoughts, words or actions, have been such, as they ought to be, towards God, our neighbour and our selves. And this we shall find out by asking our consciences such questions, as I shall presently instruct you in.

But, before I do this, it will be very necessary to give you a few cautions concerning the examining your self.

First,

First, Be not partial to your self in your examination. Put not a better construction upon your thoughts, words and actions, than they will justly bear. But rather aggravate your faults than lessen them; for it will be much more for thy interest, to think thy self rather worse, than better, than indeed thou art. If thou lookest upon thy sins to be greater than they are, this will only quicken thy diligence, awaken thy care, increase thy sorrow for them, and hasten thy repentance. But if thou flatterest thy self, by representing them to thy self to be less than they really are, thy case will be very miserable. For then thou canst neither be so sorrowful for them, nor repent so truly of them, as thou oughtest to do; but thou wilt lay a necessity upon thy self of living in an impenitent state; for so much as thou takest either from the number or bulk of thy sins, so far will thy repentance fall short of being such, as it ought to be. Consider, dear christian, that it is thy own soul which is now at stake, that no body can suffer by thy misreckoning but thy self, and that, if thou takest not care to keep true accompts, thou mayest

easily deceive thy self into eternal ruin. In a word, consider how much safer it is, to be too exact, than to neglect even the least thing; how much more danger there is of presumption, than despair; and then thou may'st be careless if thou can'st.

Secondly, Do not examine thy self by way of comparison; that is, by comparing thy self with thy neighbours, and only enquiring whether thou art better or worse than they. It is, God knows, a very common thing, even with the best of us, to say with the proud *Pharisee, Lord, I am not as this man*: Now, supposing this to be so, yet what is it to the purpose? We shall not be ask'd at the day of judgment, whether we were better than our neighbours; but whether we have discharged all those duties, which our own reason and the revealed will of God obliged us to. It will not avail us, at that great day, to alledge that there were other men worse than us; for alas! How does this any way excuse our disobedience, that other men have been disobedient as well as we? What would it signify a malefactor, when he is upon his tryal, to inform the judge, that there were other men
to

to be tried, who are guilty of much greater faults than ever he was? Do you think, upon this, the judge would pronounce him innocent? Or do you not think, that he would tell him this was no excuse for him; but that there was a settled law, by which his actions must be tried, and by which he must stand or fall? The same is our case. If we can justify our actions by our rule, then are we indeed innocent; but if we have nothing else to say for our selves, but that we have not been so bad as other men, we shall find but a little comfort in this excuse. Deceive not thy self therefore, O man; but try all thy thoughts, words and actions, by their proper touch-stones, thine own reason, and God's written Law. If these acquit thee, then thou art indeed acquitted; and if these condemn thee, thou wilt most certainly be condemned.

Having premised these two cautions, I shall now give you some heads of self-examination; under some one or other of which, every branch of your duty is contained.

Heads of Self-examination.

I. *Of our duty towards G O D.*

HA V E you always firmly believed, that there is but one, eternal, spiritual, invisible God, the fountain of all perfection and happiness, who alone made all things both visible and invisible, and preserveth and governeth them by his power and providence. Have you always believed him to be infinitely holy, just, good, merciful, powerful, wise and true, and that he is every where present? Have you constantly believed in him, feared him, loved him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength? Have you given thanks to him, and praised him every day? Have you put your whole trust in him, and firmly depended upon him? Have you called upon him frequently in his church, in your family and closet? Have you honoured his holy name, and every thing relating to him? Have you firmly believed the scriptures to be his word? And have you in all your thoughts, words and actions, endeavoured conscientiously to obey his laws?

II. *Of*

H. Of our duty towards our Neighbour.

Haft thou loved thy neighbour as thy self? Haft thou done unto all men as you would they should do unto you? Haft thou loved, honoured, and to the utmost of thy power assisted thy parents, and relations? Haft thou honoured and faithfully obeyed the king, and all his ministers, in all their commands, which have not been contrary to the word of God? Haft thou humbly submitted thy self to thy governors, teachers, and spiritual pastors and masters? Have you ordered your self lowly and reverently to all your betters? Have you hurt no body by word or deed? Haft thou been true and just in all thy dealings? Haft thou bore no malice or hatred in thy heart? Haft thou kept thy hands from picking and stealing, and thy tongue from evil-speaking, lying and slandering? Haft thou not tempted thy neighbour to intemperance, wickedness, or lewdness? Haft thou not coveted, or desired other men's goods? But have you learned and laboured to get your own living, and to

do your duty towards all men in that state, in which it has pleased God to place you.

III. *Of your Duty to your self.*

Hast thou had always humble thoughts of thy self, thy performances, thy riches, honour, wit, beauty, and every thing else belonging to thee? Hast thou been of a sedate and easy temper, not given to peevishness? Hast thou considered well of all thy actions, before thou didst commit them; and hast thou constantly examined them, to see whether they were done according to God's laws, after they were done? Hast thou been contented in thy worldly condition, and diligent and watchful in thy station? Hast thou avoided all unclean, lewd thoughts, words or actions, and every thing tending to encourage them? Hast thou been temperate in thy meat, drink, sleep, and apparel? Hast thou avoided idleness and all unlawful recreations? Hast thou so used thy body in all things, as to make it most serviceable to thy soul? Hast thou mortified it, and kept it down by frequent fastings? Or, at least hast thou
never

never pampered it by excess of meat and drink, either in quantity or quality.

Thus must you question your self concerning your past thoughts, words and actions; and in what particular soever you find you have transgressed, be sure to take special notice of your faults, in order to your confessing them to God, begging his pardon for them, and repenting of them.

And this I would have you do every night, beginning from the time when you first awake in the morning, and so going on through the several passages of the day, to the time of your performing this duty. And, that you may be sure never to omit the daily practice of this duty, always be mindful of these two things.

First, That the thoughts, words and actions of a day are many and various, and that our memories are short and treacherous; and therefore they are not fit to be trusted with a very large account. It will puzzle very many of us, I believe, to recount the passages of our life from morning till night; especially it will be difficult to recollect our thoughts, which being for the most part vain and foolish, rambling and irregular, we have no method to pursue

due in taking a review of them. We may possibly, from the place where we have been, and the company we have been in, make some collection of the words and actions of a day, though a very imperfect one. But we shall find it almost impossible to call to mind our thoughts, which perhaps have had no connection with the place or company in which we have been. If then it is so difficult a task to bring back to our view one day of our life, how much more difficult will it be to take an account of two or three together? If our memories are so shallow and deceitful, that we dare not trust them in our worldly concerns, hardly for an hour, much less for a day; surely we will not venture to trust them any long while, in our spiritual concerns, which are of much more weight and importance; in our spiritual concerns, where a mistake may be of very ill consequence; of no less consequence than the eternal ruin of our souls and bodies. Indeed would our worldly occasions permit us, there would be reason enough for us to examine our selves every hour, nay, to keep a constant registry of all we think, say, or do. But tho' this

this is impracticable, a daily examination of our selves is not. This we may easily do; and this we must do, if we truly and sincerely intend to make such a reckoning with our selves, as we shall be the better for.

Secondly, Another reason, why I would never have you let a day slip without a strict examination of your self, is because you are not sure that you shall live to perform this duty the next day; so that were it possible for us to carry in our memories the thoughts, words and actions of our lives, from one day to another, yet it would be very unsafe to do it. *For who knows what a day may bring forth?* Who is there, that can assure himself of a moment's continuance in this world? Who, but a fool, will venture to say that he will let his accompts alone till to morrow; when alas! to morrow is not in his power, and perhaps he may never live to see it. Make use therefore of the present time, and do not dare to put off this weighty work, lest by doing so, thou shouldst provoke God to cut thee off from *the land of the living*, and time should be to thee no more. Consider with
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thy self, when thy bed-time draws near, how uncertain a thing it is, whether thou shalt ever awake in this world again, or no. Consider this, I say; and then tell me, whether it be not highly fitting for thee to cast up thy accompts, and to settle the affairs of thy soul; that so, if thy sleep should prove the sleep of death, thou may'st awake with joy and comfort in the next world, as every good soul will, which has taken care thus to prepare it self for this sudden change. But, Lord! what horror and confusion will that man be in, who having put off this necessary work from day to day, finds himself at last deprived of all opportunities of performing it! If therefore thou desirest *to lay thy self down in peace, and sleep*, it will be proper for thee to examine the state of thy soul every night, before thy bed-time; that so thou may'st acknowledge thy sins to God, beg his pardon for them, and sincerely resolve to forsake them. This only can make thy bed easy and safe, by freeing thee from the troublesome fears of death, and so preparing thee for it, that, if it should come, it would prove to thee not an enemy but a friend.

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But, besides this daily examination of ourselves, we must be careful also to observe some special seasons, when the performance of this duty is in a peculiar manner requisite. As,

First, Before the receiving of the Lord's supper. And for this we have the express command of God, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* And the reason of St. Paul's giving us this advice, we find in the next verse. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* So that here the apostle supposeth that all such men as did not examine themselves, before they came to the Lord's supper, would eat and drink unworthily when they came thither. And this he might well suppose; for surely no man can be a fit guest for the table of the pure and immaculate Jesus, who has not endeavour'd to find out all his spots and blemishes, and to cleanse himself from them. No man ought to presume to draw near towards the altar of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but he who has made it his business

finers to purge and wash himself from his sins, and thereby has rendered himself fit for God to look upon. Whensoever therefore thou resolvest with thy self to receive the holy sacrament, and this thou ought'st to do as often as thou hast an opportunity of receiving it, it will become thee to set apart some time for the performance of this duty, *and so to search and examine your conscience, as our church exhorts us (and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God) that you may come holy and clean to this heavenly feast, and the marriage-garment required by God in holy scripture, and be received as a worthy partaker of that holy table.*

Secondly, This duty is, in a more than ordinary manner, necessary, at such times, as the church has appointed for publick fasting, and humiliation, and mortification; especially at *Lent*, when, by the church's appointment, God's anger and judgments are denounced against sinners. At this time certainly it behoveth us to examine our state and condition, that we may know whether we are of the number of those against whom God's judgments are
denounced

denounced, or whether we have been careful to avoid those sins, which provoke the wrath of God against all ungodly men. These times are purposely designed by the church, for the improvement of our souls; and therefore ought to be spent in such religious exercises, as will promote this great and noble end; particularly in such a severe and impartial examination of ourselves, as will give us a true sight of all our faults.

Thirdly, Self-examination is absolutely necessary in times of trouble and affliction, whether private or publick.

Private men very often cherish some one darling sin in their bosoms, which is the cause of many heavy judgments that fall upon them. And therefore when they are in distress and perplexity, it will be very proper for them to examine themselves, and to try whether they can find the cause of this their trouble within themselves. There is no doubt, but every man will be able to give himself a good reason for his afflictions, that seriously considers his own life. Here we shall certainly find that, which may be a just cause of our troubles, whether it be really or
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no. And by finding out this, we shall be put into a way of easing ourselves from the burthen of them, by removing that, which in all probability is the cause of them.

But whether this will hold good or no, as to all private men, it is hard to say. But it is certainly true of all communities and publick bodies. God never scourgeth them, but for their sins. *A righteous nation shall be exalted*, but sin not only brings a reproach, but very often severe punishments too, upon any people. In a time therefore of publick affliction and calamity, God does, as it were, call to every particular member of the community, to examine the course of his life, and see if he can find *any way of wickedness in it*. It is certain, that we are *afflicted for the multitude of our transgressions*; and therefore it becomes every individual man of us to try and examine how far we are the causes of these publick calamities; that is, to try how far every one of us either cherisheth in himself, or encourageth in others those sins, which are the certain cause of this national affliction.

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At such times as these, *viz.* before we receive the sacrament; in times appointed by the church for fasting, humiliation and mortification; and in times of publick and private calamities; we must be very strict in the performance of this duty. We must be more particular in it, at these times, than in our daily practice of it; and therefore I would not have you use those heads of self-examination now, which I have set down for your daily use; but I would have you examine your selves by those particular heads of your duty, which you will find at the end of *the whole Duty of Man*. These are so long, that it would take up too much time to overlook them every night; and therefore I endeavour'd to give you, for your constant use, only an abstract or abridgment of them. But at these particular seasons, you may find time enough to overlook and consider them, as they lie at large. To these I would advise you to add the creed, commonly called the apostles; at the end of every article of which, I would have you ask your self, whether you firmly and stedfastly believe it. In both these joined together you will find

find all that is necessary for you to believe and do, in order to your salvation; and by a serious and exact view of them, you will easily discover what faults you have been guilty of, and consequently ought to amend; and what duties you have discharged, as it became you, and consequently ought to persevere in.

Now, that you may not want encouragements to the performance of this duty, will represent to you the many and great benefits that will certainly follow a conscientious performance of it; each of which, I hope, will prove a powerful motive to engage you to a constant practice of it.

First, Nothing will so effectually teach us humility, as a conscientious discharge of this duty. For this will every day shew us more and more our own vileness and unworthiness. It will give us frequent instances of the depravity of our natures, of our backwardness to all good, and readiness to all evil; of the blindness of our understandings, the perverseness of our wills, the coldness of our appetites and affections towards all good, and our continual thirsting after forbidden things. It will every day convince us of our folly
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in pursuing shadows, and letting go the substance; of busying ourselves about trifles, and neglecting the most weighty matters. In a word, we shall, upon examination, find ourselves to be every day guilty of so much vanity and folly, so much trifling and impertinence, so much baseness and ingratitude, so much passion and peevishness, so much impudence and prophaneness, so much sin and wickedness, that we shall have very great reason to humble ourselves even unto the ground, and to look upon ourselves, as the most vile and despicable creatures in the whole world. For if a daily sight of our weakness and imperfections, our errors and mistakes, our carelessness and impudence, will not shame us into a low opinion of ourselves, I know not what will. We need only look into ourselves to find arguments for humility, and, God knows, we afford ourselves too many. There is scarce a thought in our minds, or a word in our mouths, much less any action, which is not full of folly and wickedness; so that we may every one of us justly say, with holy *Job*, *I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

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Secondly, A daily examination of ourselves will, in all probability, keep us from accustoming our selves to any evil course. When a man takes no notice of his actions, but lives without consideration, he is like an ill husband who never keeps any accompts, and therefore will be very likely to run into extravagance. But when a man, like a prudent and good husband, keeps his accompts exact and clear, and has them always in his eye, it is hardly to be thought he will undo himself by living knowingly and wilfully in such a way as will certainly ruin him. We shall by our daily examination find out our faults, when they are young, and easy to be conquered; before they have got the mastery over us, and have made us their slaves. And sure we shall not meet with any difficulty in resisting a temptation, or leaving a sin, which is but a day old, and consequently cannot have made any very strong engagement with our inclinations and affections. But however, if we do not always leave a sin upon our first discovery of it; yet I think it will be, morally speaking, impossible to habituate our selves to it; and persist long in the practice of it, when every
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every night that comes over our heads, we shall calmly and deliberately judge it to be a sin, and consequently dangerous to be persisted in. Few men, that will take the pains, thus frequently to examine themselves, can be supposed to have arrived to such a pitch of wickedness as this is. For their very examination of themselves, is an owning their sense of religion, and the obligations they lay under to it. This advantage we may therefore justly expect from a constant performance of this duty ; that it will make us walk so warily, that no temptation shall be able to prevail upon us so often as to make us its constant slaves and vassals ; but if we have the misfortune once or twice to be drawn aside by it, yet our daily examination will so frequently condemn us for it and make us so uneasy under it, that it is very reasonably to be hoped we shall, without any great difficulty, forsake it, before it gets the dominion over us.

Thirdly and Lastly, This will afford us joy unspeakable. For by this frequent examination of our selves, we shall easily know, whether we are indeed the children of God, and heirs of the kingdom

dom of heaven or no? And if our consciences will testify for us, *That in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;* then may we indeed rejoice, with a reasonable and well grounded joy. To these we must appeal; and if, upon an exact and impartial scrutiny, these acquit us, then are we indeed acquitted. Here alone can we find a foundation for such true and inexpressible joy and satisfaction, as nothing else in the world can afford us. This was St. *Paul's* triumph, *That he had a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.* And, if our consciences will give us the same testimony, we shall be partakers of the same triumphant joy.

But perhaps you will say, that you dare not examine your self, for fear you should not obtain this testimony from your conscience. You know that your conscience is true, and will accuse as well as excuse you; and therefore you dare not question it, lest it should give you such answers, as you are very unwilling to hear.

If this be your case, it is indeed very pitiable, and you have great reason to be concerned,

concerned, when you think on it; but this still makes the practice of this duty more necessary than before. He, who is sick, has more need to examine into the state of his body, than he who is in good health. And he, who is oppressed at conscience, with a heavy burthen of sins, has more need to search into it, than he who feels little or no burthen at all there. The first step towards amendment is the discovery of our fault; for this lays the cause of our distemper before us, and thereby gives us all the opportunity of easing ourselves that we can desire. He therefore, that would heal a wounded conscience, must first enquire what it was that gave his conscience this wound; and, having found that out, he may easily apply such medicines as in due time will work its cure.

Say not therefore with thy self, O sinner, that thou knowest thy conscience will condemn thee, and therefore thou wilt not ask its verdict. This is a sure way to eternal ruin. But resolve thus with thy self: I confess, O Lord, that my soul is at present in a very bad condition, de-

laden with grief and anguish. What shall I do then? shall I be afraid to look into it? Alas! then I shall grow continually worse and worse, and become every day ten-fold more the child of Satan, than I was the day before. No, I am resolved what I will do; I will dive into the very bottom of my soul, and make a strict search for those sins, which make me afraid of my self. I will never leave searching till I have found them all out, and when I have found them, I will tear them out by force from my soul, and never more suffer them to enter in. Then, and not till then, shall I enjoy a quiet and sedate spirit, and partake of *that peace of God which passeth all understanding.*

But surely, the pleasure that a pious soul must have in looking over its accompts, is beyond all expression. How does the merchant rejoice, when, upon examination of his books, he finds all his affairs to prosper and succeed, even according to his heart's desire? And, if this be matter of such joy to us, what an unspeakable transport shall we be in, when upon examination of our spiritual accompts, we shall find that we have behaved our selves so
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as becometh the *heirs of promise*. When our consciences shall give us this testimony, that we have *walked worthy of our vocation*, and shall receive for our reward *an eternal inheritance in the heavens*. Blessed God! how infinitely great will the joy of that soul be, which, after a strict and impartial search into it self, can safely apply those words of our Saviour to it self, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*. This is indeed to anticipate and fore-taste the joys of heaven; it is to make a heaven upon earth, and truly and properly to have our conversation in heaven whilst we are here. But I need say no more to this purpose. The pleasure and satisfaction that every good man has felt in the performance of this duty, [will more powerfully engage him to the constant practice of it, than any thing, which I can say. And the advantage which all bad men have found by a serious and constant exercise of it, is invitation enough to any sinner to set about it.



C H A P. IV.

Of Confession of Sins.

AFTER you have carefully examined your self, and have found what sins you have committed, and what duties omitted; your next business must be, to make an acknowledgment both of your sins of commission and omission to God.

To confess your sins, is not barely to own to God that you have sinned, and to tell him what sins you have been guilty of; for alas! He who knoweth all things, has no need of this: but it is to acknowledge your sins, with a most hearty shame and sorrow for them, and a firm resolution to amend them. He, who makes these the companions of his verbal confession, does truly and properly confess his sins; but he, who satisfieth himself with a formal telling of God that he has been guilty of such and such sins, and thinks that

that the bare mentioning of them is sufficient, offers to God the *sacrifice of fools*, and sadly deceives his own soul. To own that you have sinned, is to own that you have been a base and ungrateful rebel against God, and that you have done that, which if you do not repent of it, will sink you into eternal misery. And can you do this heartily and sincerely, without taking shame to your self, without being grieved at your folly that has brought you into this dangerous condition, and without resolving immediately to get out of it? No certainly, it is in vain for any man to say, that he doth truly confess his sins, unless he is thus affected with the sense of them. He may indeed own them outwardly with his lips, but this is not that confession which God requires of us. This outward confession must be accompanied with the inward confession of the soul; and if this be such as it ought to be, it will shew it self by producing in us a most humble shame, and hearty sorrow for our sins, and a steadfast resolution of leaving them.

First, I say, if our confession be such as it ought to be, *i. e.* if it proceeds from the bottom of our souls, it will most certainly

tainly make us ashamed of what we have done. Sin is a breach of the law of God, whom we are bound upon many accounts to obey, and he is our Creator and Preserver, the just and wise Governor of the world, and our continual Friend and Benefactor. And therefore to acknowledge that we have sinned, is to acknowledge that we have been perfidious and unfaithful, base and ungrateful wretches; and is it possible for us to think seriously that we are so, without being ashamed and confounded at it? Is it possible for us sincerely to confess this, and yet to take no shame to ourselves? No surely, it is not. It is mere dissembling with God, to tell him, that we are sensible how vilely and foolishly we have affronted him, and yet at the same time, not so much as to blush at what we say. This plainly discovers that our hearts go not along with our lips, and that we say things which we do not know the meaning of. For to be thoroughly convinced that we have done those things which we ought to be very much ashamed of, and yet not to be ashamed, is a thing inconsistent. Shame naturally ariseth from a sense of our having done what was not becoming;

coming; and therefore where this is wanting, it is justly to be feared a due sense of our faults is wanting too. Holy *Ezra*, in his confession of sins, begins thus, *I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our heads, and our trespass is grown up to the heavens.* And thus doth *Jeremiah* represent the *Israelites*, confessing their sins; *We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.* And thus doth pious *Daniel*, in his confession of sins, acknowledge his own and the people's shame; *O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.* And thus also must we be affected, when we make a confession of our sins to God; *Our confusion must be continually before us, and the shame of our faces must cover us.* We must feel the reproaches of that baseness and dissingenuity, which we own our selves to be guilty

ty of, within us; or else we do not heartily and sincerely acknowledge them.

Secondly, Our confession must be accompanied with a sorrow for our sins. If we are truly sensible of the great danger we have brought our selves into by sinning, we cannot help being concern'd at it. Grief is nothing else but a discomposure and uneasiness of mind, occasioned by our feeling that which at present is, looking back upon that which has been, or forward upon that which will most certainly prove hurtful to us. And therefore it is nonsense to say, that we do heartily acknowledge before God, that we are sensible of that great danger which our sins have brought us into, and yet at the same time to be easy and unconcerned under this sense of danger. Nay, it is blasphemy to own that we are in a state of damnation, which every sinner is, who has not repented of his sins, and yet to shew no sorrow or concern for this our truly deplorable condition. Hardiness, under such circumstances as these, proceeds from want of sense; and therefore to acknowledge that we have sinned and not to be sorry for it, is to shew that we know not what sinning

ning means. This is a poor heartless confession, which will never reach up to heaven; thither our confession of our sins and our sorrow for them must go together. These are inseparable companions, and it is in vain to think of offering up the first to God without the latter. *I will declare mine iniquity*, saith holy *David*, *I will be sorry for my sins*: And in another place, when he is confessing his sins, *my sorrow*, saith he, *is continually before me*. And so must ours be too, or else our confession will be to no purpose.

Thirdly, It must be accompanied with a steady resolution of leaving our sins, and performing our duty better for the future. For when we own that we have sinned, we own that we have done that which is wrong, and consequently ought to be amended; and that which will eternally damn us, if it be not repented of. So that, if we are truly sensible of what we say, when we confess our sins, as we must be if we hope to be accepted by God, we shall feel in our selves a firm resolution of *amending our ways*, and turning unto *the Lord*. If we do not, our confession is not sincere; for it is impossible for us seriously

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ly to own that we are in such a condition, that, if we do not repent we shall certainly be damned, and yet not to think of repenting.

By these marks may you know whether your confession is such, as it ought to be. If you are truly ashamed, and heartily sorry for the sins which you confess; if you firmly resolve to leave them, and to become better; then is your confession sincere, and such as God requires. If not, you only mock God, and deceive your self, by an outward confession of that, which you have no inward sense of.

This confession of our sins, must be twofold; general and particular.

In general, We must acknowledge that we are naturally inclined to do evil; that there is scarce a thought in our hearts which is good; that we are continually violating the commands of God; and that we have been guilty of very many sins which have escaped our notice. In a word, that our whole lives have been full of folly and wickedness; and that we have thought, said or done something almost every moment of them, which was displeasing to God.

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In particular, We must confess those sins, which upon examination we have found our selves to have been guilty of, of what sort or kind soever they may be. We must acknowledge them at length one by one; that so by a particular enumeration of them, our shame may be encreased, our sorrow enlarged, and our resolution of leaving our sins, quickened and strengthened.

But it is not enough barely thus to reckon up our sins, we must be sure to aggravate them also; that is, to shew that they have been done with such circumstances, as make them much worse than simply in their own nature they are. Thus, for instance, we must own, not only that we have sinned, but that we have sinned against the clearest light possible, against the most powerful checks and convictions of conscience, upon the slightest temptations, and the poorest inducements that could be offered us. Briefly we must recollect every thing that will serve to make us look still baser and baser in our own eyes, and to heighten the folly and guilt of our sins. If any man desires to receive more particular instructions about this matter, he may
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find them in *bishop Wilkins's excellent discourse concerning the gift of prayer.*

There is one thing more which we must observe in our confessions, and that is, to acknowledge the punishment which is due to our sins. To own that we have behaved our selves so, as to deserve the greatest severities from God, that he can inflict upon us, either in this world, or that which is to come. And the serious consideration of these things will very much conduce to the exciting such affections in us, as do become the duty of confession.

As for the frequency of our confession, it ought to be twice a day at least, *viz.* when we offer up our morning and evening sacrifice of prayer. It has been the custom of all holy men of old to usher in their prayers to God with a confession of their sins. This has been so constantly practised by all pious men, that confession is now looked upon as a part of prayer; though strictly and properly, as I told you before, it is not so. And this practice of theirs seems to me to have been founded upon extraordinary good reason. For they thought themselves unworthy
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to ask any thing of God, till they had humbled themselves before him in a sorrowful confession of their sins, and a firm resolution to leave them; and so certainly they were. And this reason has been always thought so good, that this custom of beginning our prayers with a confession of our sins has been continued down even to us; and accordingly our excellent church follows this method in her publick service. Whensoever therefore we offer up our prayers to God in private, which we must do at least twice a day, as I shall hereafter have occasion to shew you, we must let our confessions go before us to the throne of grace to make way for our Prayers.

The posture which will best become us, in the performance of this duty, is kneeling; this being reckoned the most humble posture amongst us, and consequently most fit for this humble office. Moreover, this was the posture which the holy men and prophets of old used in the confession of their sins. Thus do we read of *Ezra*, ch. ix. ver. 5. *That he fell upon his knees, and spread out his hands unto the Lord his God, and said,*

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O my God, &c. And thus did holy *Daniel*, as we may read, *ch. vi. ver. 11.* So that if we think that the prophets of God himself are worthy our imitation, this is the posture which will most become us. Let us therefore, as our church exhorts, draw near to God, and make our humble confessions to him, meekly kneeling on our knees.

I shall not here set down any form of confession; but I will direct you to two extraordinary good ones, which are composed according to the abovementioned rules. These you will find ready for your use at the latter end of *The whole duty of Man*, and these I would advise you constantly to keep to.

I will not trouble you with a particular enumeration of all those benefits and advantages, which we shall receive from a constant performance of this duty. There is one so transcendently great, and so much beyond all the rest, that I think I should disparage your judgments, if I should offer any other to your consideration. And this is the promise which is made us. *1 John i. 9. That if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,*

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delight in us to do us good, and to be merciful to us in the free pardon and remission of our sins. Behold, Lord! We come, we come, all covered with shame and confusion, and inwardly possessed with a true hatred of our sins. *Receive us, O gracious Father, receive us into the arms of thy mercy; put away our sins far from us, and blot us not out of the book of life.* Then shall we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and shall feel the efficacy of a sincere and holy confession.





C H A P. V.

O f P R A Y E R.



OUR confessions must be immediately followed by our prayers, which we may now offer with some sort of *boldness* at the *throne of grace*, having in some measure appeased our God, who before was angry with us for our sins, by a sincere and sorrowful confession of them. And, because it is impossible for us to perform our duties as we ought, before we thoroughly understand them, I think it will be necessary for us, in order to our understanding and discharging this duty aright, briefly to enquire into these following particulars.

1. What prayer is.
2. What we are to pray for. *First*, in general: *Secondly*, more particularly in our closets.
3. With what dispositions of mind our prayers must be offered up to God.

4. In whose name our prayers must be offered up.

5. Whether it be most advisable to use a set form of prayer in our closets, or to pray *extempore*, or, as some are pleased to call it, by the spirit.

6. How often we must perform this duty in our closets.

7. And *lastly*, What posture will best become us, while we are offering up our prayers.

1. *Prayer*, according to the common notion and acceptation of the word, is a making suits or requests to any person, and upon any account whatsoever. To request or sue for a thing, is to ask it in a meek and humble manner, to entreat and beg for it, and not to demand it. It is to ask for a thing in such a modest way, as if the thing, which we ask for, were not our right and due, but were to come from the free bounty and mere goodness of him, to whom we make our requests. In a word, it is to ask in such a manner, as may evidently shew our inability to help our selves, and our entire dependence upon him, to whom we address our selves, for that thing which we ask of him.

Prayer

Prayer then, considered at large, is nothing else but an humble, modest, and respectful way of asking, a begging or intreating any thing of any person whatsoever.

But, considered as it is a religious duty, it is only an offering up of requests to God, and therefore may very properly be said, in *St. Paul's* words, *Phil. iv. 6.* to be *a making known our requests unto God.* To him, and him alone must we pray, if we expect our prayers should be looked upon as truly religious prayers. For he allows no body to share with him in his worship; but, as our Saviour tells us, *We must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve.* In all our necessities we are strictly commanded to have recourse to him, and no other. *Call upon the Lord,* and *call upon the Lord your God,* is the common language of scripture, but we are no where allowed, much less commanded, to pay this part of religious worship to any other. So that to pray, in a religious sense, is to put our requests to God, and God alone.

2. Having stated the notion of prayer, it will be needful in the next place, to

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inform you what you are to pray for, and, in order to this, it will be convenient briefly to consider the several parts of prayer distinctly, which are these three.

First, Petition, or a begging [of] blessings and mercies for our selves, both spiritual and temporal.

The spiritual blessings which we must pray for, are these, forgiveness of sins, a true and stedfast faith in Christ, and grace to amend our lives, and to improve in all virtue and holiness, and to persevere in them to our lives end.

The temporal blessings, which we must ask for, are all the necessaries and conveniencies of this present life. By conveniencies, I do not mean what every man fancieth to be convenient, but what really is so, what is so necessary to our well-being here, that without it we must be in some degree miserable. Of this nature are, health, friends, reputation, abilities suitable to our several callings, liberty, peace, food, raiment, &c. But we must not pray for any of the luxuries or superfluities of life, such as a great estate, vast power and authority, mighty honour and respect, &c. These, if God pleaseth to bestow them on
us,

us, we must thankfully receive, but we must not presume to ask for them. Our Saviour alloweth us only to ask for our *daily bread*, i. e. for all things necessary for our comfortable support and sustenance in this present life.

Secondly, A second part of prayer is *intercession*, or a begging blessings and mercies for other men. We must pray for all men, not only our governors, parents, friends, relations and benefactors (though these indeed we must pray for in a more especial manner) but also for our very enemies; for thus has our Lord commanded us to pray for those *that despightfully use us*. *Matt. v. 24.* And the blessings which we ask for these, must be likewise spiritual and temporal.

1. Spiritual, if they are *Turks, Jews, Infidels, or Hereticks*, we must beg of God to forgive their errors, and to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, to enlighten such of them as are in darkness, and to convert such as are in sin. If true christians, we must beseech God to pardon their sins, to give them grace to repent of them, and to amend their lives, to do their duties diligently in their several

veral callings, and to hold fast their most holy faith.

2. Temporal, the very same temporal blessings, which we ask'd for our selves, must we ask for them also. Our Saviour does not bid us, when we pray, to say, *Give me my daily bread, but give us our daily bread*, whereby he plainly shews us, that we must ask the same temporal blessings for all other men that we do for ourselves; he himself having put us all together in one petition.

Thirdly, The last part of prayer is *deprecation*, or a beseeching of God to divert evils both from our selves and other men. Thus our Saviour bids us pray, in his most admirable form of prayer, *Deliver us from evil*. By evil is meant principally sin, which is indeed the only true evil of man; and in the next place, all those torments, pains, troubles, disquietudes, vexations and uneasinesses, which sin was the first cause of. So that to pray to be delivered from evil, is to pray that God would keep us from being made slaves to sin, and from the punishment that is due to it, and also from all pains, crosses, troubles

troubles and afflictions in this world, which may in some sense be called evils.

This, in general, must be the subject matter of all our prayers, in our churches, our families, and our closets. We must not at any set time of prayer, ask less than this, either for our selves or other men. If we do, our prayers will be lame and imperfect, and unfit to be offered to that God, who requires a perfect sacrifice at our hands.

But in our closets we must not content our selves with such a general performance of this duty; we have there an opportunity of being more particular in our prayers, than in publick we could possibly be; and therefore we must not think to put God off with general requests, but we must nicely enquire into our own and other mens particular wants, and put up particular prayers for a supply of them.

Thus, for instance, we must not think it enough to beseech God in general to forgive our sins; but we must reckon up our particular transgressions, and consider which are our most common and most heinous sins, and then in an especial manner beg pardon for them. We must not
satisfy

satisfy our selves with asking God in general to give us his grace ; but we must reflect upon ourselves and see what particular graces we want most ; whether faith, love, hope, humility, zeal, sincerity, or the like ; and having found out which of all these we stand in greatest need of, we must particularly address our prayers to God for it. In what particular point soever we find our souls weak, there especially must we beg of God to supply our strength.

The same may be said as to our temporal concerns. If we are well in all respects, and have no particular want, then a general prayer to God to continue us in our condition may be sufficient ; but if we are oppressed with sickness, forsaken by, or bereav'd of our friends, abused in our reputations, weak in our abilities, deprived of our liberty, perplexed by ill men, or destitute of the conveniencies of life. If we are under any of these, or such like particular pressures, it will become us in a particular manner, to beg of God to administer proper relief to us, and to ease us especially from that particular burthen, with which we are oppressed.

And

And the same method must we follow in our intercessions for others; if any of our governors, parents, friends, relations, benefactors, nay, or our very enemies, have been drawn into any notorious sin, or manifestly stand in need of any spiritual grace or good, it will be our duty to beseech God, in a particular manner, to pardon the former, and bestow upon them the latter.

Again, if we know any of them to be in sickness, need, trouble, or any other adversity, we must be sure to make particular mention of them in our private prayers, and to beg of God, that he would supply their particular wants.

Thus likewise in our deprecations, if any evil seems to be very near any of us, and plainly threatens us, we must particularly pray against it, in a more especial manner than we do against any other evil.

And the reason why we should be thus particular in our private prayers is very plain, *viz.* Because God has no where promised us to give us any thing, but what we ask for. He has been pleased to make asking the condition of receiving,
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and making our wants known, the condition of having them supply'd ; not that he needs to be told what we want ; for this he knows much better than we can tell him ; but asking is a sort of homage which he requires of us his creatures, and without it we have no reason to expect any thing we stand in need of. When therefore we have time and opportunity to lay open our particular wants before our heavenly Father, as we have in our closets, he will most undoubtedly expect it from us ; and if we omit the doing of it, I see no reason why we should hope to receive from God any relief or supplies suitable to our particular needs. Our church it self, even in her publick prayers, takes a great deal of care to be as particular as possibly she can ; and though she cannot possibly mention every particular man's wants by themselves ; yet in several cases she has ordered that a particular mention should be made of them. And surely, if the church endeavours so much to be particular in her publick prayers, we, who have all opportunities of being more particular in our private prayers, should not neglect being so. *David*, in several places,

ces, makes particular mention of his most heinous sins, and begs particular pardon for them. Thus in the 51st *Psalms* he beseeches God at large to pardon his sins of murder and adultery; and in the same *Psalms* particularly prays for some spiritual blessings, which he then stood in greatest need of, such as purity of heart, and inward joy and comfort. And thus St. *Paul* tells *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* i. 3. That he always made particular remembrance of him in his prayers; and thus likewise in another place he assures *Philemon*, That he always made mention of him in his prayers, as he tells us he did also of the *Romans*, the *Ephesians*, and the *Thessalonians*. Thus did holy *Abraham* in private intreat God to divert those judgments which he had threatened the *Sodomites* withal, *Gen.* xviii. 22. And thus did *Moses* particularly pray against all those judgments which were just ready to descend upon the children of *Israel*, because they had turned aside out of the way which God commanded them, and had made them a molten calf, as you may read, *Exod.* xxxii. 11. Nay, thus did our blessed Saviour himself, when he was praying in private, and had
some

some foretaste of those grievous sufferings which he was just about to undergo: Thus, I say, did he beseech God in a particular manner, that, *if it were possible, that cup might pass from him.* Thus you see, these holy men did not think it enough, to offer up general prayers to God, but having opportunity to be particular in their requests, they were so. For themselves they especially begged such blessings, as they stood in greatest need of. Of others they made particular mention in their prayers; and they were careful particularly to pray against those evils which more immediately threatened themselves or others. Let us not then satisfy our selves with asking blessings of God in general only; but let us lay open our particular cases before him, which unless we do when we have opportunity, I cannot promise that God will take notice of them. And thus much shall suffice to shew what we are particularly to pray for in our closets. I come now,

Thirdly, To shew with what dispositions of mind our prayers must be offered up to God, and they are these following.

First,

First, Humility; This the very notion of prayer includes in it; for prayer, as I told you before, is nothing else but an humble way of asking. He that asks for any thing without humility, cannot properly be said to pray for it, not to beg it as a favour, but to challenge it as a debt. But this way of asking will very ill become us, who are needy and dependent creatures, always in want, and always unable to supply our wants: Us, who are poor helpless creatures, sustained by the free bounty and mercy of God, and incapable of obtaining any thing, but what his goodness pleaseth to bestow upon us. If we expect that our prayers should be heard, we must offer them up with an humble heart, deeply sensible of its own poverty, and fully convinced of its own inability to gratify its desires, even in the least thing which they thirst after. If we come to God, with such a deep and humble sense of our poor and mean condition, then will our prayers be acceptable unto him, then he himself has assured us, that *he will look down from heaven and hear us. For he forgetteth not the cry of the humble, but hears their desire.* But if

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we are puffed up in our proud hearts, and think that we have little or no need of God, it will be best for us then to forbear offering up any prayers to him, for they will be an *abomination unto him; for he respecteth not the proud, but will scatter them in the imagination of their hearts.*

Secondly, Attention; prayer is the business of the soul, and he who reads the words of a prayer, and lets not his heart go along with his words, can be no more properly said to pray, than he who is reading a play or a romance: And yet, alas! we have too much reason to fear, that this is all the praying that many people make. It is, God knows, too common a fault, to satisfy our selves with a *calling upon God with our lips*, though *our hearts are never so far from him*, and to think we have performed our duty, when we have said our prayers, whether we regard one word we said or no. But this is all a sad cheat upon our selves, and if we take not timely care to correct our mistake, we shall, when it is too late, find how miserably we have deceived our selves. The heart is the spring from whence proceed

ceed all our desires and petitions; our words are only outward expressions of our hearts; and though to men, who can guess at our thoughts only by what we say, they may make known our requests; yet to God they signify nothing, unless they are the inward language of the soul, as well as the outward language of the lips.

Thirdly, We must pray with a sincere design to make a right use of those blessings which we pray for. If we ask for spiritual blessings, only to make a shew and boasting of them, to feed our own vain-glory and pride; and not to make use of them, as they were intended by God, for the promotion of his honour, and the salvation of our souls, we must not expect to obtain them. Or, if we ask for temporal blessings, with a design to serve some ill end by them, we must not think it hard if God does not think fit to answer our prayers. *Ye ask and receive not, saith St. James, because ye ask amiss; that ye may consume it upon your lusts.* God knows and regards the intention of the asker; and therefore we must take care, that our designs in asking may be always such, as will be well pleasing in his sight.

If not, we shall ask amiss, and shall not receive.

Fourthly, We must pray with faith, not doubting in the least but that God can and will answer our requests, if he thinks fit. St. James tells us, *ch. i. ver. 6.* That we must *ask in faith, nothing wavering.* He who asks without faith, prays without a right sense of God upon his mind, and therefore cannot in reason hope to have his prayers heard. Faith is the foundation of prayer, because we believe that there is a God who can, and will help us; therefore we pray unto him; but unless we are possessed with such a faith as this, there is no reason why we should pray. To the prayer of faith, God has made a promise, that it shall be effectual, *The prayer of faith shall save the sick.* But he who prayeth without faith, calls either God's power or veracity in question, and is not like to receive any benefit from his prayers.

Fifthly, We must pray with fervency. A cold lukewarm prayer is just next to none at all; next to our not desiring a thing, is our being indifferent whether we obtain it or no; and therefore if we shew
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any coldness or indifference in our prayers to God, he will be as cold and indifferent as we. He has been graciously pleased to promise that *fervent prayer shall avail much*; but he hates those who are *neither cold nor hot in their prayers*: If we are thus *lukewarm*, he will *spue us out of his mouth*, and be so far from giving us what we ask, that he will severely punish us for this manner of asking.

Sixthly and lastly, We must ask with an entire resignation to God's will, firmly resolved that we will be contented and well-pleased, if he should not think fit to grant our requests. Thus prayed the blessed Jesus, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt*; and thus also must we pray, we may ask for any of those blessings which I have before directed you to pray for; but still with submission to the divine will. If God in his infinite wisdom think fit to bestow them upon us, we must most gladly receive them; but if he judgeth it best for us to be without them, we must be contented to be so. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, must be the conclusion of all our prayers.

prayers. God knows infinitely better than we our selves, what is good for us; and therefore to his wise providence we may safely, nay, we are bound in all reason to commit our selves.

These are those holy dispositions of mind, which God requires in all those who ask any thing of him. I should have added to these a firm resolution of mind to leave our sins, and become better; for without this all our prayers will be ineffectual. But this I told you before, you must be sure to put on in the confession of your sins, before you presume to ask any thing of God, and therefore I think it needless to say more of it here. Let us then proceed to consider,

Fourthly, In whose name all our prayers must be offered up. We, of our selves, are such vile and base wretches, *That we are not worthy so much as to lift up our eyes towards heaven.* For we know, as St. John saith, *ch. ix. ver. 31.* that *God heareth not sinners*; and therefore, we considered in our selves, are utterly unfit to pray to him: *But the Lamb of God, which hath taken away the sins of the world,* hath made way for us to the
throne

throne of grace; he hath purged us from those sins, which before were as a thick mist between us and heaven; and by his most precious blood hath purchased and redeemed our forfeited privilege of calling upon God. In his name therefore must all our suits and requests be put up; and in his name, and for his sake they shall be accepted. This he himself assures us, *John xiv. 12, 14. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. If ye ask any thing in my name I will do it.* And again, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* When therefore thou hast any request to offer up to God, be sure to remember that of thy self thou art unworthy to offer it up, and therefore let it be put up in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, for the alone sake of whose unworthiness God will vouchsafe to hear our petitions.

Fifthly, I now come to that question, whether it be not adviseable to use extemporary prayers, or a set form, in the closet. And here I cannot forbear owning that, as I am an utter enemy to extemporary prayer in publick, so I am also in private. For although we cannot urge all

those arguments against it in private, which forbid it in publick ; yet I think there is enough to be said against the use of it, even here, to persuade every reasonable man to forbear it. As,

First, Let us consider how few men there are in the world, that are able to frame a regular and compleat prayer, even when they studiously and deliberately set about it. And how then can we expect that we should be able to do that without study or deliberation, and in a moment, which we cannot do even when we apply our selves with care and diligence to it? How lame and imperfect must the sudden prayers of those men be, whose most mature and well digested thoughts can produce nothing that is worthy the sacred name of prayer, nothing which they themselves can think fit to offer up to God?

Secondly, How few are there, even of those men, who with study and deliberation are able to compose a compleat prayer, that can do it suddenly, and in an instant, without any previous thought or meditation. It would perhaps puzzle the most ready man we have, to make such a prayer on a sudden, as should not be deficient

deficient in any part of it. Or, supposing we could find some men that are able to do this; yet sure they will not pretend that they can compose a prayer, as good in every respect on the sudden, as they can when they have time for thinking allowed them. To make a general prayer, which shall answer all our wants and occasions, and shall place every thing in that just method, which its order requires, must be a work of time and thought.

Since then there are some men who are in no wise able to make a prayer; and since those who are able, yet cannot do it on a sudden, at least cannot do it so well, as when they take time, and set about it with thoughtfulness; we cannot but conclude, that it is necessary both for the one and the other to use a set form of prayer; in which they may ask of God all those things they stand in need of, in such a decent manner and orderly method, as will be most acceptable to him.

Add to this, that a set form of prayer is a great help to attention, whereas extemporary prayer perfectly perplexeth and distracteth the mind. How is it possible,
that

that men should ever attend to their prayers as they should do, when their minds are full of the thoughts of what they shall say next, and their chief care is to say something, though they do not well know what? When things, that ought to come first, shall be put last, and the last first, and all shall be in such a sad confusion, that we shall not know when we have said enough, or what it becometh us to say more. What a hurry, I say, must a man's mind be in, in this case, and how uncapable will he be of praying with that attention which God expects from us. Besides, every now and then, it is probable the world will step in and interrupt his thoughts, while they are in this wild and loose condition. But now a set form of prayer prevents all this. We need not here trouble our selves about what we shall say next, for we know aforehand, that all things necessary are here set down in a most decent and fitting order. We have no other business than to fix our minds upon what is ready prepared for us, and how much easier this is than to invent always new prayers of our own, and to offer them up with due attention, I leave to any

any man's judgment to determine, who has ever tried both ways.

But here I am sensible I shall meet with two objections against a form of prayer, which I think it will be no hard matter to answer.

First, Some men are against a Form of prayer, because they say it is a stinting of the spirit. They confess indeed, that of themselves, they are unable to frame any prayer that is fit to be presented to God; but they think they have the Spirit of God, and that, they are sure, speaks the language of heaven. Set forms therefore may lie still as useless; for the spirit has no occasion for them. They know no reason, now they are by themselves, why they should be kept up to a form, but the spirit they think may have free utterance.

It is very much to be feared that many of those men who talk of the Spirit at this rate, do not well understand what the spirit means. They have got a canting way of talk from some conceited men, and, like magpies, they chatter it by roat, but know not what they say. Had God Almighty been pleased to promise us, as he

did the apostles, that the *Holy Ghost should teach us what we should say*, when we entered into our closets, I should be as much against forms of prayer of our own making, as I am now for them. But alas! we have no where any such promise. The ordinary assistance of God's Spirit we shall never want, if we heartily seek it, and use it well when we have it. But I know no reason we have to expect such an extraordinary measure of the Spirit, as the apostles had, without which we must not pretend to this gift of extemporary prayer. I am very sure did these men but examine their own sudden and unpremeditated prayers, they would very often find them to be such miserable stuff, that they would not dare to be so prophane, as to think them the language of the Holy Spirit.

A second objection comes from those men who are against a set form of prayer; because there is no variety in it, they are unwilling to be so streightly tied up, and would fain have the liberty of changing often, that they may not be wearied out with the dull repetition of the same prayers continually.

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This is a very poor and weak objection, and is an argument rather of an humour-some and nice, than of a truly devout and religious spirit. However, I shall endeavour to satisfy these men as far as I can. Let such therefore know, that there is no need they should be so closely confin'd to one form in their closets, as they must necessarily be in the church. There are several excellent books of private prayers which they may use, taking sometimes one and sometimes another, as they themselves shall think fit: and this I think is variety enough. I only desire to lay a restraint where our Lord himself has laid one, and to command men, as he did, that whenever they pray, they say his most excellent prayer, *Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.* There are a great many good set forms of private prayer of several authors; if men will keep to some of these, this is all I contend for, let them choose which of them they please, and change as often as they shall think fit. Only let them forbear this rambling and irreverent way of praying *extempore*, and I am satisfied. And since there are already so many excellent prayers for private use,
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I hope I shall be pardon'd if I omit the inserting of any of my own here. But if you will give me leave to recommend such as I most approve, I shall persuade you to use those at the end of the *Whole Duty of Man*, and those of the right reverend Dr. *Patrick* in his book of prayers.

Sixthly, As to the frequency of our prayers, it is very hard, nay impossible, to give any certain universal rule in this case, because mens circumstances in this world are very unlike, some being rich and masters of their own time, and so having a great deal of time to spare; others poor, and continually engaged in such necessary employments, as take up almost all their time. However, in general, I shall lay down these following rules, which will reach men of every state and condition.

1. That we should be as frequent in prayer as we can, that is, as our necessary worldly business, and the other duties of religion will permit us to be. In scripture we are commanded to *continue in prayer, to pray always, and not to faint, to pray without ceasing, &c.* Which texts, although they are not to be understood

stood in a literal sense; yet they certainly oblige us to a frequent performance of this duty. They at least enjoin us to spend that time, which now we often fling away idly, in the worship of God. And there is scarce any man, but those of the very lowest condition, for whom this book is not designed, who has not some idle time, some time which is spent even in doing nothing, or what is worse, doing ill. The least therefore we can do, is to devote this time to God's service. And if men would generally observe this rule, God would have a great deal more of their time, than he now has.

2. No man should ever pass a day without offering up his sacrifice of prayer twice to God, in the morning and in the evening. This at least our reason seems to require of us. In the morning our bodies, as it were, are created a-new, and stand in fresh need of God's sustaining hand, and therefore it now becomes us to address our selves to him, as our Saviour directs us, for our *daily bread*, that is, for such necessaries of life as he has made us stand in need of, by giving us a new day. At night we lie down in our beds, and know
not

not whether it may not be in our graves also. We are sure that we shall never awake more in this world, without God's permission; and that if we awake in the other without his favour, we shall be eternally miserable. Now then it surely behoves us to beg his gracious protection and merciful kindness, that so, whether we awake any more in this world, or sleep the sleep of death, we may be sure of his favour, and then we shall not fail of being happy.

Add to this, that none of the holy men we read of in scripture were less frequent in their private prayers than this. *Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice,* saith holy *David*. And of *Daniel* we read, *That he kneeled down in his chamber, and prayed three times a day*. And in imitation of them, it would very well become us, who have time to spare, to pray three times a day likewise; but we must be sure never to fail of offering up our private prayers, every morning and evening.

3. Besides these constant seasons of prayer, there are others which are purely accidental;

dental; as times of affliction, holy-days, fasts, &c. *Call upon the Lord in the time of trouble, saith David.* When any calamity or affliction oppresseth thee, then you need not stay for your set time of prayer, but run immediately to God for help, and beg his comfortable assistance. Holy-days and fasts are purposely design'd for the promotion of piety and devotion; and therefore on these days, besides our ordinary devotions, we must have some prayers which more immediately relate to the day, and we must spend more time in our prayers on such days, than we generally do on other days. There are days set apart more peculiarly for God's service, and, as such, must be observed by us in our closets.

If men are careful to observe these rules, we shall have no reason to complain that they do not perform this duty of prayer so frequently as they should do. If they bear a conscientious regard to the first rule, they cannot fail of praying often; and if they omit this, and mind only the two last, they will still pray much oftener than now they do.

Seventhly, The bodily posture always to be used in prayer, both private and publick, is kneeling. Of this there can be no dispute, because we have an expresse command of God for it. Thus *Psalms* xcvi. 6. *Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* And agreeable to this command was the practice of all holy men of old, nay, and our blessed Saviour himself, of whom we read, *Luke* xxii. 41. that when he had withdrawn himself from his disciples, and went to pray privately to his Father, *He kneeled down and prayed.* If then our Saviour's example be worthy our imitation, and God forbid any of us should be so prophane as to say it is not, kneeling is that posture of body which we must always use, when we offer up our most private prayers.

Thus have I briefly run over the several heads, which I at first propos'd to speak to. But I cannot conclude this chapter, without inviting you to a frequent performance of this duty, from a prospect of those many advantages which will flow from it. As,

1. If you pray according to all the rules before laid down, in all probability you will

will obtain what you pray for. I say, in all probability; because it may possibly sometimes happen, that God may deny you what you ask for, for some wise and good reason unknown to you, even when you do not ask amiss. But, generally speaking, you shall not be disappointed of your hope, but your prayers shall be answered. But if you never pray at all, or pray not in this manner which God has prescribed, you have no reason to expect even the most trifling thing you want. To them that ask thus, God has promised that they shall have; but He has nowhere promised to bestow any thing upon them who do not pray to him.

2. If your petitions are not answered, you will still have this to comfort you, that it is not for want of your performance of this duty. He that is in want, and never prays, as he should do, to have his wants supply'd, may thank himself for them: but the good man, who performs this duty conscientiously, whether his prayers are answered or no, has this to satisfy his mind with, that his misery does not proceed from his neglect of his duty, but that God in his wisdom thinks fit not

to give him what he asks for, and therefore he can quietly and contentedly bear his want.

3. Whether our prayers meet with their reward in this world or no, they will certainly not go unrewarded in the next. God has engaged his truth for this, and therefore we need not doubt of it. He has promised us, That if we thus *pray unto him in secret, he will reward us openly*. He will at the great day of retribution, however he may think fit to deal with us in this world, before the face of men and angels, and all that great assembly which shall be then present, shew us that he has heard our many pious prayers, by rewarding us for them with an eternity of happiness. Whatever disappointments therefore we may meet with, by not having our prayers answered in this world; yet still we will not be discouraged. We know, O Lord, that thou art faithful who hast promised; and therefore though thou dost not reward our prayers with temporal blessings, yet thou wilt give us that, if we ask as we ought to do, which we chiefly ask for, even eternal life and glory.



C H A P. VI.

Of *T H A N K S G I V I N G*.

WE must always close up our prayers with a thanksgiving to God. For so he himself commands, *That we should give thanks for all things, and with our prayers and supplications offer up our thanksgivings also. Phil. iv. 6.*

To give God thanks is to acknowledge, with a heart truly sensible of God's great goodness towards us, the many blessings and mercies which he hath from time to time conferred upon us, to own that infinite mercy and kindness which he continually manifests towards us, and to bless and praise his name for them. And tho' this is but a poor return for those many favours which we receive from God; yet he, out of his great love and condescension to us, has been graciously pleased to assure

us, that he will kindly accept it at our hands.

Our thanksgiving must be twofold, general and particular.

In general, we must thank God for all those blessings which we enjoy in common with other men; as our Creation after God's own image; the redemption of the world, by Christ; the offer of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to all such as earnestly desire, and heartily endeavour to obtain, the kingdom of God; the manifestation of God's will, and the promises of eternal life and glory to all those who embrace the gospel, and live according to it, our continual preservation, and all the temporal blessings which we enjoy in this life, and which others enjoy as well as we.

In particular, we must give God thanks for all those blessings which he has in a particular manner bestowed upon us, whether they be spiritual or temporal.

First, Spiritual: as that he has caused us to be born of christian parents, by whom we were brought up in the true religion, and so had not those prejudices to conquer, before we could come to the knowledge of the truth, which those poor souls have,
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who are ill principled at first; that he has many times, by his grace, kept us from yielding to the temptations of sin, and that when we have sinned, he has been so merciful as to afford us time to repent of our sins, and to make our peace with him. In a word, we must thank him for all those particular means of improving ourselves in virtue and goodness, which we have enjoyed beyond many other men; whether by being born of more virtuous parents, more religiously educated, living where we have had better examples set before us, receiving a larger measure of God's grace, or being better disposed, by our natural tempers of body, to virtue and religion, than many other men. For these and several such like blessings, which it is impossible to reckon up, must we offer up our particular thanks to God, who has so kindly bestowed them upon us.

Secondly, There are likewise many temporal blessings, which several of us enjoy, in a greater and more plentiful measure than many other of our fellow-creatures: As riches, honour, reputation, friends, liberty, peace, health, wit, beauty, or the like. Many of us have had a great num-

ber of particular deliverances from some eminent danger, all of us some. So that we shall all meet with frequent occasions of blessing and magnifying the name of God in a most particular manner, especially those of us, whom out of our own mere goodness and favour, he has placed in much better worldly circumstances, than many others of our brethren.

But we must never fail, every morning, to return our most hearty thanks and praise to God, for his care of us the night before; for the refreshing sleep which he gave us; his protection of us from all dangers, whether of fire, thieves, &c. but above all, for his permitting us once more to behold a new day, whereby we have some farther time for repentance graciously allowed us.

At night also you must be sure to call to mind all the mercies of the foregoing day. Consider with thy self what particular sins God has kept you from committing, and what good he has enabled you to do; what success you have had in your worldly affairs, and what especial deliverances of any sort you have met with
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that day. And for these mercies you must offer up your most particular thanks.

But it would be endless to reckon up all those mercies for which we are obliged to bless and praise God's holy name. *If I should count them, as holy David saith, they are more than the sands of the sea.* He who receives fewest mercies from God, has yet received enough to employ his whole life in praises to him. *Bless the Lord therefore, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles. Who executeth righteousness and judgment to all that are oppressed. Who is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Who dealeth not with us after our iniquities; but pitieth us, even as a father pitieth his children. Bless the Lord therefore, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.* This was the language of the holy *David,*
and

and this is that language which God expects from all that love and honour him.

Now it will mightily help to quicken our gratitude towards God, and to enspirit and enlarge it; if, before we offer up our thanks, we use our selves always seriously to reflect upon God, who is the author and fountain of all mercies; and upon our selves, who are the unworthy receivers of them.

First, Let us consider that he who bestoweth these blessings upon us, is no less a person than the great, eternal, ever-blessed God. So that if the greatness of the person who gives, increaseth the value of the gift, as it most certainly does; then those gifts which come from God must be infinitely more valuable than any other, and consequently deserve our loudest thanks and praise. That the great and high God should condescend so far as to take any notice of us, is such an exceeding great mercy as we can never be thankful enough for. Upon this consideration *David* breaks forth, in the 113th *Psalms*, into these expressions of praise. *Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth, and for evermore. From the rising of the sun un-*

to the going down of the same, the Lord's name be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth. He raiseth up the poor, and lifteth up the needy out of the dunghil. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. David thought it such an instance of kindness and condescension in the great and mighty God, to look down upon this lower world, that he thought he could never praise him enough for it.

Besides, as God is infinitely above us; so also is he quite out of a capacity of receiving any advantage from us. He neither stands in need of, nor hopes for, any returns of kindness from us; but out of his own free bounty and goodness makes his sun to shine upon us. Men very often are kind to us more for their own sakes than ours, designing, by some small favours to us, to purchase a greater from us to themselves; and therefore such favours

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as these do not much deserve our thanks. But God is utterly incapable of receiving any advantage from the favours which he bestoweth upon men. They all flow from pure love and goodness, and are dispensed with no other design, but to make the whole creation happy. Oh! what infinite goodness is this, that the all-sufficient God, who can receive no benefit from any of his creatures, should be continually sending down blessings upon them, and labouring to make them happy. How shall we enough admire the *length* and *breadth*, and *height* and *depth* of that divine love-which eagerly strives, without any motive but its own goodness, to make us men partakers of eternal felicity? O my soul! how canst thou ever hope to be thankful enough for this unspeakable love? If thou shouldst spend all thy days in one act of praise and thanksgiving, it would all come short of what thou owest to thy God. Grudge him not then a small portion of thy time, but rejoice when thou hast an opportunity of offering up thy thanks to him, and greedily lay hold on it.

But *Secondly*, Our gratitude will still rise to a higher pitch, if we consider farther
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ther what we our selves are who receive these blessings from God. But oh! I tremble to say what wretches we are. We are sinners, base and vile sinners, rebels against God, despisers of his authority, transgressors of his commands, and careless of his honour, the most contemptible of all creatures, and most odious in the sight of God. And yet notwithstanding all this, he is graciously pleased to take care of us, and to preserve us by his mercy and goodness Blessed God! how infinite art thou in thy mercies, how kind even to those who most prophanely and impiously affront thee? *What is man, O Lord, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou so regardest him?* What indeed is he, but a base, treacherous and ungrateful creature? And yet thou usest him as if he were the most obedient, faithful, and best deserving creature in the world. Should an injur'd prince deal thus with his rebellious subjects, how would they admire his mercy, and praise his love? Oh! how shall we then be thankful enough for God's mercies to us, who have used him much worse than ever any subject did their prince, and yet continually receive greater blessings from

from him, than any earthly power can give. How should our mouths overflow with thanks and praise, when we consider that our kind and gracious God repays all our injuries with kindnesses, and all our affronts with blessings. If this will not melt down our hard hearts into thankfulness, I know not what will. If the considerations of God's infinite condescension and free goodness to us vile and miserable wretches, who are continually abusing and provoking him, will not kindle in men's hearts a lively sense of God's mercy towards them, and fill their mouths with praises and thanksgivings, I utterly despair of urging any thing else that will.

Were we sure then that no benefit would redound to us from our thanksgivings; yet it would be our unquestionable duty, frequently to offer them up to God. But we want not encouragements to the performance of this duty; for the benefits, that it will procure for us, will be very great. For,

First, This is the most acceptable sacrifice we can offer up to God, and therefore will be a likely means of procuring his favour. *Offer unto God thanksgiving,*
and

and pay thy vows unto the most high; for this is much better pleasing in his sight than the flesh of bulls, and the blood of goats. Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me, saith God. When we sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare God's work with rejoicing, then is our offering such as he delights in.

*Secondly, Thankfulness, for those blessings which we have already received, will go a great way in procuring for us those which we stand in need of, and pray for. When God sees that men have a right sense of his goodness, and gratefully acknowledge his kindness towards them, he will think his blessings well bestowed upon them, and be willing to continue them. But if he finds men insensible of his mercy, and unthankful for his benefits, it is very probable that he will withdraw *the light of his countenance* from them, and take no farther care of them. For he abhorreth ingratitude, and delights in the humble thankful soul. If therefore thou desirest to obtain what thou askest for, be thankful for what thou hast received; and so, when God shall see that his mercies are not lost and thrown away upon thee, he may be
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still encouraged to increase the number of them.

Thirdly, A constant performance of this duty of thanksgiving, will very much serve to confirm and enlarge our love to God. When we shall frequently, twice a day at least, call to mind the numerous instances of God's mercy and loving-kindness towards us, we shall soon find what St. *John* saith to be true, that *God is love*; and the more firmly we are persuaded of God's love to us, the more strong and vigorous will our love be to him. For we cannot help loving him, who, we stedfastly believe, has always loved us with love unspeakable, and always studied our true good and interest. Nature itself teaches us this lesson, that we should love those who love us; and therefore if we act agreeably to our natures, our love to God will most certainly flow from a true sense of his love to us. And this, a constant recollection of God's favours and benefits, and a hearty thanksgiving for them, will very strongly imprint upon our minds.

Fourthly and lastly, A frequent and regular performance of this duty, will be an excellent preparative for heaven. There
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many of our other duties will cease; reading will there be at an end, for we shall have no need of instruction, but shall be perfect in knowledge like God himself: There will be no need of self-examination; because, when we once come thither, we shall always keep in one right and constant way: nor will confession of sins be needful there, where there is no such thing as sin; but praise and thanksgiving will be the work of eternity. Our tongues shall never cease to tell of God's praise, and to shew forth all his loving-kindnesses with gladness. There shall be no end of his praise and our thanks, but they shall be our happy and delightful employment for ever and ever. So that, if we would train up our selves for heaven, we cannot take a better course, than frequently to accustom our selves to praise and thank God here on earth, and so to begin that noble work here which will be carried on by us hereafter, though in a much more perfect manner, to all eternity. *Praise the Lord therefore, O my soul,* and offer up continual sacrifices of thanksgiving to him here on earth, that thou may'st be well tuned and

fitted for that bless'd employment of the saints in heaven.

I have nothing more to add on this subject, but only to inform the pious reader, that he will meet with excellent forms of thanksgiving, in that most admirable book which I have directed him to for his prayers, *The Whole Duty of Man.*





C H A P. VII.

Of M E D I T A T I O N.

WH A T spare time you have left, after the performance of the foregoing duties, I would advise you to employ in religious meditation, that is, in thinking seriously upon something which may tend to your spiritual good and edification.

Thus, for instance, I would have you every morning consider with your self, how you are like to spend the following day; what company you shall be engaged in; what business employed about; what temptations to sin you shall most probably meet with, and what opportunities of doing good may be in all likelihood offered to you: and in a word, what evil you are most in danger of, and what good you are most likely to be capable of doing. And accordingly frame your designs for the regulation of your life for that

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day;

day; study with your self how you may best avoid those evils which are most likely to beset you, and embrace those opportunities of doing good, which in all probability will be offered to you. Fore-arm your mind against the assaults of the approaching evil, and prepare it with greediness to lay hold on the good.

After this, if your time will give you leave, it will be useful for you to reflect upon the portion of scripture that you have read that morning, to consider seriously with your self, whether you rightly understood what you read; and if you did, what you found in it that might serve either for instruction or reproof to you, what encouragements to virtue and dissuasive from vice; and in short, what that may be any way of advantage to you in relation to your spiritual concerns. Consider also, how you have performed your other duties that morning; and wherein soever you find your self to have been wanting, be sure to remember your failing, that so you may correct it the next time.

At night thou may'st call to mind the particular mercies of the day past, and make these the subject of thy meditation:
or

or else, thou may'st reflect upon the night it self, which, coming now upon thee as the shadow of death, will suggest to thee many useful thoughts. Now likewise I would advise thee, as in the morning, to reflect upon what thou hast read, and the duties thou hast been just performing.

At any other time of the day also, when thou art at leisure, I would advise thee to enter into thy closet, and employ thy self in this holy exercise. Fix thy thoughts steadfastly, at such a time, on some religious subject, especially upon such as will most immediately influence thy practice; such are *death, judgment, heaven and hell*, which if men seriously thought on oftner than they do, they would lead much better lives than they now do. And that no man may be to seek for matter on any of these useful subjects, I have taken care at the end of this chapter to subjoin some short meditations on each of them, which I am sure thou may'st use without any trouble, but I hope not without great advantage.

There are likewise many other subjects proper for thy meditation, such as the birth, passion, resurrection and ascension of our Saviour. When therefore any of

those days approach, which are purposefully set apart by the church to keep up in our minds a constant sense and remembrance of these great mercies of God towards us, I would advise thee to reflect seriously every day for a whole week before, upon that mercy which thou art suddenly to bless and praise God for in publick. And so likewise on any other holy-day or saints-day, I would have thee employ thy thoughts in meditations suitable to the design of the day, that so thou may'st be fitted for the duties of the day, and be well prepared for that holy exercise of prayer and praise, which thou art then to perform in the *great congregation*. And that you may not excuse your self, by saying that you are unable to gather your thoughts together and fix them on any of these subjects, I will save you this trouble, by telling you that you may find meditations ready framed for these purposes, in a book, called *Reformed Devotions*.

In a word, any religious subject is proper for thy meditation; but those most of all, which will with greatest strength and vehemency stir thee up, and provoke thee, to piety and virtue. If men employ their
thoughts

thoughts in holy meditations, only to entertain their minds with fine speculative notions of God and religion, they will be but little the better for them; but if they think in order to practise, and therefore chuse practical subjects to think upon, they will most certainly reap very great benefits from their constant meditations. For,

First, This will mightily tend to settle a firm sense of religion in our minds. When we shall every day spend some of our thoughts upon religious subjects, we may with reason hope that religion will never be quite out of our minds. Such an habitual entertainment of her in our thoughts, will make us familiarly acquainted with her, and tie us fast to her. It will make so deep an impression upon our minds, as will not with ease be rased out. Nay, farther,

Secondly, This will most certainly make us deeply in love with religion. The only reason, why men do not admire her, and value her as they ought, is, because they never sufficiently contemplate her beauties. Would we but often view her in a true light, we should find her charms

irresistible, and be proud of being admitted into her service.

Thirdly, An habitual practice of this duty will teach us to delight in our own company, and make us love to be alone. Men are very often forced to go into company purely for this reason, because they know not how to employ their time, when they are alone. But if they would set themselves constantly to serious thinking, and accustom themselves at least to daily meditation, they would soon learn how to spend their time alone, and be so far from being uneasy in their own company, that they would delight in it more than in any other. And how much this would retrench the wickedness of the age, I dare leave to any impartial judge to determine.

Fourthly and lastly, A constant performance of this duty would work in us a mean and poor opinion of the things of this world. While men employ all their thoughts upon this lower world, it is no wonder if they love nothing else; for while they know nothing better, they can love nothing more. But alas! if they
would

would suffer themselves to leave this world a little, and by the help of their thoughts to look forward to the other, they would soon see the difference between them, and blame themselves for not thinking sooner. They would look with scorn and contempt upon this lower world, which has nothing in it that can satisfy a reasonable nature, and for the future would learn to feast their souls with more agreeable banquets, with the delightful pleasures of religious meditations, which alone carry a grateful relish with them, and truly please and satisfy a reasonable mind.

You therefore that have tried the pleasures of religious meditation, I am sure can need no encouragement to be frequent in them. And as for you that have not tried, I only beg of you to taste, and then leave off if you can.

DEATH.

*D E A T H.**MEDITATION I.*

IS it appointed for all men once to die? **O** let me wisely consider this, and learn how to live. Let me remember, that the night is coming, wherein no man can work; and therefore let me do what I have to do to day, whilst it is called to day. Let me consider, amidst all my worldly enjoyments, that there will certainly come a time when I shall be taken from them, whether I will or no; and considering this, let me not cleave so fast to them as if I was never to leave them. Let me always be mindful, that I have here no abiding city, that I am a stranger and a pilgrim in this world, and that my Father's house is in another country; and therefore let me not so firmly set my affections upon the things of this world, as if they were to be my lot and my portion for ever; but let me use them only as conveniencies in my journey, and be ready to part with them, whenever it shall seem

seem good to my Father to call me home. Let me often consider, that this poor body of mine, upon which I spend now so much time and care, to trim and adorn it, shall one day become more noisom than the vilest carrion, that it shall be laid low in the earth, and become a prey to the worms; and then let me be proud of it if I can. Then shall all my beauty be turned into dust, and my bones into rottenness. But my soul shall still live, death has no power over that, it shall in spite of death survive the body, and live to all eternity. Blessed God! how foolish a creature then am I, who spend all my time in cultivating and adorning this fading and perishing body, and can afford none to my most precious and immortal soul? I am ashamed and confounded at the thoughts of this my great folly, and am resolved for the future what I will do. I will shew how truly sensible I am of the worth of my soul, by my care of it; and what a mean opinion I have of this short-liv'd body, by regarding it no farther than the good of my soul requires. And, if I do this, I shall not be afraid to meet death whenever it comes. Death has no sting, but what sin gives

gives it; if therefore I am careful to pluck out this sting, I need not be afraid of it. If I am careful in my life-time continually to watch my soul, and to keep it pure and undefiled from sin, then may I cry out with St. Paul, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* Then shall I smile, even in the agonies of death, and welcome the kind messenger that comes to invite me home. But if I disarm not death of this sting, I shall indeed have reason to fear him. It will be no wonder if I tremble at the sight of death, when it shall be to me the gate of hell, and an entrance out of this world into a place of endless and unspeakable torment. Be wise therefore, O my soul, betimes; remember that nothing but the thoughts of a well-spent life can free thee from the fear, and arm thee against the assaults of death, and resolve so to live that thou may'st not be afraid to die. Resolve to be righteous, and then thou shalt be so far from fearing death, that thou shalt have joy and hope in it.

MEDITATION II.

Is it most certain that I shall die, but uncertain when? May I be called hence, for any thing I know to the contrary, the next week, or the next day, nay, this very day, or this very moment, why then do I not live in constant expectation of death? Why do I flatter my self with the hopes of long life, because I am young, healthful, lusty and strong? Alas! vain man, does not every day's experience teach thee, that the young die as well as the old, the healthful as well as the sickly, the lusty and strong as well as the weak and decrepit? Why then dost thou deceive thy self by building upon a sandy foundation? Art thou able to say thou wilt be alive to morrow? Alas! poor soul, to morrow is out of thy power, and perhaps thou may'st never live to see it. thou may'st in thy fancy extend thy life as far as thou pleasest, thou may'st lay projects and designs for many weeks and months, nay, for many years to come; but notwithstanding this, thy Soul may be this night required of thee. Thou art
every

every moment of thy life in danger of death, and can't not tell but that every gasp of breath thou fetchest may be thy last. When to thy self and to thy friends thou seemest to be farthest from it, then perhaps art thou indeed nearest to it. What a madness then is it not to be always prepared for it? Were we sure of living any certain time, we might then with some colour of reason, defer our preparation for death, till we saw it draw near us. But it is downright madness for a man to say, he will prepare for death to morrow, when he knows not but it may come to day. Thou art afraid of missing any opportunity of improving thy worldly affairs, because thou art not sure that thou shalt ever meet with such another. Oh, why art thou not much more afraid of letting thy present opportunities of repentance and preparation for death slip by thee, when thou thy self confessest, that it is hazardous and uncertain, whether thou shalt live to enjoy the like again. How can't thou be so wise in the trifling concerns of this life, and so very foolish in the much more important concerns of another? Happy is that man, who, because he knows not when his fatal

tal hour shall come, whether at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning, is continually watching and preparing for it. Yea, blessed I say is he, who is thus constantly upon his guard, and is not afraid of a surprize. O let me live every moment as if I was sure to die the next, and then I shall not fail both of living and dying in peace.

MEDITATION III.

'Tis true the time of my death is very uncertain, but yet I know it cannot be far from me. Threescore and ten years is the longest period of man's life. One in a thousand perhaps reacheth this, and one in ten thousand lives a little beyond it. Let this then comfort thee, O my soul, under all the troubles and afflictions of this life. They are but for a moment, and though they lie hard upon us to day, to morrow we shall be free from them. Let not thy courage therefore be cast down, neither be afraid, for thou may'st easily look to the end of thy troubles. Let thy patience hold out but a little longer, and thou shalt be sure in a little while to rest from
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thy labours. This consideration may make even the most uneasy state of life supportable, since we know that it will not be long before our condition will be changed, and we shall be set at liberty from all those afflictions which now surround us. The thoughts of this also should quicken my diligence and industry. For I know that I have a great deal of work to do, and I know also that all the time I have allotted me, will be little enough to do it in. O let me not then lose one moment of this precious time. Let me not waste it in idle trifles and impertinencies; but let me employ every moment of it in doing that work which my Father sent me to do. If I do thus, my time, how short soever, will be long enough; but if I squander it away in doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, I shall find the want of it when it is too late.

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J U D G M E N T.

MEDITATION I.

THough death separates our souls from our bodies for a while, yet they shall one day meet again. An angel shall sound a trumpet, and command the graves to give up their dead; and then shall the bodies of all that slept arise, and be again united to their proper souls. Then shall the Son of man come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and all the nations of the earth shall be brought before him. Then will he require of every one of us an account of whatever we have thought, said, or done in the body, and give to every man according to his works; to them who have patiently continued in well-doing, glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternal life; but to them who have not obeyed the truth, but have obeyed unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of them. Nothing will then escape the eyes of our all-seeing judge, but our most

secret thoughts, words and actions, shall be laid open before that great assembly of men and angels, and weighed in the balance of impartial justice. But, O my soul, if our most just judge shall be exact to mark what we have done amiss, who will be able to stand before him? If with rigour and severity he shall try and examine us, who is there among us that will be found not guilty? But, O blessed Jesus, we know that thou art merciful and willing to save to the uttermost. We rejoice that thou, who wast our Saviour, wilt also be our judge. We have long experienc'd thy loving-kindness towards us, and are sure that we shall find mercy in thy judgment. Thou well knowest the infirmities of human nature, and therefore we need not fear but thou wilt make gracious allowances for them. If through the whole course of our lives we have sincerely endeavour'd to obey all thy commandments; if we have heartily bewailed our many failings and neglects, and have seriously and truly repented of them; we doubt not but that thou, our most kind and merciful Redeemer, wilt accept of this our sincere, though imperfect obedience. Let it then,

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O my soul, be thy constant care to endeavour in all things to approve thy self a faithful servant to thy blessed Master, and thou wilt have no reason to be afraid of him when he comes to be thy judge; for in the midst of judgment he will remember mercy; and, even in that dreadful and terrible day, will look with a cheerful countenance upon those who in all godly sincerity have had their conversation in this world, and reward their obedience with an eternal weight of glory.

MEDITATION II.

O! what a blessed and joyful day will this prove to those happy souls, who shall then hear those comfortable words of our Saviour pronounced to them, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?* O! how will those happy saints rejoice, who having, like their dear Lord, been despised and rejected of men, shall at this great day receive honour and glory of God himself, and be made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever. Then shall God,

before the solemn assembly of that day, vindicate the dispensations of his providence, towards his righteous servants in this lower world, from the imputations of severity and injustice; by making it publickly and plainly appear, that although he suffered them to be evil intreated there for a while, and made no distinction there between them and the wicked; yet he always had them in remembrance, and only defer'd the manifestation of his special love and kindness for them, till this great and general retribution. Why then, O my soul, dost thou suffer thy self to be discouraged, because thy piety and virtue are not immediately rewarded in this world? Why art thou ready to be weary of well-doing, because thou dost not see that God makes any certain distinction here, in the administration of his temporal blessings, between thee and the most profligate wretch? Alas! my soul, this world is not a proper place for distinction; but there is a time coming, O may it not come before thou art prepared for it! when there shall be a very visible distinction made between the just and the unjust, when those steady christians, who have not fainted, shall

shall most certainly reap, and being separated from their false brethren, shall be received up into eternal mansions of glory.

MEDITATION III.

Go on, my soul, and if thou can't bear the dreadful sight, now take a view of those poor trembling wretches, who having refused to own our Saviour for their Lord and Master, are sorry to find that, whether we will or no, he must be their judge. O! what would they now give to be hid from his sight? What would they now give to have another life, another opportunity of preparing for judgment? But alas! it is too late, their time of trial is past and gone, and there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation. Alas! unhappy wretches! how do they start and look pale at the sight of their judge? They need no trial, for their countenances condemn them. They too well know, that blessed Jesus, whom they have so often scorned and trampled under foot, and now too late they find that he is come, according to his word, to execute judgment upon his

enemies. Behold! they fall down trembling at his feet, and importunately beg forgiveness. But O unhappy negligence! O ill-timed repentance! 'Tis now in vain to sue for pardon, when they themselves cannot but own the justice of that dreadful sentence, which their judge must now pronounce upon them, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Alas! poor souls, how are they able to hear this deadly sentence? Gladly would they die under it, but that they cannot; they are now banished for ever from the enjoyment of God and happiness, and chained down to eternal misery. O! that men would often entertain themselves with this sad but useful thought! that they would often draw this melancholy scene in their minds, and try whether it would not effectually damp all their irreligious mirth and jollity. Let them seriously ask themselves how they will be able to bear the sight of an abused and angry Redeemer, and then let them abuse and provoke him if they dare. But whatever other men may do, do not thou fail, my soul, frequently to reflect upon this great and terrible day of the Lord,

terrible

terrible indeed to those, who by adding iniquity to iniquity, heap up wrath against the day of wrath. Always remember that all thy thoughts, words and actions, must be proved and examined at this great day, and therefore take care that they be such as will bear this severe trial. Never dare to be merry or cheerful, till thou hast settled the accounts of thy soul, lest eternal sorrow overtake thee unawares, and shut out every glimpse of joy or comfort from approaching to thee.

H E A V E N.

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

COULD we ascend up into the third heaven and view there those glorious mansions which our gracious God hath prepared for all such as continue his faithful servants unto the end; how should we be transported with that ravishing and blissful sight? How earnestly and impatiently should we desire to be dissolved, and to be received up into that *New Je-*

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rusalem? How eagerly and courageously should we contend for this great and noble prize? O! let our faith supply our want of sight; let us firmly believe what God hath told us concerning his kingdom; and then the joys of heaven will be as present to our minds, as if we really saw them. Let us believe him (and surely it is no unreasonable thing stedfastly to believe him, who cannot possibly deceive us) and we shall soon be possessed with a true sense of the greatness of that happiness, which is laid up for the saints in heaven. The very lowest and meanest thing that the scriptures say of it, is, that it is incomparably beyond all the happiness of this life. The pleasures of this world are oftentimes great in expectation, but always very poor in the enjoyment; but those of the other world are infinitely greater in the enjoyment, than they were in the expectation. Here our pleasures are all imbittered with an ungrateful mixture of pain and trouble; there they shall be pure and unmixed, free from any base alloy, or bitter ingredients. Here a frequent repetition of our pleasures makes them dull and nauseous to us; but there we shall continually repeat them with
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the same vigorous delight, with which we first enjoyed them, and they shall always be fresh and new to us. Here our pleasures are unconstant and uncertain, always upon the wing and ready to leave us; there they shall be fixed and unchangeable, and we shall have a secure possession of them. So vastly will the pleasures of heaven surpass, in all respects, these our earthly ones, that when we come to taste the one, we shall grudge even the very name of pleasure to the other. O blessed God! what egregious folly then are those men guilty of, who, for the deceitful pleasures of sin, part with their titles to those substantial joys, which will be the certain reward of virtue and obedience. Cheat not thou thy self thus, O my soul, but with an eye of faith look forward into the heavenly paradise, and from the contemplations of the solid happiness of that glorious place, learn to despise this poor counterfeit happiness, which the vain world makes her boasts of.

MEDITATION II.

Great and glorious are the things which are spoken of thee, thou city of God. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, how richly thou art furnished with all things necessary to make the happiness of thine inhabitants compleat and perfect. But this in general we know, that as the happiness which thy blessed inhabitants enjoy is vastly beyond that which we call happiness in this world, so is it likewise in it self exceeding great; great indeed, since it is too big for us to frame any notion or conception of; infinitely great, because it shall be like the happiness of him, who is indeed happiness it self. For we know and are assured, that when we shall ascend up into heaven, we shall become like God himself; like him, as in other things, so in his happiness and glory. Did we therefore know no more of our future happiness than this, it were enough to satisfy us in our enquiries concerning it, for what can we desire more than to be like God, the most perfectly
happy

happy being, in happiness? But if we desire to be more particularly still informed concerning the ingredients that help to make up the mighty happiness, the scriptures will discover some of them to us. They promise us an infinite enlargement of our knowledge, and that our wills shall be unchangeably bent towards good, and our affections chained to the most amiable objects; that we shall know God, even as he knows us, cheerfully and readily perform his will, and love him, and be beloved by him, with the most intense and ardent affection; that we shall be admitted into the society of angels and just men made perfect, and enjoy their endearing conversation and friendship, and partake with them in their blessed employments, and in that fulness of joy, which is continually in God's presence. O glorious state! how wilt thou feast our understandings, wills and affections, by setting before them constantly such objects, as they shall contemplate, love and admire with inexpressible pleasure. Were this the only happiness of heaven, it would be an abundant recompence for all that we can do or suffer in this world. But alas! we
know

know not yet what our happiness will be, and even this which we pretend to know, we know but in part, very darkly and obscurely. This I know, O may I often think on it! that the rewards of heaven are infinitely beyond every thing which I can now conceive or imagine, and that the happiness which the blessed souls there enjoy, being like the happiness which God himself enjoys, must be infinitely great and infinitely perfect.

MEDITATION III.

As the happiness of heaven shall be infinitely great, so shall it be eternally durable; it will not only be an exceeding, but an eternal weight of glory. It would mightily pall and damp the happiness of the saints, as great as it is, to see an end of it; to see, though at never so great a distance, a time coming, when they should be divested of all their glory, and be reduced to their primitive poverty. But the inhabitants of heaven have no fear of this, their pleasures, as they are without measure, so are they without end; they are possess'd of everlasting life and glory,
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and their happiness can no more cease, than God can cease to be; for he hath promised that it shall be eternal, and therefore it must last as long as God is true, which will be for ever and ever. Look up then, O my soul, and survey the promised land, steadfastly behold its beauty, and consider its duration, and then tell me what thou would'st give to be possessed of it: alas! my soul, all that thou can'st give will not purchase it, but thy blessed Saviour and Redeemer hath already purchased it for thee, and given thee a just claim and title to it. He has only required a sincere obedience to all his commands, as a condition of everlasting life; perform this, and heaven is thine own. Be sure but to follow thy blessed Master, and he will lead thee into heaven. This, this is the only way to get thither; we must be holy before we can be happy, and perform our Lord's will before we can be received up into his joy. And oh! what is there that I would not do or suffer to obtain heaven? How many difficulties do I constantly encounter and surmount, purely for the sake of the paltry pleasures of this life? And can I then think any thing
difficult

difficult, when heaven is to be my reward, if I fight a good fight, and obtain the victory? Oh no! were I to run through flames to heaven, it would be an easy passage; I should never faint under the fiery trial, while I kept my eyes constantly fixed on that joy which my gracious God hath set before me. But thanks be to God, this is seldom made the way to heaven; the way thither is generally smooth and pleasant enough; and though sometimes we meet with thorns and brambles in it, yet great part of it is as pleasant as we can wish it. But, be it as it will, if thou wouldst obtain the end, it is absolutely necessary thou shouldst use the means. If thou desirest to be like God in his happiness, it is requisite thou shouldst first endeavour to be like him in his holiness; be pure as he is pure, and he has promised thou shalt be happy as he is happy. Now then may'st thou make sure of heaven, if thou thinkest it worth obtaining; now may'st thou obtain the crown, if thou thinkest it worth thy while to strive for it. Rouze, rouze, my soul, and instantly set about thy work: I am so transported with the prospect of the heavenly *Canaan*, and ravished

wished with the hopes of possessing it, that I resolve to fight my way to it through every thing that opposeth my religious progress, and to press forward, even through the most rigid and severe afflictions, to those glorious mansions of eternal happiness and pleasure.

H E L L.

MEDITATION I.

HOW admirably, O blessed Jesu, is thy religion fitted to work both on our hopes and fears. Great are its promises, and great its threatenings; on the one side, a heaven to invite us; on the other, a hell to fright us, into obedience. O! let us fear here, that we may not for ever smart hereafter. Consider, O my soul, before it is too late, what torments are prepared for the disobedient in the next world; and knowing the terrors of the Lord, do not dare to disobey. Think often on that dreadful sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire*; think duely on it and then provoke God if thou dar-
est.

est. Dost thou know what it is to depart from God? It is nothing less than to depart from all that is good, and all that is happy, to be thrust away from the blessed regions of everlasting life and glory, and to be banished from all the pleasures and enjoyments of paradise; alas! my soul, how can'st thou bear the thoughts of this? Yet this will certainly be thy lot, if thou art not careful by a timely repentance to prevent it. Too sadly, alas! do the damned spirits know the meaning of this mournful word, *depart*: O! how do those wretched souls fret and vex, and grieve and rage, at the thoughts of this dreadful word. When they look up to heaven, and consider what they might have been, O! how does it torment them to think what they now are? Unhappy souls! they feel by woful experience, what the loss of heaven is; they see heaven indeed, but the sight of it serves only to increase their pain, and continually to reproach their folly. O! how do they lash themselves for this their folly, and curse those gay delusions which cheated them of their eternal happiness? Envy, despair, and madness, rack their
their

their souls, they thirst for that which they must never enjoy, and pierce and wound themselves with raging grief. Reason itself, which gives us here relief, serves only to encrease and raise their torments. Be wise then, O my soul, in time, and take care not to lose that happiness, the loss of which will make a hell for thee in the other world. Weigh well the joys of earth and heaven in the just balance of reason, and so chuse now, that thou may'st not for ever lament and curse thy choice hereafter. Harken to thy conscience in this world, whilst it gives thee friendly advice, that so it may not be thy tormentor in the next. For this is that ever gnawing worm which continually preys upon the damned souls, and chaseth away all rest and quiet from them.

MEDITATION II.

Sure it is hell enough to be doomed continually to lament the loss of heaven; we shall need no other punishment to make us miserable. And yet, alas! this is not half of hell. Were this all, the damned spirits would think their punishments

light, when compared with that which they are now chained to. *Depart from me*, is but one branch of their sentence; that which follows is, if possible, still more dismal, *into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*. O dreadful and intolerable sentence! who can dwell with everlasting burnings? We are not able to endure here the scorching of the fire for a moment, and how then shall we be able to endure the more exquisite and piercing fire of hell, for ever and ever? But yet this will be the portion of every wicked and ungodly wretch in the next world. And to add to their misery, (though indeed it is already large enough, and needs no addition) they shall be forced continually to hear the groans and cries, and to see the sad miserable condition of their fellow-sufferers. O sad and mournful scene! a place, full of darkness and melancholy horror; full of howling, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth. O unspeakable torments! Infinite in your extent, and eternal in your duration, too great to be born, and yet not to be fled from. Were there ever to be an end put to the sufferings of the damned, the prospect of this, though
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at never so great distance, would help to alleviate their misery? but alas! their pains will never wear away, but will be kept alike sharp and quick to all eternity. They shall feel more in one moment, than they endured on earth all the time of their lives, and this infinitely great pain and torture shall last for ever and ever. Their fire shall be so far from being ever quenched, that it shall never abate, and their bodies shall be always preyed upon by the flames, and yet shall never be consumed. In vain shall they sigh and groan, and weep and wail; they are miserable beyond all relief, and beyond all expression. They shall seek death, but shall not find it; they shall desire to die, but death shall fly from them. Eternal life shall be a curse to them, since they shall only live in unspeakable misery, only live to wish in vain for death. God's wrath is upon them, his vengeance has overtaken them, and will continue heavy upon them, to all eternity.

MEDITATION III.

Wouldst thou know, my soul, how to avoid this place of torment? There is but

one way. Learn truly to fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him, and then thou needest not fear hell itself. 'Tis true indeed, the way which leads to hell is broad and spacious, and at first sight seems to be a pleasant road; and therefore it is necessary that thou shouldst always remember that the end thereof is bitterness. Many there are, alas! too many, that walk in it, and will persuade thee to bear them company; they will use enticing words, and flatter thee with their double tongues; but believe them not, for destruction is in their paths, and the way of peace have they not known. The only certain way to escape God's wrath, is to avoid those sins for which it comes upon the children of disobedience. Whenever therefore thou art tempted to any thing that is sinful, be sure to avoid it, for it will lead thee down directly to hell. Only be careful to keep thy innocency, and then thou may'st safely triumph over hell itself. But if thou committest sin, and obey'st the devil, then art thou the servant of the devil, and shalt be partner with him in his misery. Every particular breach of our duty carrieth us
nearer

nearer and nearer to this dreadful place of torment, and every sin unrepented of, casts us down towards it. Consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he snatch ye away, and there be none to deliver ye. Consider this, I say, and shew your selves men; men, whose reason teaches them to fly from danger, and to seek for peace. Remember that the pleasures of sin are not to be purchased, without the loss of thy heavenly happiness; nay more, that those short and fading pleasures will end in an eternity of misery; think seriously and frequently of hell, of the greatness of its torments, and the perpetuity of them; think as often on the pleasures of sin, their emptiness and vanity, and the shortness of their continuance; and then I can safely leave thee to chuse for thy self, either obedience and heaven, or sin and hell.



C H A P. VIII.

Of Private Humiliation.

HERE is one duty still behind, which I have too much reason to fear is but little thought of, even among the better sort of christians; and this is *Private Humiliation*, or the setting apart some time to bewail in secret both our own particular sins, and the general sinfulness of the whole world. This, I confess, is but a melancholy employment; but yet so necessary an one, that without it we can never hope to enjoy any true peace or chearfulness. For this is that *godly sorrow which bringeth forth joy*, and unless we can thus mourn, we shall never possess any solid or lasting comfort.

Our holy mother the church has taken peculiar care to provide for the performance of this duty in publick, having ordered

dered several days in the year to be set apart for this purpose. Such are all her days of fasting and abstinence, both ordinary and extraordinary, which were all designed by her to be so many days of *mourning* and *humiliation*, *mortification* and *repentance*.

And certainly it will well become us her children, in imitation of her holy example, to set apart some time for the discharge of this duty in private; that so there may be an uniformity and agreement in our publick and private behaviour, and we may act like christians, not only when we appear in the *great congregation*, but also when we withdraw into our closet and severest retirements. We must not think it enough to comply with the commands of the church, in observing her publick days of humiliation; but we must be the same in our closets that we are in our churches, possessed with the same sense of our own and other mens sins, and humbled under the same weighty load of sorrow; or else it is very much to be feared our religion is all dissembled. Nay, indeed the closet seems to be the most proper place for the performance of this duty, because

we have not those restraints upon us there, which we have in publick. There our minds will be at perfect liberty to reflect seriously on those grievous sins, for which we humble our selves, and we may freely disburden our selves of all our sorrows, and give our tears their full vent. Do not therefore content thy self with a discharge of this duty in publick only, but let the closet have some of thy pious sighs and groans, which seems to be a place peculiarly fitted for this melancholy and solitary employment.

Thus did the holy men of old. *David* did not think it enough to lament his own and other mens sins, in the publick place of God's worship; but he retired into his inmost chamber, and there *watered his couch with tears* and truly mourned and grieved for *those who kept not God's law*. *Jeremiah* sought for the most secret and retired places, and there poured forth his soul in tears and *lamentations*, and mourned before his God, for the crying sins of his nation. And holy *Daniel* thought it not too much to spend *three whole weeks* in private mourning and humiliation for his own and the people's sins.

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Do not thou therefore, dear christian, think it too much to spend a part of one day in every week in this holy employment; but constantly on every *Friday*, the day on which thy blessed Saviour suffered for thy sins, make it thy business to humble thy self before thy God in private, and heartily and sincerely to bewail thy own sins, and the sins of all mankind, and earnestly beg pardon for them. If thou dost thus, thou wilt observe the day, as the church designed it should be observed; for certainly no employment can be so proper on that day, on which *the Lord of life and glory was made a sacrifice for sin*, as this of mourning and humiliation, of detesting and abjuring sin, and of shewing our hatred of it. And that thou may'st not be at a loss, for want of a form of devotion, which thou may'st constantly use upon this occasion, I will take care to furnish thee with one at the end of this chapter. In the mean while I shall endeavour to stir you up to this holy practice, by representing to you two very great advantages that you will obtain by it.

First, By humbling your self before God, and bewailing your own and other mens

mens sins, you may probably prevent some of those terrible judgments which God seems to have decreed against your self and others. If any thing can stop the arm of divine justice, it must be the powerful humiliation and sorrow of them who truly mourn for sin. Towards such as these, God has always shewed himself very compassionate ; and has not only spared them themselves, but very often others also for their sakes. Their cries and intercessions pierce the heavens, and have an easy access to his presence, and their sighs and tears melt him down into pity and compassion. He cannot strike while there are *ten* such persons in a city ; but, for the sake of those ten, all the rest shall escape. This has been the ordinary, I will not say the constant, way of his proceeding, and therefore we may have great hopes, if we sincerely and passionately mourn for sin, that for our sakes God will be merciful to our whole nation ; or at least, that, if his wrath doth descend upon the children of disobedience, that he *will bear our sorrowful cry and will help us.*

Secondly, They that mourn thus religiously, shall most certainly be comforted.

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They that thus sow in tears, shall undoubtedly reap in joy. Though they do not immediately feel the happy effects of this their pious humiliation; yet at the last they shall most surely find our Lord's words true, *They shall be comforted.* They shall then indeed be comforted, when our blessed and most just judge, who keeps all their *tears* in his *bottle*, shall command them to enter into the *joy of their Lord*; then shall *their sorrow be turned into joy*, and because they once wept, when tears were necessary, they shall now never weep more, *but all tears shall be wiped from their eyes.* And who then would not be contented to mourn here, that he may be sure never to mourn hereafter? Who would not willingly employ every moment of his life in such a holy and religious mourning, as will purchase for him an eternity of joy? Grant, O merciful God, I beseech thee, that I may be such a true mourner in this *vale of tears* and misery, that I may have a title to thy promise of everlasting comfort, and that when I shall be taken off of the melancholy stage of this world, I may be received in-

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to those mansions of joy and pleasure, where grief and sorrow never enter.

An Office of Humiliation, to be used by private Christians in their Closets every *Friday* in the Year.

A *S soon as you rise in the morning, apply your self to your ordinary course of devotions; only instead of the heads of self-examination set down in this book for your daily use, make use of those in The Whole Duty of Man, which I have before advised, upon extraordinary occasions. And be sure to do this with great care and thoughtfulness, that so thou mayest bring thy self to a right sense of the greatness and multitude of those thy sins, which thou intendest to mourn for. After you have regularly and decently performed your ordinary devotions, you may give over and refresh your self for a while, and then return to your closet again. Where, when you have composed your self, I would have you begin these your solemn devotions, with this useful reflection upon your own state and condition.* **A**

A SOLILOQUY.

O My soul, thou hast weighed thy self in the balance of the sanctuary, and thou art found very light. Light indeed are all thy good works, but thy sins are very heavy; like a weighty burden they are too heavy for thee to bear. O! whither will such a dreadful weight sink thee! it will pull thee down into the low-ermost hell, if thou dost not take care to free thy self from it; if thou art not truly sorrowful for it, and firmly resolved to shake it off. There is scarce any one commandment of thy God, which thou hast not broken, which thou hast not transgressed time after time, notwithstanding all the kind motions of the blessed Spirit, and the checks of thy own faithful conscience to the contrary. Thou hast run with delight into sin, and foolishly and impudently gloried in thy disobedience. The number of thy sins is like the number of the sands of the sea, and the greatness of them is beyond all expression. O! let thy tears be as hard to be numbered as thy sins, and let thy sorrow for them infinitely transcend the delight that thou took'st

took't in committing them. Let thine eye become a fountain of true penitent tears; that so being first washed in thy own tears, thou may't be fit to be washed from thy sins in the blood of thy dear Saviour. *Let thine eyes trickle down, and cease not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down and behold from heaven.* And let thy heart be filled with such a sorrowful and pious contrition, as thou knowest thy God will not despise. This, O my soul, is the sure way to obtain true peace and comfort; this is that repentance which thou shalt never repent of.

Immediately after this, fall down upon thy knees, and make the following humble confession of thy sins to God.

A C O N F E S S I O N.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, which I from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy divine Majesty, most just-
ly

ly provoking thy wrath and indignation against me. I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the Burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive me all that is past, and grant that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Forgiveness of Sins.

LOOK down, O merciful Father, look down from heaven, and behold a poor miserable wretch, oppressed with the burden of his sins, and overwhelmed with sorrow. Look upon me with an eye of pity and compassion, who am heartily grieved for my sins, and firmly resolved to forsake them. Send me comfort, O blessed Redeemer, from thy holy place, and visit me with the light of thy countenance. Receive, O gracious Father, receive a true and sincere penitent, who
with

with sighs and tears cries aloud for mercy. Thy property, O Lord, is always to have mercy, and to forgive; O let thy merciful ears be open to my prayers, and let them receive that blessed answer from thee; *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Grant this, O merciful God, for thy Son Jesus Christ's sake.

A Prayer for Grace to amend our Lives.

O Holy Lord God, who by thy grace workest in us both to will and to do according to thy good pleasure, give me such a measure of thy Grace, I most humbly beseech thee, as may enable me to amend my life for the time to come, and to be obedient to all thy wise and just commands. It is the earnest desire of my soul to please thee, and I know that there is no way to please thee, but by keeping thy commandments. O let me ever have them written in my heart, that they may be always present with me, and that I may continually meditate upon them. Grant that I may from this hour
bid

bid adieu to all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that I may dedicate my self entirely to thee, to serve thee in righteousness and true holiness. Thou, O Lord, out of thy infinite kindness and mercy, hast graciously been pleased to give me sight and sense of my sins; O let me ever hate and abhor them, detest and forsake them, and cleave entirely unto thee whom my soul longeth for. Let me no more return with the dog to his vomit, but so establish me with thy grace, that no temptation of the world, the devil, or my own flesh may be ever able to draw me to offend thee, but that being made free from sin, and becoming thy servant, I may have my fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When you have fervently and affectionately put up these prayers to God, in the next place I would advise you to read over this following portion of the Psalms, with great seriousness and attention.

1 **H**AVE mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak; O Lord, heal me for my bones are vexed.

2 *My soul also is sore troubled, but Lord, how long wilt thou punish me?*

3 *I am weary of my groaning, every night wash I my bed, and water my couch with my tears, my beauty is gone for very trouble.*

For thine arrows stick fast in me, O Lord, and thy hand presseth me sore.

There is no health in my flesh, because of thy displeasure; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin.

6 *For my wickednesses are gone over my head, and are like a sore burden too heavy for me to bear.*

7 *I am brought into so great trouble, that I go mourning all the day long.*

8 *I am feeble and sore smitten, I have roared for the very disquietness of my heart.*

9 *Lord, thou knowest all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

10 *For I truly am set in the plague, and my heaviness is ever in my sight.*

11 *But I will confess my wickedness, and be sorry for my sin.*

12 *Wherefore turn thou unto me, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and in misery.*

13 *The*

13 *The sorrows of my heart are enlarged, O bring thou me out of my troubles.*

14 *Look upon mine adversity, and forgive me all my sins.*

15 *Mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up, they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and my heart hath failed me.*

16 *Yea even from my youth up, thy terrours have I suffered with a troubled mind.*

17 *For thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me, and the fear of thee hath undone me.*

18 *My heart is smitten down and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.*

19 *For the voice of my groaning my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh.*

20 *Yea I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.*

21 *And that because of thine indignation and wrath, for thou hast taken me up and cast me down.*

The Duties of the Closet.

Immediately after this Psalm, read some portion of scripture proper for this occasion: in the Old Testament read the story of Ahab, who notwithstanding his great wickedness, upon a sincere humiliation, found favour with God, 1 King xxii. In the New Testament, the parable of the prodigal son, who, though he had lived riotously and wickedly, yet because he humbled himself for his sin, and earnestly begged forgiveness of his father, he was kindly received by him, and had all his past faults blotted out, Luke xv. These lessons read with due attention, will administer great comfort to thee in thy sorrow, and fill thee with joyful hopes of obtaining a gracious pardon of all thy sins, from thy most merciful and tender Father.

After thou hast made an end of reading, conclude thy morning devotions with this following thanksgiving and prayer.

A T H A N K S G I V I N G.

O Blessed Lord, who, out of thy great love and kindness towards me a vile and miserable sinner, hast been graciously pleased

pleased to bring me to a sight of my sins, and to excite me in the holy desires of leaving them; I desire to return thee my most humble and unfeigned thanks for this thy unspeakable mercy. O! how miserable should I have been, if thou had'st given me over, as justly thou mightest, to an hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment. But, O Lord, thou hast not dealt thus with thy servant, but hast opened his eyes to see the things that belong to his peace. Thou thoughtest it not enough to redeem me once from death, by the precious blood of thy most dear Son; but thou hast many times plucked me from the jaws of hell, when I was flying from that happiness which my blessed Saviour purchased for me. O! how often have I been engaged in the paths of ruin and destruction; how often has thy Holy Spirit led me out of them, and shew'd me the way to everlasting bliss and glory? Even now, O Lord, thou kindly callest and inviteest me to thy kingdom; even now thou exhortest me to leave my burden, and to enter into thy rest. What shall I render unto thee, O Lord, for this thine inestimable

benefit? For this and all other thy mercies I will praise thy name for ever and ever, and endeavour constantly to please thee, by a sincere and universal obedience to all thy commands. O Lord, enable me to make good these my vóws, for the sake of thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

A P R A Y E R.

O Holy Lord, who art ready to embrace all true christians that come unto thee, who delightest not in the death of a sinner, but had'st rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; hear me and help me, I most earnestly beseech thee. Strengthen and confirm me in those holy resolutions, which thou hast put into my heart, and grant that I may persevere in them unto my life's end. Let not my tears ever be wiped from my eyes, or my sorrow banished from my heart, till I have made my peace with thee, and am again become one of thy true children. Bless and prosper the good work which thou hast begun in me, that so I may proceed from sorrow to repentance; and that being
truly

ly penitent I may obtain thy pardon and forgiveness. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin, that so I may be holy and pure in thy sight, and duly qualified for the participation of that eternal happiness, which thou hast promised to all those who truly love and serve thee. And this I ask and beg of thee, in the name, and for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The End of the Morning's Devotions.

Devotions for the Afternoon.

AS thy morning was spent in bewailing thy own sins, let thy afternoon be spent in lamenting the general sinfulness of mankind; that so the whole world may fare the better for thy tears and thy prayers. When therefore thou hast settled thy self in thy closet, begin thy devotions with this serious soliloquy.

A SOLILOQUY.

WHEN I reflect upon the general corruption of mankind, their averfeness from all good, and their readiness to all evil, their open and prophane contempt of God and religion, and their impudent encouraging of all manner of sin and wickedness; I am astonished and confounded; astonished with wonder at the patience and long-suffering of God, which has thus long bore with us; and confounded with fear and horror at the prospect of those many dreadful judgments, which seem to hang over us, and are just ready to fall upon us. For if God should deal with us after our sins, and reward us after our iniquities, we should soon become like *Sodom and Gomorrah, a lake of fire and brimstone*. Our iniquities have ascended up into heaven, and alas! what can they bring down thence, but wrath and destruction? They cry aloud to God for vengeance, and almost call his justice in question, because he is so merciful as to bear with us. But though God has thus long forbore us, we must not be so presumptuous, as to think he will still suffer us. Tho'
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he is slow to anger, yet his wrath will most certainly descend at last upon the children of disobedience; and though it has been long coming, it will be very grievous and heavy when it comes. Let it be thy business then, O my soul, to endeavour to keep off the fierce anger of the Lord, as far as thou art able; let thy sighs and tears continually come before him, and plead for mercy, and let thy prayers continually ascend up into his presence, and with importunate cries beg of him that he *would spare his people*, and not bring his *heritage to confusion*. It may be, that he will pity thy cry, and will hear thee; it may be, that thy sighs and tears may melt him into compassion, and that for thy sake it may go well for a time with the evil-doers. Cry aloud then, O my soul, and try if by thy fervent prayers, thou canst not prevail,

After

After this, read the following Psalm.

I *T grieveth me when I see the transgressors, because they keep not thy law.*

2 My heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

3 For he flattereth himself in his own sight; until his abominable sin be found out.

4 The words of his mouth are unrighteous and full of deceit; he hath left off to behave himself wisely and to do good.

5 He imagineth mischief upon his bed, and hath set himself in no good way; neither doth he abhor any thing that is evil.

6 The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek after God.

7 But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable, there is none doth good, no not one,

8 *Destruc-*

8 *Destruction and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known, there is no fear of God before their eyes.*

9 *But health is far from the ungodly, because, O Lord, they regard not thy statutes.*

10 *Wherefore, when they were sick, I put on sackcloth, and humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer shall turn into mine own bosom.*

11 *I behaved my self as though it had been my friend or my brother, I went heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.*

12 *For I am horribly afraid, O Lord God, for the ungodly that forsake thy law.*

13 *Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy commandments.*

After this Psalm, read the eighteenth chapter of Genesis, where God promiseth Abraham, that he would spare Sodom if he could find but ten righteous persons in it. And let a due reflection upon this, help to enlarge thy pious sorrow, and to
encrease

encrease thy christian concern for the general sinfulness of the world; that so, for thy sake, and the sake of some other truly devout souls, God may be merciful to all mankind. And, to make sure of his mercy and pity, add these following prayers to thy tears, and try if, by this holy violence, thou canst not extort compassion from him.

A C O N F E S S I O N.

O Most holy Lord God, who art terrible in thy judgments towards the children of disobedience, who for the sins of mankind didst once drown the whole world, and didst also rain fire and brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, for the sinfulness of them that dwelt therein; I acknowledge and confess, in behalf of myself and all the rest of mankind, that we have justly deserved thy severest judgments; for we have all gone astray and dealt wickedly, there is not one of us that doth good, no not one. We have openly contemned and ridiculed virtue and religion, and in their room have set up and encouraged all manner of vice and wickedness;

we

we have dishonoured thy name, defiled thy house, prophaned thy worship and slighted thy commandments. Nay, O Lord, we have been so hardy, that we have been insensible under thy punishments, and that which thou in mercy designed'st to reform and amend us, has served only to make us more obstinate and rebellious against thee. We have made ourselves slaves to the world, the flesh and the devil, and have engaged our selves in a war against heaven, and have fought against our happiness. And now, O Lord, what can we expect from thee but judgment and fiery indignation, which is indeed the due reward of our sins? We must confess that we are ripe for destruction, and every moment to expect to have the world set on fire about us. But, O Lord, thou art a merciful God; to thee belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against thee, and have not obeyed thy voice, by walking in those laws which thou hast set before us. Deal not with us therefore, O merciful Lord, after our sins, neither reward us after our iniquities; but let thy anger and thy wrath be turned away from us, and bring us not to confusion; let the
prayers

prayers and tears of those few pious souls, who mourn in secret for the sins of mankind, stop thy avenging hand, and prevail with thee to allow a sinful world a little more time for repentance. O! let not our obstinacy tire out thy patience, but do thou mollify our stony hearts, do thou smite these hard rocks, that true penitent tears may flow from them. Bring us to a sense of our sins, and a dread of thy judgments; that so we may not dare to provoke thee any more, but may humble our selves before thee, in a most sincere and sorrowful contrition of heart; that thou, being pleased therewith, may'st repent thee of the evil, which thou hast said thou would'st do unto us, and do it not. O Lord, hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord, hearken and do, not according to our merits, but thy mercies; for the sake of him, who hath purchased and redeemed us with his own blood, even Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Then

*Then use these Ejaculations taken out of
the Whole Duty of Man.*

O Lord, of whom shall we seek for succour but of thee, who for our sins art justly displeas'd? yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Father, we have sinned against heaven and before thee, and are not worthy to be called thy children; yet, O Lord, do not thou cast off the bowels and compassions of a Father, but even as a father pitieth his own children, so be thou merciful unto us.

O God, we confess that we have defaced that image of thine, which thou didst imprint upon our souls; yet, O thou faithful Creator, have pity on thy creatures.

O Jesu, we have by many and grievous sins crucified thee afresh; yet thou, who pray'd'st for thy persecutors, intercede for us also, and suffer not, O blessed Redeemer, our souls (which are the price of thy blood) to perish everlastingly.

O Spirit

O Spirit of grace, we have by many horrid impieties done despite to thee; yet, O blessed Comforter, though we have often grieved thee; be thou pleased to succour and relieve us, and to give us grace to repent of our sins, that we may obtain the end of our hopes, even the salvation of our souls.

In thee, O Lord, is all our hope and trust; O cast not out our souls, but let the light of thy countenance shine favourably upon us, and visit us with thy salvation.

AN INTERCESSION.

O Merciful Lord God, who didst send thy Son into the world to redeem the world, and art not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and the knowledge of the truth; have mercy upon all *Jews, Turks, infidels* and hereticks. Be favourable, O blessed Lord, to thine ancient people the *Jews*; take from them all hardness of heart, and open their eyes that they may see, though late, the Lord of life and glory, and with an unfeigned submission turn unto him, and cheerfully obey his commandments.

mandments. Let the light of thy gospel shine forth, even unto the darkest corners of the earth, that so the whole world may come to the saving knowledge of thy truth, and become one sheep-fold under the great shepherd of our souls Christ Jesus. And grant, O Lord, that all those, who, by thy infinite grace and favour, have heard of the name of thy dear Son, and are admitted into the communion of his church, may endeavour to adorn the religion they profess, by the holiness and integrity of their lives, by a pure, meek and humble conversation. Bless all degrees of men in the whole world from the highest to the lowest, but more especially those whom thou hast entrusted with the sovereign power of governing thy people. Grant that they may wisely consider, that the sword is put into their hands, for the maintenance of virtue, and the discouragement of wickedness and vice, and may manage it accordingly; that so both christian and heathen governours may endeavour, as far as lieth in them, to promote virtue and goodness, and to put down all vice and wickedness. And to all of inferior ranks and stations give thy heavenly grace, that they may

all be mindful of their several duties, and carefully and honestly perform them. Make us all sensible of the great danger we have brought our selves into by our sins, and enable us, by the help of thy Holy Spirit to disentangle our selves from them, and to turn unto thee with a steadfast faith and unfeigned repentance. Avert those judgments from us, which we have all just reason to fear, especially we who are called by the name of thy dear Son, because we sin against much clearer light, more powerful convictions, and are endowed with a greater strength by far to resist temptations, than the unbelieving world. Give light, O Lord, to all that want it, and enable all to live up to that light which they have already; that so the light which is in them, may not be turned into darkness. Finally, O Lord, be merciful to all men, make us all such as thou would'st have us, and then we shall be such as we our selves desire to be. Turn thou us, O good Lord, and so shall we be turned. Be favourable, O Lord, be favourable to us: for thou art a merciful God, long-suffering and of great pity. Thou sparest when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest

thinkest upon mercy. Spare thy people, good Lord; spare them, O Lord, for thy mercy is great, and after the multitude of thy mercies look upon us, through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A P R A Y E R.

O Gracious God, who, upon the intercession of thy holy servant *Moses*, didst turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of the evil which thou thought'st to do unto thy people; hear the prayers and the supplications, which thy servant hath now offered up unto thee, in behalf of the whole world: why doth thy wrath wax hot against us, why art thou so displeas'd at us? O let not thine anger burn for ever, but incline thine ears unto my prayers and hear them, and answer them in loving-kindness, mercy and forbearance. Hear, O Lord, and answer not for my sake, but for the sake of him, who hath loved us, and given himself for us, even thy most dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who hath taught us when we pray to say,

The Duties of the Closet.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Here ends thy afternoon's devotions, but let not thy pious sorrow end here; that must be more durable, it must be well rooted and settled in thee, being a gracious disposition of mind, which the blessed Jesus requires of all his followers. At night let thy devotions be the same as they used to be. You may use any of these prayers, at any time, when you please, with your other devotions.

The

THE CONCLUSION.

I Have now briefly run over the several duties of the closet, and instructed you, as well as I am able, how you may best perform them. I have nothing more to do, but earnestly to persuade you to be constant in the practice of them, and, since you are made to know what your duties are, not to be barren or unfruitful in that knowledge.

And methinks it should be no hard task to prevail upon christians to be careful in the performance of those duties, which most of all shew them to be christians, which are so truly pleasant in themselves, and will be so very beneficial to us. Methinks, I say, these duties should speak for themselves, and need no advocate to plead for them. But alas! too sadly do we find that the charms of religion have not that effect upon men, which may very justly be expected from them; and that all which we can say in her behalf, is no more than is necessary, in this loose and degenerate age. I shall therefore endeavour to draw men to an habitual practice of these

The Duties of the Closet.

duties by these three very powerful motives.

First, By our constant performance of these duties, we shall be best able to know, whether we are indeed christians or no; whether we only put on an outward form of godliness, or are inwardly full of the power of it.

Secondly, We can no way entertain and feast our minds better, than by a frequent performance of these duties.

Thirdly, They carry with them a very great and noble reward, and will abundantly recompense all the care we take in a due discharge of them, both in this world, and that which is to come.

I. I say, by our constant performance of these duties, we shall be best able to know, whether we are indeed christians or no; whether we only put on an outward form of godliness, or are inwardly full of the power of it. It is so much the temporal interest of every man, to appear virtuous and religious in the world, that it is
very

very much to be feared, that a great number of those men who talk much of religion, and make a great shew of it, yet are rotten at bottom, and use it only as a cloak for their knavery. Thus did the *Pharisees* of old; they prayed in the publick streets, nay, and made long prayers too; but it was only for this reason, that they might with less suspicion devour widows houses. And therefore a man, whose religion never goes out of sight, but is always acted before men, may very justly question whether he is truly religious as he ought to be, and acts upon the noble principles of christianity; whether he be sincere in what he doth, and doth not serve God for the sake of *Mammon*. For we may flatter our selves, as the *Pharisees* did, and call our selves righteous, when yet a corrupt principle of worldly interest may be at the bottom of our righteousness, and spoil all. We may indeed outwardly observe most of the duties of christianity, and yet be as far from being true christians, as *Turks*, or infidels.

But if we would surely know, whether we are sincere christians or not, we must try our selves, when we are out of the

fight of the world, and when no body is by to take notice of, and applaud us for what we do. If in our closets (where, let our behaviour be what it will, the world is never the wiser for it) if here, I say, we always chuse to spend our time in conversing with God, and in the holy exercises of an inflamed devotion, we may with very good reason hope that our religion is not dissembled, but that it flows from an inward sense of the many obligations we lie under to be religious. For no other reason can be given why men should perform the duties of religion, but these two; either, first, because they design by an appearance of virtue to gain a reputation amongst men; or, secondly, because they are truly sensible of the great reasonableness and necessity of pleasing God, and walking according to his commandments. The first can have no place in the closet, from which the world is shut out, and therefore cannot possibly tell whether we are good or bad there, and consequently can pass no judgment upon us. But the second will oblige us equally both in publick and private, and is the only reason that can be given for closet-religion.

If

If therefore thy retired hours are constantly well spent in holy and religious exercises, this is a very great proof of thy sincerity, and may reasonably give thee this assurance, That not only the form of godliness fits upon thee, but also that the power of it dwells in thee.

II. We can no way entertain and feast our minds better, than by a frequent performance of these duties. Our souls, which are the images of God, when they are left to themselves, and have no restraint upon them, naturally thirst after God, and desire to converse with him. They perfectly well know him to be the greatest good, and therefore they value him and delight in him above all things; so that the true happiness of our souls consists in their communion with God; and consequently the more closely they are united to him, the greater must their happiness and pleasure needs be. 'Tis true indeed, we cannot see God face to face in this world; our present enjoyment of him and conversation with him are very imperfect, in comparison of what they shall be in the other world. But yet, as imperfect as they are, they infinitely transcend all the other pleasures

pleasures of Life. There is nothing else which the soul can relish; all other joys are flat and insipid; but the pleasure of conversing with God she tastes, with inexpressible transport and delight.

And what place can be so proper for the soul to meet her beloved in, as the closet, where there shall be nothing to disturb or interrupt their heavenly conversation, no earthly objects to divide and distract the thoughts, but the world shall be quite shut out, and God shall be all in all? Here may she enjoy him, as fully as possibly she can in this life, and converse with him as closely, as the vast distance between heaven and earth will let her. She cannot have a full sight of him there; that beatifick vision is reserved for those, who shall be thought meet to be made partakers of the happiness with the saints in heaven; but she may now see him through a glass darkly, and converse with him in the holy exercises of the closet, such as reading his word, speaking to him in prayer and praise, and silently meditating on him and his infinite perfections, which are the only ways we have of conversing with God in this world.

I. Read-

I. Reading his word; and what can be more pleasant to a rational mind, than to view that portraiture which God has given us of himself in his holy book; where we have the clearest manifestation of the divine nature, that this world affords us? How delightful must it needs be to turn over that *book of God*, and continually to make new discoveries there of the divine beauties and perfections; sometimes to observe his justice, other times his mercy, then to admire his wisdom, and to praise him for his goodness? What can be more entertaining than to follow him there through all the numerous turnings and windings of his providence, and to behold and admire all the exquisite art and contrivance of the great Governour of the world? But above all, how strangely will it please us to acquaint our selves with the will of God, which is here plainly, so far as it concerns us, made known to us? This is indeed a great and noble employment for the mind, to study the will of its Creator, and to reflect upon the reasonableness and excellency of those *laws*, by which the all-wise God governs the universe. Such great *delight* had holy *David*

vid in the study of these *laws*, that they were his *meditation all the day*, nay, and in the night-season also did *he meditate in them*. *He desired them more than gold, yea than much fine gold, and they were sweeter unto him than honey and the honey-comb*. And indeed it is impossible it should be otherwise with any pious soul, since in these sacred books she may find all that she can desire and wish for. Doth she thirst after knowledge? let her come hither and quench her thirst at these sacred fountains, from which all valuable knowledge flows. Would she gladly settle her affections upon some truly lovely and desirable objects? O! let her draw near, and look stedfastly upon her God, who exposeth as much of himself to view in this holy book, as human sight can bear, and then let her love any thing else if she can. Here she will find him, who alone is lovely, nay, and what will still more delight and please her, here will she find a sure way to the eternal enjoyment of him, whom she so much loves; here will she be instructed how [to behave her self so, that her God, whom she thirsts after, may delight in her, and take her up from be-
holding

holding his *hinder parts*, to that glorious place, where she shall see him face to face, and have a full and secure enjoyment of him for ever and ever. O! let her then come with joy unspeakable to this study of these divine books, in which she shall find all that is worth knowing or loving, all that she delights in or hopes for, all that can make her easy here, and eternally happy hereafter.

II. Another way of conversing with God is by prayer and praise. First, by prayer, by which the soul makes known her wants to God and sueth to him for a supply of them. And what an ease must this be to our souls, when oppressed with any trouble, or reduced to any straits or exigencies, to have the liberty of communicating their case to God, and of begging help of him, who, they are sure, both can and will help them. This is indeed a very great and valuable privilege, and such an one, as we shall every day have occasion to make use of. Let afflictions, crosses, disappointments, or troubles, come when they will, the pious soul knows where she may get protection from them, nay, where she may obtain

obtain power to repel them, and to make them fly before her. She can call, and her God will hear and answer, *she can make her cry in an acceptable time, and shall be delivered out of her troubles.* O, most comfortable and delightful employment! easy in performance, and great in reward; pleasant even in doing, and exceeding beneficial when done; how must every soul rejoice that considers this? how gladly ought we always to hasten to this holy exercise, which even in our worst and most desperate case will still afford us unspeakable comfort and relief.

Again, as to praise, what more proper or agreeable employment can be found out for the soul, than the praise of him, who made, preserved, redeemed her, and is continually doing her good. The delight which every grateful soul takes in requiting its benefactors as far as it is able, is inexpressible. Thanks and praise is all that we can return God for his manifold and great favours; these therefore we should always be offering up. *We should praise his name from day to day, nay all the day long should we have pleasure therein.* We should talk of his loving-kindness in the
 great

great congregation, and in our chambers also should our songs be always of his mercy; we should join with the holy angels above, in their hymns of praise who cease not day and night to praise and magnify God, but count it their happiness that they are allowed to sing of his mercies, whose praise fills heaven and earth.

III. The last way of conversing with God here on earth is by meditation. And what refreshment will it be to our weary souls, when quite spent and tired out with the business of this life, to ascend up to their native heaven, and there to feast themselves with all the pleasures they are capable of; to give their understandings, wills and affections their full scope; to know all that is worth knowing; to chuse every thing that is worth their choice; and to love that which alone is lovely. Had not the mind the power of releasing it self thus from earth sometimes, this world would be but a very dull and melancholy place, having nothing in it which can, in any sense, satisfy our souls, and make them truly easy and happy. O! let us then often retire to our closets, and give our souls the pleasure of conversing thus with God,
let

let us be frequent in reading his word, in praying to him and praising him, and in sending up our souls to him in religious meditation. Let us not deny our poor souls, the only happiness which this world affords them; the only food which can nourish them, but let them take as much heaven here as they can, and feed at present upon the crumbs that fall down from their Lord's table, till at last they shall be admitted to sit down at his table with him in his kingdom.

But if pleasure be not strong enough alone to draw you to your closet, yet sure when profit is joined to it, you cannot possibly resist; and therefore I will proceed in the last place, to shew that the benefits which we shall receive from the frequent performance of our closet-duties, will be unspeakably great.

I. When we have accustomed ourselves to delight in our closets, we shall never have any time lie upon our hands, but shall know where to employ all our vacant hours. And this, as it will be a great ease to us here, so will it turn to great account hereafter. It will at present free us from all those troubles and
incon-

inconveniencies, which idleness and want of knowing how to spend our time continually bring upon us, which are very many and very great, and it will mightily shorten our sad account, and take away more than one third part from the catalogue of our sins. For I am sure I may safely say, that, as time is generally spent, above one third part of the sins which we commit is owing to idleness. When therefore all our idle hours are turned into hours of devotion, how much better will our accounts look, how much easier shall we our selves be here, and how much happier hereafter.

II. The constant performance of these duties is a very likely way to settle such a firm sense of religion upon our minds, as shall influence the whole course of our lives. For what we do in our closets, is done with a great deal more thoughtfulness, and makes much deeper impressions upon us, than what we do in publick; so that we may with good reason hope that the religion of our closets will shew forth its fruit in all the other parts of our lives and conversations; and that it will bring an habitual seriousness upon us, and fix

The Duties of the Closet.

God so firmly in our thoughts, that it will be no easy matter to dispossess him.

III. This is the best way we can take to procure God's blessing upon us here, in our worldly concerns. For when he shall look down from heaven, and behold a sincere and undissembled soul, who does not only make a profession of him in publick for present advantage, but worships him in the most retired places where no eye can see her but his own, I say when he shall behold so much true and sincere religion in any of us, it is ten thousand to one but that he will bless us in all we undertake. This without doubt will make us very dear unto him, for he loves sincerity and truth, and in all probability will put us under his particular care and protection. But,

IV. and *lastly*, Whether it obtains any blessings for us in this world or no, it will without fail make sure of those of another world. At the great day of retribution, when men shall be rewarded according to their deeds, then will our Father, who hath seen us in secret, reward us openly enough. Openly indeed, in the presence of the whole world, in the presence
of

of his holy angels, and all the saints in heaven. Then every moment that was religiously spent in our closets shall turn to our advantage, and help to encrease our happiness. Many shall we see in that day, who, though they made great shews of religion in the world, yet really had none at all; who frequented the churches to be seen of men, but never approved themselves to God in their closets. These poor unhappy wretches, having sadly deceived their own souls, shall now find the sad consequence of this deceit; they are now unmasked, and their form of godliness will profit them no more, but they shall be given up to the devil, whose children indeed they have always been. But the sincere christian, whose religion has not been acted, but has been hearty and sincere, the same in the closet that it appeared in the church, shall dwell for ever with the God of truth and sincerity, and continually taste of those joys, and drink of those rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

If then either the prospect of present pleasure and profit, or the hopes of future happiness have any power over us,

they will oblige us to a constant performance of the duties of the closet, which is attended with certain pleasures and great profit here, and will be rewarded with eternal happiness hereafter. And on the contrary, the neglect of them, being the highest contempt of God that can be, as shewing that we have indeed no true religion at all, but that it is all false and counterfeit, and that we have no regard at all to the commands of God, who has strictly enjoined us thus to wait upon him in private, will have its due reward in hell, amongst the wicked and ungodly. Let us consider this, and be wise.





THE GREAT
DUTY of COMMUNICATING
Explain'd and Enforc'd;
THE
Objections against it answer'd,
AND THE
Necessary Preparation for it Stated.
WITH
DEVOTIONS
TO BE US'D
BEFORE, AT, and AFTER,
THE
LORD'S SUPPER.





TO HIS
PARISHIONERS.

Dear NEIGHBOURS,



I being my design to settle a monthly sacrament among you, beginning from Easter-day now at hand; I cannot satisfy my self without endeavouring, by all ways in my power, to dispose and prepare you for a constant attendance at it. For which end I send you this little plain book, which contains the sum of all that is necessary for you to know, and all that I have already preached to you on this subject. And I most earnestly beseech,

TO HIS PARISHIONERS.

intreat and require you (as you will answer it at the great day, when men must give a strict and severe account how they have us'd those means and opportunities of being acquainted with their duty, which have been offer'd to them, especially by the hands of their spiritual teachers and pastors) to peruse and consider it, with the same seriousness and concern for your souls, with which, I call God to witness, it was written. And, if it should not reach all your scruples, and answer all your difficulties, I beg of you that you will let me know wherein you shall remain unsatisfied, that so I may give you such farther helps and directions, as shall appear to be needful. This, as it will shew your sincerity and honest desire of coming to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus; so will it likewise
be

TO HIS PARISHIONERS.

be the shortest and surest way of your coming at it; it being impossible, by writing or preaching, to give the same exact and speedy resolutions to the doubts and difficulties of particular persons, as by verbal conferences; wherein they have the satisfaction of putting their case, and hearing it answer'd in their own way. May it please God, of his great goodness, so to excite, direct and bless your endeavours, in this, as well as in all religious matters, that you may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and, by so doing, glorify God, make your calling and election sure; and fulfil the joy of,

Your most faithful,

*Feb. the 20th,
1699.*

and most loving pastor.

T H E

THE
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THE



THE
GREAT DUTY
OF
Communicating, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of the nature, end, and design of the Lord's supper; the benefits which christians are made partakers of by receiving it; and the obligations which they lie under to receive it.



IN order to a full and clear understanding of the nature of the *Lord's supper*, we shall do well seriously and particularly to consider the account which the scriptures give us of our blessed Master's institution of it. And this

The Great Duty of

this by comparing together *Mat. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii. 1 Cor. xi.* we shall find, in short, to be this.

Our blessed Saviour, when he was eating the passover with his twelve apostles, the evening before his passion, *took bread, and gave thanks, or blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, take, eat, this is my body which is given for you: This do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, this is my blood of the new testament (or the new testament in my blood) which is shed for you and for many: This do in remembrance of me.*

For the better explaining of which words, and ascertaining the extent of their obligation, we will distinctly consider these three things.

First, *What it is that is here commanded to be done, Do this.*

Secondly, *Who the persons are that are concern'd to do this.*

Thirdly, *The end for which it is to be done, in remembrance of me.*

First,

First, *What it is that is here commanded to be done*; and this can be nothing else than what our Saviour and his apostles had been just then doing, *viz. taking bread, and blessing and breaking it, and likewise taking wine, and giving thanks, and partaking of and distributing both.* To this, and every part of this action, must the words *do this* necessarily refer; because they immediately follow the doing of all this, and no part of this is excepted in our Saviour's command. Those who are to provide and distribute, are to provide and distribute both bread and wine, for so had our Lord done; and those who are to receive, are to receive both bread and wine, for so had the apostles received. And therefore the church of *Rome* is inexcusable, which, directly contrary to our Lord's institution, gives the bread only to some *receivers* without the wine.

Secondly, *Who the persons are that are concerned to do this*; and they are all christians whatsoever. By which I mean,

First, All successions and generations of christians that shall be in the world, as long as it shall last. For they being all equally concerned in the benefits of our Saviour's

viour's death and passion, must according to reason be supposed to be equally obliged to keep up this *holy supper* in commemoration of them. So that if we had no direction about this matter in scripture, the reason of the thing it self must then have taken place, and that would have made this supper perpetual. But the scriptures have not been silent in this point, but have plainly told us, that we are thus to *shew the Lord's death, till he come*: that is, till his second coming to judge the world.

Secondly, All sorts of christians, the *laity or people*, as well as the *clergy or ministers of the gospel*. For tho' it is pretended by some, that because our Lord gave the bread and wine only to the apostles, who were all *ministers*, and not any one lay-disciple; therefore he design'd this *supper* only for the ministers of the gospel, but not at all for the people; yet I think the contrary may very plainly be proved, both from reason and scripture: From reason, both because it appears most probable, that the apostles, in the institution of this supper, were the representatives of the people, and not of the ministers, who were then

then much better represented by our *great high-priest Christ Jesus*, and whose office, it is plain, he then alone executed; and likewise because it is certain, that the people, who are as much partakers of the benefits of Christ's death, as the ministers, have as great reason to commemorate 'em as they. From scripture, both because it is evident from thence, that the apostles constantly administered this supper to the people (as to give one instance for all, we read, *Acts ii. 42.* where we have no less than three thousand lay converts at once receiving this *supper*) and likewise, because we there find *St. Paul* spending a great part of a chapter in urging and directing the lay-*Corinthians* how they ought to receive, *1 Cor. xi.*

'Tis true indeed, that the part which our Lord had in the institution of his holy supper, *viz. The blessing of bread, and breaking it, and taking wine, and giving thanks, and distributing both*, belongs only to the ministers of the gospel; because these are all special acts and exercises of the ministerial function, and, as such, have been always reserved to them alone. But the receiving of the bread and
 wine

wine, when *broken, blessed* and *offered* to us, is the common duty of all christians, as well people as ministers.

Thirdly, The end for which this is commanded to be done in remembrance of me, or rather in commemoration of me: for so the word, which we here translate *remembrance*, sometimes signifieth; and this indeed seems to be the most proper signification of it in this place. For *commemoration* is a solemn act of remembrance, and such an one, no doubt, our Saviour here expects from us. We are always bound habitually to remember him, but this supper is particularly design'd to excite in our souls a present and actual remembrance of him; of him, that is, of his death and passion, of his body that was broken, and his blood that was shed for us. For the bread and wine, which are here administered to us, were appointed by him as signs and representations of his flesh and blood, as he himself tells us, at his institution of this holy supper: *This, says he, speaking of the bread, is my body which is given for you;* that is, This is a sign or representation of my body, which shall very suddenly be offered up upon the cross
for

for you; and again, speaking of the cup, *This is my blood of the New Testament, or the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you, and for many;* as if he had said, the wine which you now see in this cup, and which I command ye all to drink of, is a sign or representation of my blood, which will be shortly shed to ratify or confirm the new covenant, which I have made between God and man.

When therefore we eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, we must be sure to put both parts of our Lord's commandment together, and fulfil both; by doing it in remembrance of his body that was given, and his blood that was shed for us. And such a remembrance as this necessarily implies these two things.

First, An acknowledgment of Christ for our Saviour and Redeemer. For what else is it to commemorate his dying for us, but to declare that we are sensible, that our *peace is made* with God, *through the blood of his cross,* and that we, who before *were all under sin, and liable to wrath, aliens from, and enemies to God,* shall now *not have our trespasses imputed to us, but be saved from wrath through*

Christ, and in the body of his flesh through death be reconciled unto God. To declare, I say, and shew both to God and man, that our hope is only in the Lord Jesus, who hath now appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and in whom alone we have redemption through his blood, even forgiveness of sins. This, you, see is what the scripture means by Christ's body being broken, and his blood shed for us; and therefore all christians, who sincerely remember those, must sincerely acknowledge this.

Secondly, An acknowledgment of Christ for our Lord and Master: For, besides that by submitting to his rites and institutions, we plainly declare our selves his disciples: besides that by acknowledging of, and partaking in, his sacrifice, we do, according to the sense of all nations, own our selves members of his church; besides this, I say, by acknowledging Christ's dying for us, we do manifestly acknowledge our obligations both to love and obey him: To love him, who hath so loved us, as to lay down his life for us; to obey him, whose purchase we are, who hath bought us with a price, even the inestimable price of his blood,

blood, and has therefore a right to us, as the scripture tells us, as a *peculiar people to himself*. And this the primitive christians were so sensible of, that they look'd upon every receiving of the Lord's supper to be a new tie and obligation, a new vow and dedication of themselves to Christ: And hence it was that the word *sacrament*, which signified among the *Romans*, that oath of fidelity which their soldiers took, was given as a name to the Lord's supper, because christians were suppos'd to bind themselves there, as it were by an oath, to Christ's service.

The ends for which our blessed Lord instituted this holy supper seem to have been these three.

First, *His Father's and his own glory*; which could no way better be illustrated and extoll'd, than by making all christians whatsoever join in ascribing their redemption, and salvation to them. For this is at once to own both their power, and wisdom, and goodness, which were so eminently display'd in these great works; and likewise their sovereignty and dominion over us, which are the natural effects of them.

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Secondly,

Secondly, *The preserving the unity of the church*, towards which nothing could contribute more, than the frequent meeting together of its members, to acknowledge *one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, above all, through all, and in them all*; and this is most effectually acknowledged, by our being *all partakers of that one bread*; for thus, as St. Paul teacheth, *we being many are one bread and one body*. And likewise their meeting to commemorate the noblest instance of love that ever appear'd in the world, and consequently the noblest example for christians to follow, the noblest motive to excite them to *love one another*.

Thirdly, The good and edification of every particular Christian; and this end will appear to be admirably well serv'd this way, if we will give our selves leave to reflect a little on the benefits which every christian is made partaker of by receiving this holy supper. And,

First, If we consider this holy supper, but as a *commemorative sign*, or sign to put us in mind of Christ's dying for us; yet even thus it will prove of vast advantage

tage to us. For this will naturally tend to inflame our love, and exalt our gratitude towards him, to confirm our faith and strengthen our hope in him, and to fix and establish our purposes of obedience to him. All this, I say, will be the natural result even of a bare contemplation or remembrance of Christ's having freely given up himself to death, even the death of the cross, for us, and of his having thereby procured *remission of all our sins*, and a promise of eternal life and happiness, to all those that *obey* him. But,

Secondly, If we consider it, as it is *the communion of the body and blood of Christ*, that is, as it is to all faithful christians an actual participation of the benefits of Christ's death and passion, *viz. of remission of sins, of the hope of eternal happiness upon our obedience, and of the grace of the Holy Spirit to teach and enable us to obey*, we shall be abundantly convinc'd of the advantage and benefit of it to us. By this means we have the same strength and nourishment convey'd unto our souls, which the outward symbols, bread and wine, convey to our bodies. *We are made one with Christ, and Christ with*

us, and nothing but our own wilful disobedience shall be ever able to part us more from him.

This is a true and faithful account of the Lord's supper, which I think may be fairly summ'd up in these few and plain words. *It is a fœderal feast, or feast of covenant between God and man, instituted by Christ himself, and perpetually to be observed by all christians; where by partaking of bread and wine, in commemoration of Christ's body given, and his blood shed for them, they on their part acknowledge Christ for their Saviour and Redeemer, Lord and Master; and God on his part grants and confirms to them, under the symbols of bread and wine, the body and blood of his son Christ Jesus, that is, all the blessed effects of his body broken and his blood shed, viz. pardon of past sins, promise of eternal happiness upon future obedience of the gospel, and grace to direct and enable them to perform this obedience. And this feast is therefore call'd the Lord's supper, because it was instituted by our Lord at supper time.*

From

From what has been said, I think our obligations to receive this holy supper do abundantly appear. For,

First, We have here a plain command so to do, *Do this in remembrance of me*; a command, as has been already shewn you, which reacheth to all christians, and will oblige them, even to the end of the world. So that it is mere trifling with God, our Saviour and the world, to call our selves christians, and yet live in a wilful neglect of this plain command of Christ. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, saith our Saviour, and do not the things which I say?* to what purpose do ye in words acknowledge me to be your Master, and yet when I call upon you to *do this*, plainly declare by your actions that you do not regard me? Better had it been for you that you had never taken my sacred name into your mouths, than that you should thus abuse and blaspheme it. *Be not deceived, I will not be mocked: But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sydon, at the day of judgment, than for you.*

Secondly, This command of our Saviour is attended with a multitude of circumstances, which do every one of them

very much add to its force and obligation, and render the neglect of it more and more unpardonable. For.

First, It was his dying command; that very same night, in which he instituted this holy supper, was he betray'd into the hands of the Jews, in order to be mocked and derided, buffeted and scourged, and at last sacrificed upon the cross for our sakes. And can our dying Saviour require any thing of us, that we will not do? Can he speak, and shall not his last words be minded by us? What answer do ye think ye should have given him, had ye heard him speaking in this manner to you? My dearest
 “ children, whom I love so well, whose mi-
 “ series I am so deeply concern'd for,
 “ whose sins I am so very desirous to get
 “ a pardon for, that behold I am just now
 “ going to die an ignominious death upon
 “ the cross for you, that so, by the sacri-
 “ fice of my self, I may take away all
 “ your sins, and make you heirs of eter-
 “ nal glory. My best and dearest children,
 “ dearer to me than my life it self, hear-
 “ ken to the last words of your dying Sa-
 “ viour; I have but one thing more to
 “ require of you: Oh let not that be neg-
 lected

“ lected by you! let me intreat you,
“ with my last breath, that breath which
“ I am contented to part with for your
“ fakes, to preserve this my last command-
“ ment inviolable! Would ye not all have
“ said, Distrust us not, O blessed Master
“ we beseech thee; command whatsoever
“ thou see'st good, and we will chearfully
“ obey, tho' it be even to death it self.
“ Our hearts are affected with the sense of
“ thy approaching kindness, that we can
“ no more forget thy dying words, than
“ we can refuse to accept thy dying love.”

Secondly, *It is a very easy command;* take bread and wine, bless them, and then eat and drink of them in remembrance of me, is a commandment as little grievous as our hearts could wish for; so that they who neglect it, have nothing to say in excuse for themselves, but seem to sin purely for sinning's sake, and this is the very height of wickedness. Blessed God, that ever the devil should so far get possession of mens hearts, as to keep them from doing their duty, even where there is no hardship in doing it. How can these men in reason expect that our Saviour should be at any pains to save them, who are resolv'd
they

they will be at none to obey him? Or rather, how can they not expect to be made the unhappy instances of his wrathful displeasure, who will not do even this small thing to please him?

Thirdly, *This is a command, in which our obedience to Christ is more peculiarly try'd.* In most other of his commands, there are other obligations besides those of his authority, as in all moral duties, obligations from nature, reason, or the like; so that it is not very easy to tell, by mens compliance with these, whether they are true servants of Christ, or no; because they may, nay, and it is plain they sometimes do, comply with these duties, upon principles of nature or reason, when yet they have no true sense of their obligation from Christ's authority. But, in the duty before us, there being no obligation but Christ's positive Institution, they, who perform it as they ought, must certainly act upon a true christian principle, *viz.* a sense of the obedience they owe to Christ's commands. This then being a plain test of our being true christians, it is certainly our duty to let all the world see, by our compliance with it, that we
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are so; and that the obligation of Christ's authority, when alone, is abundantly sufficient to command us whithersoever it pleaseth.

Fourthly, *This command, is a more than ordinary trial of our gratitude and love to Christ*, because it commands nothing, but what we are bound even by the mere laws of love and gratitude, to be most ready to perform. For supposing Christ had had no authority to command us any thing; but had only requested of us that we would perpetually observe this his supper in commemoration of him; yet considering what great, unspeakably great things, he had done for us, we should have been most inexcusable, if we should not have answer'd this his request. The laws of love and gratitude are founded upon reason, and therefore ought to have a powerful influence upon reasonable creatures; and certainly all that love and gratitude can oblige us to, we must be obliged to in behalf of him, who has done more to engage our love, and deserve our thanks, than all the friends that we ever had in the world put together. Base and ungrateful wretches then must we needs be, if when he only desires

desires any thing of us, we do not make haste to fulfil his desires ; but most especially base and ungrateful, if when he desires of us only, that we would meet together now and then, to commemorate all his kindness towards us, we refuse to hear or regard him, as tho' he were unworthy our remembrance.

Fifthly, *This is a command, to do a thing vastly for our own good.* So that we must be fools as well as rebels, if we omit to do it. Of how much advantage the receiving the Lord's supper, is to every faithful christian, you have already seen, and from thence may judge how much it is your interest to receive it: and certainly, where your duty and your interest are so closely link'd together, it must be a strange spirit of contradiction and rebellion, or at least a strange degree of carelessness and supineness, that can make you forget or neglect your duty. You must have a mighty mind certainly to quarrel with our Saviour, who will rather forego your own interest, than obey his commands.

Sixthly, *This is a command, in which the honour of God and our Saviour are in a very extraordinary manner concern'd*
and

and which therefore we ought to be most particularly careful to observe. For since the holy supper was instituted on purpose for the solemn commemoration of the great loving-kindness of God and our Saviour in redeeming us, and for shewing forth to the world their great power, wisdom and goodness, in the redemption of us, and likewise the new title they hereby acquired to our service and obedience; we cannot possibly do any thing more for their honour, than to attend this solemn commemoration, and join with our fellow christians in acknowledging all glory, service and obedience to God, *who hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, and hath bought us with a price; and likewise to our Lord Jesus Christ who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood.* And the refusing to do this, looks as if we did not really believe christianity; *but counted the blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctify'd, an unholy thing.* And how high an affront this must needs be to God and our Saviour, your own hearts will tell you.

Seventh-

Seventhly, *This is a command which tends mightily to procure and promote love and unity amongst christians*, as has been before prov'd; and upon that account, challengeth a very particular regard and respect from us. Every member of a society is in an extraordinary manner obliged to pay a most exact obedience to those laws, which do more immediately concern the well-being of that society of which he professeth himself a member; and consequently every christian must lye under more than ordinary obligations to obey this command of Christ, concerning this supper, because the good of the christian church in general is very much concerned in it. It was design'd, and is very fit to unite and bind the members of Christ's church closer and closer together, and so to strengthen the main body; and those, who will not join in this, design plainly to betray the trust reposed in them, and, as far as they are able, defraud all their fellow members of those blessings of love, peace, mutual friendship, &c. which must have been the natural effects of their obedience in this point.

Lastly,

Lastly, *This is a command, which we are often put in mind of.* We hear of our obligations to it both from the desk, and from the pulpit; we read of them in the church catechism, and have a sensible remembrance of them, every now and then, at the communion table. We are frequently exhorted, intreated, and in the name of Christ commanded to attend his holy supper: we are told of the great danger of neglecting it, and both the mercies and terrors of the Lord are made use of to draw and compel us to it.

And now, if after all this, we still continue obstinate and undutiful, what can we expect but a punishment answerable to our obstinacy? A punishment that shall no more relent than we have done, but, being deaf to all our prayers and cries for mercy, shall with the same continued torments prey upon us, and be to us the sad remembrancers of this fatal obstinacy to all eternity.



C H A P. II.

Of Preparation for the Lord's Supper.

IN discoursing on this head, it will be convenient, from the very beginning, to distinguish betwixt *necessary* preparation, without which no man ought to come to the Lord's supper, and such as is only *expedient* or *adviseable* under certain circumstances; it being plain from experience, that for want of this distinction, men have been strangely confounded in their notions about this matter.

To the *necessary* preparation, no doubt those words of St. Paul referr'd, *Corinth. II. 28. Let a man examine, try or prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup*; because this is laid down at large, as a general rule to all christians; and it is here plainly supposed, that no man ought to *eat of that bread*

bread and drink of that cup, who has not first examined himself. Examined himself as to what? Our church tells us in few words, whether he repents him truly of his former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life, has a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and is in charity with all men.

In which words three things are propounded as necessary qualifications for the worthy receiving the Lord's supper. *First*, a sincere and compleat *repentance*, which shall not only look backwards with unfeigned sorrow for our sins past, but likewise forward, with stedfast purposes to lead a new life for the time to come. *Secondly*, a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, such a firm and hearty persuasion and assurance of God's having redeemed us from *sin* and *death* by the death of Christ, and of his having made our Lord and Master, and promis'd eternal life to us upon condition of our obedience to him, as shall work in us a readiness of mind to serve and obey him in all things, and more especially shall dispose us to commemorate his death, with

the highest gratitude and most affectionate thanksgiving. *Lastly*, An universal love and *charity*, which shall extend to all men, even our very enemies; and make us not only forgive all their trespasses against us, but likewise *blefs* them, *pray* for them, and, in one word, do them all the good we can.

Now that every of these is really a necessary qualification for the worthy receiving the Lord's supper, will most evidently appear, by considering them a little apart. And,

First, As to *repentance*, it is plain, even from reason, that without this we must needs be unfit to join in any of God's *ordinances*; it being downright hypocrisy, and a mere mocking of God, to declare ourselves his servants by communicating in these outward rites of his religion, when yet at the same time we are not inwardly disposed at all to serve him in the most important parts of our duty, *living righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world*. And therefore we find the scriptures constantly representing God, as one that abhorreth and abominateth the service of the wicked, and
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resents their *prayers* and *sacrifices*, their *incense* and *solemn meeting*, as *abomination* and *iniquity*.

Much less can a wicked man be fit to join in this holy ordinance of the Lord's supper; for the end of this being to lament and bewail those sins, which were the occasion of our blessed Lord's death; and to rejoice in that victory, which our Lord by his death obtain'd over sin; he must certainly be a very unfit man to do this, who still taketh part with sin, sheweth a favour and liking to it, and instead of being *servant to Christ*, is indeed the *servant of sin*.

Besides, we know the Lord's supper is a *covenanting* ordinance, wherein we are to engage ourselves to the service of Christ; and God, upon supposition of such our engagement, is to make over to us all the benefits of Christ's death and passion, *remission of sins, grace to enable us to live according to the rules of the gospel, and eternal salvation upon our so living*. But now the wicked man is unqualified for both parts of this covenant; for how shall he engage himself in the service of Christ, who is not resolv'd to forsake his

kins? Or what title can he possibly have to the benefits of Christ's death, who will not perform that obedience, which is a necessary condition of his coming at them? So that such a person can have nothing to do at the Lord's supper; he is not concern'd in the business of it; and therefore, if he does come to it, must be look'd upon as an intruder, and one that purposely designed to provoke and affront God. *Unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest to be reform'd, and castest my words behind thee.*

Secondly, As to faith; without this, the scripture tells us, it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God, he that draweth near to him in any of his ordinances, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder to them that diligently seek him. God is not to be put off with outward professions and pretences, to be worshipped only by our lips, while our hearts are far from him: but he is a God of the heart, a searcher of our reins, and a tryer of our most inward thoughts: and therefore it will be better for us not to
worship

worship him at all, than not to worship him in earnest; never to pretend, by any outward signs, to believe in him, than not to believe as we pretend.

And indeed can any thing possibly be more absurd and ridiculous, as well as blasphemous and provoking, than for those to pretend to commemorate Christ's dying for us, who do not believe one tittle of it? For those to acknowledge him the Saviour of the world, the Lord and Judge of it, *who say in their hearts* it is no such thing? This is certainly either to question God's omniscience or his regard to sincerity, or else to defy his power; and therefore sure we cannot think this an acceptable service to him.

Besides, are not all the blessings of the gospel, which we hope to have confirm'd to us in the Lord's supper, promised to *believers* only? or can we think that the inestimable benefits of Christ's death, are to be had at so cheap a rate, that there is no need either of believing any thing of them, or so much as being thankful for them? No certainly; *the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, unto eve-*

ry one that believeth, and to none else; to him that believeth with a lively faith, (not a faith without works, which St. James tells us, is dead) and aboundeth therein with thanksgiving. To what purpose then, but to aggravate his condemnation, shall that man dare to come to the Lord's supper, in expectation of the blessings of the gospel, who is so far from abounding in faith with thanksgiving, that he hath neither faith nor thanksgiving.

Lastly, As to charity, this is upon many accounts, a necessary qualification for our worthy receiving the Lord's supper. For first, it cannot be supposed that any man can be fit to commemorate the great love and kindness of our blessed Lord dying for us, who is not so far affected with it, as to endeavour all he can to transcribe and imitate it. How great things soever we may say in commendation of it, how much soever we may in words extol it, we shall not be accepted of God, if we in our actions blaspheme it. And it is in truth no less than to call our Saviour fool in dying for us, when we were his enemies; to think that we are not obliged

obliged to *love, forgive, and help* one another. Either his love to us had no good grounds and reasons for it; or if it had, and we think so, we ought to shew that we do so, by letting the same grounds and reasons influence our love. *Secondly*, Without charity, one of the great ends of our meeting at the Lord's supper will be defeated, which is to propagate love and charity amongst christians. *Thirdly*, Without this, the scripture assures us, all our services, all our gifts and graces will stand for nothing in the sight of God. *Though we speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, we are become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though we have all faith, so that we could remove mountains, and have not charity, we are nothing.* *Fourthly*, Without this, we are incapable of receiving any benefit from the Lord's supper; for remission of sins, which must first be obtain'd, before we can hope for any other mercy from God, is promised only to the charitable. *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will*

also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Lastly, Our blessed Lord has commanded us not to dare to bring any ill will or enmity along with us, when we come to his supper; nay farther, if we are come to it, and find that we have unawares brought any, or go away and lay them aside, before we presume to partake of it. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Thus much is, I think, sufficient to prove that *repentance, faith and charity*, are necessary qualifications for the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper. That they are the only necessary ones is very plain, because they are all that is necessary to salvation, all that is necessary to give a man a title to all the promises and blessings of the gospel; and certainly more cannot be necessary to fit a man for the Lord's supper, than to fit him for heaven;

ven ; to fit him for the seal of the promises, than for the promises themselves.

But here I shall be asked; if this be all the preparation necessary, how comes it to pass that we have so many sermons preached, and books written about setting apart some time, suppose a week, for private devotion and examination, every time before we receive the Lord's supper? How comes it to pass, that many very good men, if they happen to be disturbed by any worldly business, so that they cannot attend this their weekly preparation, look upon themselves as unfit, for that time, to attend the holy communion? To this I answer,

First, That I told you before that there was a preparation, though not absolutely necessary, yet, under some circumstances, expedient and adviseable. Where men have time and other opportunities, it is very commendable in them to do all they can, by reading the scriptures and other good books, and by prayer, and other exercises of devotion, to excite and encourage, to actuate and quicken, all their graces and virtues, that so they may appear in their best robes at their Lord's table.

ble. This is such a piece of respect to God and our Saviour, as cannot fail of being well accepted of them. But then,

Secondly, We must be careful not to carry this matter too far, and make other *necessary* conditions of *communicating worthily*, besides what God has made. He has no where commanded us to say a certain number of prayers, to fast so many days, and to ask our selves so many questions, before we communicate; nor doth the nature of our duty require any such thing of us. And if our *spiritual pastors* have put us upon these things, they have gone beyond their commission, and departed from the doctrine of the church, which solemnly invites all such, *as do truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, to draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to their comfort*; without asking them whether they have made any farther preparation.

Lastly, As for those who refrain from coming to the Lord's supper, because they have

have been hinder'd from making this particular preparation: let them be never so good and never so wise in other things, *yet in this I praise them not.* For certainly it is an argument of a weak mind, and not of a *sound judgment*, for men to make to themselves duties, which God and reason have not made: It is *superstition*, and not religion, for men to place their duty in little niceties and punctilio's, and to overlook the *weightier matters* of the law. And yet this they certainly do, who excuse themselves from the great and important duty of communicating, purely upon account of their not having perform'd some little forms and exercises, which nothing but their own fancies and other men's imprudent discourfes and examples have made duties. Besides, they do by this means debar themselves from the great and inexpressible benefits of communicating; they omit a most happy occasion of glorifying God and their Saviour, and doing good to their brethren and themselves, only to humour groundless scruples, and unreasonable curiosities.

Nay,

Nay, even themselves at other times condemn themselves; they can readily come to other ordinances, as praying, hearing the word, &c. without any such preparation as this; and yet this would be every whit as commendable here, as for the holy sacrament. We may *hear and pray*, as well as *receive* unworthily; and yet this they seem not to be much concern'd about; which plainly shews that they are guided in this matter more by example and fancy, than reason or religion.

The sum of all is this. We cannot possibly, by any preparation make our selves too pure, and devout guests for the Lord's table; and therefore, when we have opportunity, it will highly become us by prayer and other such means, to trim and deck our selves for it. But still we must always remember that the great and only necessary preparation is *repentance, faith, and charity*; a pure innocent mind, a firm and stedfast faith in Christ, an ardent and impartial affection to our brethren. Without these, all other preparations are vain and of no account, and with these we are fit guests to receive the Lord's supper where-ever we meet it,
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tho' never so unexpectedly, and without the least warning. He, who is possess'd of these divine graces, is always fit, without any further preparation, for death and heaven, and then undoubtedly fit for any means and ordinances of religion whatsoever.

But here I shall be ask'd, how a man can know that he is thus prepar'd? I answer, his own mind must tell him, and if he doth but consult it honestly and with sincerity it will. No body but himself can inform him, whether he be in temper and disposition, in firm purpose and resolution to quit all his sins, without the least reserve, and to endeavour, to the utmost of his power, to live for the future, as becometh the gospel of Christ. No body can tell him, what he believeth, what he unfeignedly acknowledgeth to be true, but himself; nor can any other be able to inform him, whether he heartily forgiveth all men their trespasses, and is ready upon all occasions to do them the most good he can. No man knoweth the heart of a man but himself; and he may know it if he be faithful to himself. Otherwise we are in vain call'd upon in scripture to *examine*

amine ourselves, to try our thoughts, and consult our consciences.

Well, but you have formerly examin'd your self, and thought your self rightly dispos'd in all these points; but you found by your after-behaviour, that you deceiv'd your self, and therefore how shall you trust your self again? I answer, the more sensible you are of any mistake you have formerly made in this matter, the more heedful and watchful over your self ought you to be for the future. It may be your heart was in right temper before, when you thought it so, but you let it slide back afterwards; therefore, *tho' you think you stand now, take heed lest you fall.* It may be you were careless and remiss in examining your self before, and then it is no wonder that you found your self mistaken; therefore be strict and severe with thy self now, that thou may'st be mistaken no more.

But may you venture to go to the sacrament, immediately upon your conversion from your sins? Must you not stay some considerable time to try, by your actions, whether your purposes of amendment are sincere or no? Yes, if you cannot trust your self, you had best so to do; if you are
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in doubt of it; you must not dare to mock God. But if, after a thorough search and examination of your self, you are fully persuaded, that you are really beginning a new life, and that you shall persevere in it, I see no reason then why you should not come; *come to him that refresheth such as are weary and heavy laden*; come to him who having wrought in thee to will, according to his good purpose, will infallibly, if it be not thy own fault, work in thee to do likewise, and so finish the good work, which he has happily and graciously begun in thee.

We read in the *Acts* of the apostles, that the new converts to christianity, without any time of trial, were immediately admitted to the Lord's supper; for so we are told, *Acts ii. that all*, the whole three thousand new converts there mentioned, immediately after their conversion, continued in *breaking of bread*, that is, in the communion of the Lord's supper. And therefore I can see no reason, why a man, that really thinks a true change of mind wrought in him, should not presently, upon his assurance of such a change, from an honest and impartial examination of himself,

self, hope that he is a fit guest for our Lord's table. Especially considering how kindly the prodigal son in the gospel is received and treated by his Father, even immediately upon his return.

I shall add no more, but that I most earnestly beseech men to be very faithful to themselves in this weighty business of self-examination. They are the only persons that can suffer by making a false judgment of themselves, and therefore it highly stands them in stead, *so to judge themselves, that they be not judged of the Lord; so to search and examine their own consciences (and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God; but so) that they may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage garment required by God in the holy scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy table.*



C H A P. III.

Of frequency of communicating.

I Shall not here detain you with a long account how the primitive christians communicated at first once a day, then daily for a considerable time, and at length never seldomer than once a week. The state of the church, while in its infancy, and under persecution, required then a more frequent performance of this duty, for the strengthening and comforting of its members, and for the propagation of the faith, than now, when it is well grown, and generally spread, and has gotten helps and advantages from secular interest and power. And therefore the example of the primitive christians in this point, circumstances having much varied between their times and ours, cannot be an exact rule to us. However thus much we may very fairly infer from it, that we ought to be frequent in

this duty, tho' not so frequent as they were.

But that which it principally concerns a private christian to know, as the case stands now, is how often he ought to partake of the Lord's supper, when administered *in the parish where he resides*: I say *in the parish where he resides*, because certainly private christians are not bound to look further: these being the places in which the church has commanded them to attend the ordinances of religion, and to expect the administration of them.

And the answer to this is very plain and easy: *That we ought not to omit any opportunity, so offered to us, of partaking of the Lord's supper.* For, considering how much our partaking of it is for the honour of God and our Saviour, for the credit of our religion, the good of the christian society, of which we profess ourselves members, and our own particular interest and advantage; I cannot see how we can answer it either to God, our Saviour, our brethren, or our selves, if we at any time neglect to partake of it. Can we doubt whether it will not be highly displeasing to God; if when he calls us together

gether to give thanks and praise to him, in a most solemn manner, for his abundant mercies in Christ Jesus, we at any time unthankfully refuse to come? Do we think that our blessed Saviour can take it well at our hands; if, when he, by his ministers, invites us to commemorate his love in dying for us, we at any time turn our backs upon him, as those who think him not worthy our remembrance? Are we afraid that we shall give too much countenance to our religion, if we always appear upon this occasion; or that the church will grow too strong, by our thus often becoming *one bread and one body*? or do we suspect that we shall be too much gainers by our constant communicating in the blessed effects of the body and blood of Christ. Methinks I am ashamed to ask such questions as these. Oh! with what joy ought we to run to our Lord's table whenever we behold it spread for us? How ought the sight of the heavenly food, there prepared for us, to transport and delight us? How much more eagerly ought we to embrace every opportunity of having the pardon of our sins confirmed; and the promises of grace and everlasting life renewed

to us, than of heaping up riches, honours, or any other worldly good? and yet we are sure to be careful enough to let slip none of these.

But perhaps you will say, certainly there are some times, when a man may be dispensed with from communicating, some reasons which will excuse his absence; and every time of staying from the Lord's table is not sure to be look'd upon as a sin of omission. I answer, that the excuses which will avail in this case are very few. That which is commonly made, of want of time for particular preparation, I have already shewed to be insufficient in the foregoing chapter; and I know of none that will hold good but these three.

First, In some parishes the number of communicants is so vastly great, that they cannot possibly communicate all at one time, at least not with any tolerable conveniency; and in such a case, a good man not only may, but ought to give way and make room for others, who have a right to communicate as well as he. But then we must be very careful that when we do absent our selves upon this account, there be real ground and reason for it; and that
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we may be sure of this, we shall do well to consult our minister about it, who is the most competent judge in this matter.

Secondly, It may sometimes so happen, that a man just before the time when he should receive the Lord's supper, by some sudden and surprizing occasion, may be drawn into some gross and enormous sin, and not have time enough between that and the administration of the sacrament, to recollect and examine himself, to try whether he be truly sorrowful for this his fault, and do sincerely detest and repent of it. And if so, he ought certainly for that time to stay away, and make his peace with God, and to make himself sure that he has a right to the benefits of Christ's death and passion, before he presumeth to come to the communion of them.

Lastly, Whatever will excuse a man from coming to church, as works of necessity or charity, being sick and in distress ourselves, or attending upon such as are so, and need our help, &c. will, by parity of reason, excuse us from coming to the Lord's supper. But he who comes to church, and yet at the same time neglects the Lord's supper, to which he is there invited, with-

out either of the two forementioned reasons, is inexcusable. And upon this account, I suppose, it was, that the canons apostolical, and the synod of *Antioch*, threaten every one of the faithful with excommunication, who come to church to hear the holy scriptures, but stay not to participate of the holy supper.

But it may be farther urged ; Doth not the law of the land it self, which obligeth us to communicate three times a year only, suppose this to be sufficient ?

I answer, *first*, that the law of our land plainly supposeth it very good and commendable to do it oftner, because it saith, we shall receive it *three times at the least*.

Secondly, If what has been said above concerning the reasons of our omitting no opportunity of communicating, be true, this is enough to oblige us without any farther consideration.



CHAP. IV.

*Objections against communicating
answer'd.*

H Oping that some men at least are sincere in their excuses, which they make for coming to the Lord's supper, how light and trifling soever the excuses themselves may be; I shall not grudge my time and pains in considering them distinctly, and giving answers to them. And *first*, the most common excuse which men make in this case, is that they are *unworthy*, and therefore dare not communicate; always bearing in mind those terrible words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* Now in answer to this, I desire men to consider these three things.

First, What it is they mean, when they say they are *unworthy*. For, if they mean any thing to the purpose, they must

mean either that they are not sorry for their sins, and fully resolv'd to forsake them; or that they do not stedfastly believe all the articles of the christian faith; or *lastly*, that they are not in charity with the world, ready to forgive and do good to all mankind; for these are the only things which can render a man *unworthy* to receive the Lord's supper. And yet I verily believe, that the far greatest number of those, who call themselves very *unworthy*, would think themselves very much injured, if any of these things should be said of them. Well then, such men give themselves their own answer; they are not really *unworthy*, and therefore they may safely come.

But, say they, we are incumbred mightily with worldly business; we do not find in our selves a zealous and a warm *faith and love* of God, our Saviour and religion; we have contests, disputes and law-suits with many of our neighbours; and these things we are afraid render us *unworthy*. By no means; if we pursue our worldly business honestly and fairly, without letting it inroach upon the business of religion, by swallowing up all our time,
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and leaving none, or very little for the worship of God and service of our neighbours, we not only do what is innocent, but commendable, and our duty. If we are *rooted and grounded in faith*, so that in the general course of our lives, *we have our conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ*, and *keep all his commandments*; this is a sufficient proof of our *faith and love* to God, our Saviour and religion, altho' we never have any hot fits and sudden starts, raptures and extasies. *Lastly*, If we are contending with our neighbours for nothing, but what we sincerely think our right; if we take a fair and legal way of righting our selves, and prosecute our suits without the least malice or ill-will to our neighbour's person; there is no harm in all this; none of these things are any bar to our communicating. But,

Secondly, If you are really *unworthy*, whose fault is it that you are so? May you not have, or at least might you not have had for asking, such a measure of divine grace, as would sufficiently enable you to attain all those qualifications which are necessary to render a man a *worthy* communicant; and why then did you not, or why

why now do you not accept and make use of it? Do you think to make your own fault your excuse? or will you plead in your behalf that you are not worthy, because you will not be so? No, certainly; all that you can do in this case, is to make what haste you can possibly, by immediately embracing and complying with the offers of God's grace to become worthy; that so there may lie no fault at your door, either on one side or the other, but that you may both communicate and communicate worthily.

Lastly, As to those terrible words of St. Paul, *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;* I might observe, that the word which we here render *damnation*, signifieth no more than *judgment*, and probably was design'd in this place only to denote temporal judgments; but I shall not insist upon this. For whatever the meaning of these words may be, it is certain, that the unworthy receiving the Lord's supper, till repented of, is a damnable sin; as being a downright impudent mocking of God and Christ, by pretending our selves their servants, and solemnly vowing all holy obedience

dience to them, when yet in our hearts we at the same time mean no such thing. But what then? Shall we therefore stay away from the communion, and by so doing wilfully break a plain commandment of our Saviour, and thereby become guilty of a damnable sin? This is to take a certain damnation for fear of none, which we may avoid if we please. No, certainly; the juster consequence, in this case, is that we ought to use our utmost endeavours to qualify our selves for communicating worthily, that so we may have no reason to fear the dreadful punishment of communicating *unworthily*.

Secondly, Others are afraid of communicating, lest they should fall into sin afterward, and this they think would be unpardonable; for this reason some men have thought it wisdom to abstain from communicating till the time of their death, when they are beyond all danger of sinning more.

Now I readily grant that it is a very great aggravation of any sin, that it is committed after receiving the holy communion, because this makes it a sin against new vows and promises, which we there
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made, a sin after greater measures of grace and divine assistance, which we there received, than we had before, and consequently a more inexcusable sin than it would have been before ; but that it should be unpardonable, is what can never be prov'd. For.

First, It is certain from our Saviour's own words, *That all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the holy ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.* So that unless sinning after communicating be the sin against the holy ghost, which I think was never yet pretended, we need not fear its being forgiven us, upon our sincere repentance for it, and endeavouring to be more careful for the future. But,

Secondly, Did not St. Peter, after receiving the communion, nay, and immediately after too, commit sin, and that too one of the greatest sins that he could possibly be guilty of, *the denying his Lord and Master?* and yet no body doubts but upon his sorrow and repentance, this was entirely forgiven him. And ought not this example to be a great encouragement to all such, as are so unhappy to sin, as
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he did, upon repentance like his, to hope for a pardon like his too? However,

Lastly, The consideration of this aggravating circumstance of our sins, ought to make us extremely cautious and fearful of sinning after the communion; for no wise man will venture himself into an eminent danger, merely because there is a possibility of his escaping out of it.

Thirdly, Others think to excuse themselves by saying that they have already, perhaps often too, been partakers of the Lord's supper, and been so far from receiving those benefits from it, which we pretend are to be had there, that they have not found any benefit at all by it, and therefore they cannot conceive to what purpose they should give themselves the trouble of coming to it any more. To which I answer,

First, That generally speaking, this is not true; it being plain from experience, that most men, even the worst of men too, gain this sensible advantage by communicating, that, for some time both before and after, they are more serious, more thoughtful, and keep themselves within stricter bounds of temperance and sobriety, than

than they us'd to do at other times. And this is a very considerable advantage, and has very often prov'd the happy occasion of men's looking into and examining their own lives, of their finding fault with and becoming sick of themselves, and of their seeking a remedy for their sickness, in a thorough repentance and reformation.

Secondly, If men do not find these benefits which we assure them of, in the *communion of the body and blood of Christ*, it must be wholly their own fault; for God is *faithful, who hath promised*, and will infallibly make good his part of the covenant, to all those who are careful to make good theirs. So that this objection so far as it is true, is an objection only against our selves; it can be no reason for our absenting from the holy communion, but it may and ought to be a powerful reason for our taking care to come so prepared, that we may be fit to receive the blessings there offered by God to us.

Thirdly, Men are apt to judge of the effects of their receiving the communion before (according to the nature of things) they can possibly appear. God's grace, though it works in a supernatural manner,

ner, yet it attends the natural motion of men's own endeavours, works and keeps equal pace along with them. And therefore our reason will tell us, that it must take up some time to watch and observe the effects of it. The conversion of a sinner, and perfection of a saint, are not things to be wrought in a moment: there are a great many little steps and degrees to be taken and gain'd, which are almost insensible, at least do not become remarkable, till they have been often added one to another; and therefore we must wait with patience, and keep on doing our own business, and then in time we need not fear but the works of the Lord will be made perfect in us. We can no more argue that we do not grow in grace, because we do not see every small increase of such our growth, than that we do not grow in bodily stature, for the same reason. But,

Lastly, Supposing no benefits at all were to accrue to us, from our receiving the Lord's supper: what then? Are we to obey none of our Saviour's commandments, but such as we are to be gainers by? Is it not enough that he has plainly enjoin'd

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us to do this? Are not his power and authority sufficient grounds and motives for our obedience? Moreover, are we never to minister to the glory and honour of God and our Saviour, but where we can at the same time minister to our own profits too? This, methinks, is strange doctrine, especially in a christian's mouth, who promised at his baptism, without reserve, to keep all God's commandments, and to walk in the same unto his life's end.

Fourthly, Another objection comes from those men, who do not care to communicate with ill men, who they see constantly flock to the Lord's table; much less to receive the communion from the hands of an ill minister, as it may sometimes happen. But this I hope to shew to be rather an affected niceness and squeamishness, than well-grounded wisdom and religion. For,

First, As to lay-communicants, supposing them to be ill men, which yet charity, especially such charity as a man ought to bring with him to the communion, commandeth you to be well assured of before you suppose it; yet, what is that to you?
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are you bound to answer for their unworthiness in receiving, or for the sins they shall be guilty of after? are you afraid that they are infectious, and that you shall catch their sins of them, only by looking on them, or kneeling by them? if not, what means this foolish nicety, these groundless scruples? would it not become you better when you meet such men at the Lord's table, to hope that they are now beginning to repent and amend, and to wish and pray that it may be so? ought you not rather to embrace and welcome them with joy thither, as the angels do a repenting sinner, and to lay hold of this occasion of encouraging them to love thyself, and other good men, as that which may afterwards prove a likely means of making them love that religion, to which thou and they owe all their goodness? This certainly would be the properest behaviour at this feast of love; this charity of thine to them would nearest resemble that of thy Lord to thee.

But you will say, perhaps, that the thoughts of that extreme danger, which they incur by coming unworthily to the Lord's table, and their cold and indifferent

behaviour there, discompose thy thoughts and deaden thy devotions. Be it so; yet this is not thy fault, but theirs, so far as they are the necessary occasion of it. But surely it will be no hard matter for thee to divert thy thoughts from them at such a time, and by meditation and private prayer to apply them to the business thou art about. Nay, the very thoughts of the great danger of communicating unworthily and indecently, which you say these men bring into your mind, are very proper thoughts at that time. Add to this, that our Lord himself gave the communion to *Judas*, as bad a man as we can well suppose, and the rest of the apostles made no objection against his communicating; and who art thou then that pretendest to be wiser than our Lord and his apostles?

Secondly, As to an ill *minister*. This objection might be of some force, if the virtue and efficacy of the communion did at all depend upon the goodness or badness of him who administreteth it; but this it doth not. It is enough that he be lawfully ordain'd and impowered to minister to us in holy things; farther considered, as to his goodness or badness, there is no
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more in the case betwixt him and us, than in the case betwixt us and any other lay-brother; and this, I hope, has been sufficiently considered.

Fifthly, It is objected by some, that they cannot come to the Lord's supper, as administered by the church of *England*, because they cannot comply with the posture of kneeling, in which that enjoins them to receive it. But why can they not comply?

Is it because the posture is in it self unlawful? That they will be hardly so foolish as to say; it being acknowledged by all mankind that postures are indifferent things; and the practice of the best men that ever lived, nay, even of our Lord himself, having plainly prov'd that there is no unlawfulness in this of kneeling.

Is it because the supreme authority of our nation has commanded it? (for the rubrics of our common prayer are all acts of parliament, and by these we are commanded to kneel at the communion; a thing which I wish some men would seriously lay to heart) this methinks must be strange perverseness, to refuse to obey our governors in indifferent things, the on-

ly things in our obedience to them that can be try'd.

Is it because this was not the posture in which our Lord instituted this holy supper? How do they know that? for the scriptures are silent in that matter; but supposing it was not, do these men think us obliged to observe all the circumstances which our Lord then made use of? If not all, why more particularly this of his posture? If all, why then do they themselves vary so much from many of them, as they do? Why do not they make ready the Lord's supper in an upper room; why not at the same time of the day which he did?

Is it because kneeling is no table gesture? I answer, that the nature of the Lord's supper doth not require that it should be so; if it did, it would likewise, for the same reason, require other circumstances proper to a feast and a table, which yet they who make this objection, will by no means allow of, so that in this they give themselves their answer.

Is it because kneeling is not a proper posture, not suitable to the business of communicating? certainly the most proper of any whatsoever; as serving best amongst

mongst us, to express that humility and thankfulness of mind, with which we receive and commemorate, as we ought to do, the benefits of Christ's death and passion. Or,

Lastly, Is it because this posture is abused to very ill purposes by idolaters, more especially by the papists in this very instance of communicating? I answer, that the abuse of an indifferent thing, can be no argument against the lawful use of it, more particularly the use of it to very good and commendable ends.

Sixthly and lastly, There is one other objection, which, tho' very seldom mention'd, yet I fear, lieth at the bottom of many mens hearts, and that is, giving away money at the communion. But here it is to be considered, that altho' this is a very good expression of that charity, which we are indispensably bound to bring with us thither; yet this is no necessary condition of, or qualification for, our worthy receiving. Those who have nothing or very little to give, have equal right to the communion, and will be made as welcome at it by our Saviour, as they who give never so largely out of their abundance. Let not any

man neglect this happy opportunity of doing honour to God and his Saviour, and unspeakable good to himself and his brethren, purely because he cannot make such a shew with his money as other men. Let him give cheerfully what he is able, and he need not fear but that our Saviour, who so much commended the widow's charity in her *mite*, will likewise accept and approve his? Or if he has nothing else to offer to God, yet let him offer him a penitent, faithful and charitable heart; and this he will find dear and precious in his sight.

And thus I have answer'd, I hope, fully and clearly, all those objections which men ordinarily make against communicating; at least all such as occur to my mind at present. If there be any others that have escaped me, I shall be very thankful to those who will be so kind as to inform me of them, and most readily give them their due weight and consideration.

Three prayers to be us'd by such as have leisure, every morning and evening with their other devotions, for a week before they receive the Lord's supper.

For Repentance.

O Most holy Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? and has more especially required, that those who compass thine altar, should wash their hands in innocency: grant me, I beseech thee, unfeigned repentance for my past sins, a most deep and hearty sorrow for them, and most firm and stedfast purposes and resolutions to forsake them; and do thou, by thy grace, so assist and strengthen these my resolutions, that they may become effectual, for the bringing forth fruit unto holiness, so that in the end I may have everlasting life. Thou only, O Lord, art able to work in me both to will and to do, according as I ought. Cleanse me therefore, I most humbly pray thee, from all filthiness, both of flesh and

The Great Duty of

spirit, and enable me so to perfect holiness in thy fear, that I may be a fit guest for thy Son's table, and likewise meet to be partaker of that inheritance of the saints in light, which thou, in thine infinite mercy, has promis'd to all such as faithfully serve and please thee, through thy dear Son, and our alone Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Of Faith.

O Most gracious and ever merciful Lord, who has promised to all them that believe in thy Son Jesus, everlasting life, and has instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges and seals of these thy promises: give me, I most earnestly beg of thee, such a sure and lively faith in him, as may entitle me to become a worthy receiver of these pledges, and heir of these promises. I believe, O Lord, help thou my unbelief; I believe that the blessed Jesus laid down his life for me, and acknowledge with all possible thankfulness, his inexpressible kindness in so doing; I believe that he gave himself for me and all mankind, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself

self a peculiar people, zealous of good works; therefore will I endeavour to manifest my faith by my works. I believe that there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved, but the name of the Lord Jesus; therefore in his name only I implore thy mercy, increase of faith here, and of glory hereafter. *Amen.*

For Charity.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. More especially now, when I am going to commemorate the unspeakable love of my blessed Saviour in dying for me, let me not be destitute of love towards my brethren, O let my readiness to forgive others their trespasses, fit me for thy forgiveness of mine; let me not be an enemy to any man, lest I be thy enemy too; but give me that charity, which covereth

The Great Duty of

vereth a multitude of sins, that charity, by which all men may know me to be Christ's disciple, which shall dispose me to be of a meek, patient, long suffering, forgiving temper, like him, and to do good to all men, as he did; that charity, which shall never fail, but shall go along with us into, and make us fit inhabitants for that city of love, the new *Jerusalem*. Grant this, O merciful Father, for the sake of thy Son Christ Jesus, through whose love alone we are encouraged to present these our requests to thee. *Amen.*

A prayer to be said in the morning before we communicate, after our usual prayers.

O Most gracious and ever merciful Lord God, who art always wont to give more than we either desire or deserve; accept, I beseech thee, my most humble and hearty thanks for thy great mercy in bringing me to the light of this day, and thereby giving me an opportunity of meeting my dear Redeemer at his holy table; of testifying my love and gratitude

tude to him, and of communicating in all the blessed effects of his love towards me; of renewing to him my baptismal vow of faith and obedience, and of receiving from him fresh confirmations of the benefits made over to me in my baptism, even remission of sins, grace, and eternal life. O that I may be careful duly to improve this happy opportunity now before me! that I may eat and drink so worthily, as to eat and drink my own salvation! that my sins, which are many and great, more especially all such as have been committed knowingly and wilfully, (*such as --- Here mention those wilful sins, if there are any such, which thou knowest thy self to have been guilty of*) may be forgiven me; and that henceforward, whether I live, I may live unto thee; so whether I dye, I may dye unto thee; that so living or dying, I may be ever thine.

And the same mercies, which I beg for my self, I beg likewise for all my fellow christians; more particularly those who shall this day, any where, partake in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. O let not one of their precious souls perish, who seem to be so near
to

to the kingdom of heaven; but do thou, by thy grace so assist and direct, strengthen and support them, now and evermore, in doing thy will, and working out their own salvation, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A short prayer to be said after that which we commonly say at our first coming into the church.

GRant, O blessed Jesu, that the nearer I draw to thy table, the nearer I may likewise draw to thee in purity of heart and affections, in strength and liveliness of faith, in fervency and extensiveness of charity. That so, being of the same mind which was in thee, and thinking, believing, and doing, as becometh thy disciple, I may be meet to be partaker of those pledges of thy favour, which thou now offerest at thy holy table to all thy faithful servants, and of those joys in another world, which thou in thy mercy hast prepared for them. *Amen.*

Just

Just before we receive.

Hear those prayers, O Lord, which have been offer'd up by the congregation, and for the sake of thy well beloved Son Jesus Christ, suffer us to draw nigh unto thee, and to hope for thy mercy. In his name alone it is, that I, a most vile wretch and miserable sinner, am bold to call thee Father, and to intreat thy favour and forgiveness. O let his merits answer for my unworthiness; let his death preserve me from dying; let his body and blood preserve my body and soul unto everlasting life. *Amen.*

Immediately after receiving the bread.

O Merciful Lord, grant, I beseech thee that by virtue of thy dear Son's body given for me, and represented to me by this bread, I may become acceptable in thy sight, obtain thy pardon and peace, thy grace and assistance, thy everlasting happiness and glory. And do thou, O Lord, so fill my heart with thankfulness for the inestimable benefits of my Saviour's

viour's death and passion, that I may be ready to do any thing, even to lay down my life for him; and that loving nothing more than him, he may vouchsafe to think me worthy of him, and to crown me with eternal glory in his kingdom. *Amen.*

Immediately after receiving the wine.

I Thank thee from the bottom of my heart, O gracious God, that thou hast redeemed us to thy self by the blood of thy Son; O let me evermore bear in mind thy inexpressible kindness and condescension in so doing; and shew forth my sense of them, in a sincere, universal and constant obedience to thee. That so the Lord Jesus may be indeed the author of salvation to me, and I, being wash'd and cleans'd from all my sins in his blood, may appear pure and spotless before thee, and be admitted to partake of those rivers of pleasure, which are at thy right hand for evermore. *Amen.*

When

When you return to your seat.

GRant, O blessed Lord, that I, and all those who meet together this day under pretence of commemorating thy death, may so effectually remember it, as for ever after to hate those sins, which were the occasion of it; so effectually remember it, as constantly to love and adore thee for it; so effectually remember it, as to use our utmost endeavours to imitate and transcribe it; so effectually remember it, as to remember that we are thine, bought with the price of thy blood, and are therefore bound to serve thee, with our bodies and spirits, which are thine. *Amen.*

A prayer to be used the evening after communicating, with our other devotions.

Acept, O blessed Lord, accept my unfeigned thanks, for thy great mercy in admitting me this day to the sweet and comfortable communion of the body and blood of Christ, and for all those benefits

benefits which I there receiv'd. Enable me for the future to live worthy of them, to make good all the promises and vows I there made, and to continue stedfast in that repentance, faith and charity, which I there profess'd. Marvellous was thy love in sending thy Son to die for us, and particularly great has it been towards me, in that it has caus'd me to be born in a christian country, where I had early and easy opportunities of knowing the christian religion, and that too in its utmost purity and simplicity, and have long been protect-ed and maintain'd in the free and undisturb'd exercise of it. Oh that my behaviour may prove answerable to these mercies; that I may use all these happy opportunities, which many other poor souls want, as one that is truly sensible of the advantage of them; that I may grow in grace, and the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and abound in every good word and work, to the praise and glory of God. I know, O Lord, that if we sin wilfully, after that we have receiv'd the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for^o of judgment, and fiery indignation. O let me constantly
ly

ly carry this in my thoughts, and seriously reflect upon it, that so I may not be of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

I pray likewise, that all my fellow christians may sincerely perform that covenant, which they have this day made to thee; that they cease to do evil and learn to do well, that they may be strong in the faith of Christ, and love one another, as he hath loved them; that so thy honour may be effectually promoted, the salvation of all men further'd, thy Son's kingdom enlarg'd, and his coming hasten'd, to the inexpressible comfort and eternal joy of all those, who having sincerely obey'd the gospel of Christ here, shall evermore rejoice in the blessed fruits and rewards of their obedience in heaven. Grant this, O merciful Father for the sake of thy well-beloved Son Christ Jesus, to whom, with thy self, and eternally blessed Spirit, three persons but one God, be all honour and glory, might, majesty and dominion, from this time, henceforth, and for evermore. *Amen.*

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from initial entry to final review, ensuring that all necessary information is captured and verified.

3. The third part of the document addresses the role of the accounting department in this process. It highlights the need for clear communication and collaboration between different departments to ensure the accuracy of the data.

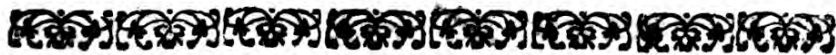
4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of regular audits and reviews. It explains how these processes help identify any discrepancies or errors and ensure that the records are up-to-date and accurate.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed and offers some final thoughts on the importance of maintaining accurate records.



THE
ANATOMY *of* ATHEISM.

A
P O E M.



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To the Honourable

Sir George Darcy, Bart.

DEAR SIR,



THE great desire I have to see you happy, both here and hereafter, engages me to do all that is in my power for the promotion both of your spiritual and temporal interest. It has pleased God to give you a fair portion of worldly goods, and a very large share of intellectual endowments, whereby you are put into a capacity of providing for your self both in this world and that which is to come. Your only care therefore must be to employ these

U 3

good

good gifts of God to his glory, and the salvation of your own immortal soul.

IT is religion only, dear Sir, which can carry you safe through this valley of tears, and can at last advance you into that place where all tears shall be wiped from your eyes. It is This alone which will make you the love of men and angels, nay, and what is infinitely more valuable, of God himself. In fine, It is this alone which can make this present life easy and pleasant, and secure you from eternal misery in a life after this.

LET religion therefore, dear Sir, be your first and early care, that so you may be wise betimes, and avoid those follies which too commonly attend the young gentlemen of this age. You are just now entering upon that vast stage, the world; you have good and evil set before you, and the eyes of all men are upon you,

you, to see what manner of choice you will make. Your present and future happiness is at stake, and therefore it highly concerns you to make such a choice as you may never hereafter have cause to repent of.

YOU have the advantage of a sober and religious education from your very cradle, and the examples of as good parents as ever any child was bless'd with. Your deceased father, whose memory will live as long as piety and virtue are sacred here on earth, was an admirable pattern of unblemished goodness: And your excellent mother is still, God be thanked, a living pattern of all that is virtuous and praise-worthy.

WHAT then will you be able to say for your self, if you degenerate from such worthy progenitors? What excuses will you be able to make even to this world, if you deceive their expectation by becoming the unworthy son of two such incompara-

ble parents? But, alas! there is still a question which is infinitely more weighty, and that is, what will you be able to plead for your self at the great day of judgment, if you have behaved your self so wickedly here, that even your father and mother must rise up and condemn you?

BUT I am persuaded better things of you, and cannot give my self leave to think you will ever be a disgrace to your worthy family. You have hitherto given us great hopes of seeing your father again alive in you. I beseech God of his infinite mercy to preserve you in all virtue and goodness, and to make you a great and glorious instrument of doing good here on earth.

HAVING told you that religion is the greatest wisdom, or, as the wise man speaks, *the beginning of wisdom*; I must now tell you that the beginning of all religion is the acknowledgment of God, the owning of
a su-

a supreme power who made us and every thing that has been made from the beginning of the world out of nothing.

This great and fundamental truth must be necessarily well established in us before we can come to any such thing as religion. For, as the apostle tells us, *He that cometh to God, must believe that He is.* You cannot therefore better employ your time than in reading such treatises as serve to make out this weighty truth. Such are the present archbishop's sermon concerning *Atheism*, Dr. Barrow's sermons on the first article of the *Creed*, and *Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionis*; any one of which three will sufficiently satisfy any unprejudiced man who has not made his reason a slave to his passions.

After having named these great men, I know not how to advise you to read the following poem of my

* Dr. Sharp.

OWN.

own. I can only recommend it to your reading when you are more inclined to read verse than prose. And I beg of you, if you find any thing in it that you think well said, not to attribute it to me, but to those great men whom I named but now, whose works I have only transcribed to their authors great disadvantage.

IF this small piece shall contribute any thing towards the confirming you in the belief of a Godhead, I shall think my time well spent in writing it. If not, I shall however have this to comfort me, that I wrote it with a sincere design to do you good, and to perform the office that I owe to you, of

A most faithful friend

and obliged humble Servant,

W. DAWES.



P R E F A C E.



*W*HEN I wrote this poem I designed to have put all the articles of our christian faith into verse, that so I might entice those men to look upon a book of poetry, who have not fixedness and solidity enough to consider the many excellent treatises on this subject in prose. And therefore I did intend to make use of common and obvious arguments, thereby to make each article as clear and plain as possibly I could.

But considering with my self that this would be a work of time, and would require great learning and industry, I began to despair of ever compassing it,
and

and therefore resolved to let this poem come out into the world by it self, and try its fortune.

I think I need not make any apology for printing a discourse on this subject: For if ever any thing of this nature was necessary, it is certainly so now, when men are arrived to that pitch of impudence and profaneness, that they think it a piece of wit to deny the being of a God, and to laugh at that which they cannot argue against: Or at least, when men live at such a licentious rate, that we may easily see they are like the Psalmist's fool, and say in their hearts, There is no God.

I am therefore well satisfied that I made choice of a very good subject; I only wish the poem may be found worthy of it, and strong enough to defend so important a truth.

*Many reasons I have for the publish-
ing*

ing of it, which I think it may not be improper here to mention.

The first is this, That there are many copies of it gone abroad which are in danger of being sent to the press uncorrected.

The second is, Because I know nothing of this nature extant in our English tongue, I mean no particular poem purposely wrote on this subject.

My last and main reason is, because some judicious men have thought it not altogether unfit to do some good in the world.

If it be well accepted of, and has its designed effect, I may perhaps be encouraged to publish something else of the same nature. In the mean while, till I see what fortune it has, Adieu.



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THE



T H E
A N A T O M Y of A T H E I S M.



I N C E some with bare-fac'd impu-
dence deny
The *self-existence* of a *Deity*
Who *Is*, and *Was*, from all eternity ;
Others more civilly a God dispute,
Till by disputing they themselves confute ;
A Third fort Own *they do a God believe*,
But at such random rates and methods live,
That by their practice they a God defye,
And by their actions give their tongues the lye :
Since these, I say, so numerous are grown,
And fill the court, the country, and the town,

My

My pious muse inspir'd with holy rage
 These dreadful monsters singly shall engage :
 And, as of Old the little son of *Jesse* *
 A mighty giant did in fight suppress,
 Strengthen'd by God whose armour then he wore,
 And whose just cause upon his sword he bore ;
 So, by the help of that divinity
 Whom I assert, they foolishly deny,
 Their errors I so fully shall refute
 That I shall leave them answerless and mute.

And, first, for him who rashly does disown
 The being of the bless'd eternal One ;
 Let him but tell me whence the world began,
 Who made that lovely, lordly creature, man ;
 Let him around him gently cast his eyes,
 And guess who made the earth, the seas, and skies.

If he be one of that misguided tribe,
 Which to blind chance does all these works ascribe ;

* *David.*

Let him the beauties of this globe survey,
The just vicissitudes of night and day,
The constant motion of the moon and sun
Which in just order do their races run:
Let him consider his own wond'rous make,
And, for a time, himself to pieces take:
Then see how ev'ry fibre, vein and nerve,
Does to its proper ends and uses serve,
How all we eat, and drink, and take for food,
Dissolves to chyle and mingles with the blood.

If all this lesson still shall prove in vain,
And he his first dull maxim will maintain;
That *atoms* moving in a heedless dance
Leapt into this harmonious form by chance:
Then let him say, a beauteous edifice
From bricks and stones will of it self arise;
That letters, in a bag together shoo'd
Will make an uniform, ingenious, book;
Or that bare brass and steel will jump into a clock.

The works of chance are of another kind,
And, like their cause, irregular and blind,
Without intention and without design,
And far from being beautiful or fine.
Since then the workmanship we plainly see,
We must infer there must a workman be :
Thus by the art the artist we descry,
And by the creature find the Deity.
Now, if the world at first was made too fair,
Too curious, excellent and regular
To be the work of blind contingency,
To what new covert must the *Atheist* fly ?

The *world's-eternity* he next must take
For his last refuge and his surest stake ;
And by denying that the world was made,
Or that by art it was in order laid,
He thinks to ward off the necessity
Of introducing here a Deity,

Whose

Whose boundless power, and all-contriving thought,
This lovely fabrick to perfection brought.

But here, instead of wiping off the score,
He's plung'd in deeper than he was before:
And, far from owning its eternity,
We'll shew the world in its first infancy;
And as through various turns and windings led,
We trace the river to the fountain-head;
So going backwards still from man to man,
We'll find a time when he at first began.

Most writers * own 'tis not six thousand year,
Since first this beauteous fabrick did appear;
Ægyptian priests held a much longer date,
And reckon'd at a very diff'rent rate,
But they, alas! were full of forgeries,
And fam'd for nought but impudence and lies;
Chaldæans too made their unjust account
Beyond the numbers of our cent'ries mount,

* See Bishop *Pearson* on the *Creed*, p. 58, 59.

But told such gross improbabilities,
 That wisest men them and their cheats despise.
Moses alone the sacred truth did tell,
 And the world's age with faithfulness reveal,
 Believ'd by all, but such as want of sense,
 Or obstinate and harden'd impudence,
 Has blinded with so thick a mist of night,
 That they shall never more behold the light.
 On his account however I rely,
 As an exact, impartial history,
 Because tradition does its faith assure,
 And with one common voice proclaims it pure.
 Here may each man, as in a mirrour, see
 His first extraction, and his pedigree,
 And find his wish'd-for genealogy. }
 Thus then we come to our original,
 And to the God and Father of us all.

But, since the *Atheist* does this book disown,
 He must have other proof, or he has none.

And

And tho' our reason make it clear and plain,
This book does nothing but the truth contain,
Wrote by a man, whose just integrity
Forbids us to suspect him of a lye,
Or tell those things, with confidence, as true,
Which he, perhaps, fancies he never knew;
Yet against *Moses* he will still exclaim
And call his story a fantastic dream.

If then there was a world, as some contend,
Which never did begin, and ne're will end,
Let them the records of this world unfold,
In which its mighty actions are inroll'd,
And shew, before the time of our creation,
One kingdom, empire, common-wealth or nation,
One language, science, art or mystery,
Whose first original we can't descry.

But here the *Atheist* leaves us at a stand,
And bids us seek for an unheard-of land,

Without a guide to tell the certain way,
And keep false lights from leading us astray.
Doubtless, *saihb he*, there was in times of yore,
Of histories and records plenteous store,
But these to earthquakes, floods, and deluges,
More frequent fires, and sad contingencies,
Became a dire inevitable prey,
And with their authors they were snatcht away.

Was there then ever such a fire or flood,
So swift and fierce as not to be withstood?
So gen'ral, and so full of cruelty,
As to leave none to write its history,
If so, the world was to Begin again,
Which is the same as if it had never been;
If not, 'tis strange tradition shall not tell
Those wonders which our ancestors befell,
They who surviv'd these sad catastrophes
Told them, no doubt, to their posterities;

And

And thus the history at first begun
Must thro' the line of long succession run.
Supposing then, what story did relate,
In careful writing, subject was to fate,
Oral tradition could not wholly fail,
Unless it had been stopt by miracle;
Some glim'rings sure we of this world should see
Thro' the dark vale of long antiquity;
Some tidings of that world we needs must have
Which fell almost at once into its grave;
At least some rite or custom would remain
To prove that *men have before Adam been* *
Since all these things are wanting, let's conclude,
That *Adam* is our fire, and we his brood;
And on his person we with ease shall see
The plain impressions of a Deity.

Besides, as wise *Lucretius* § well observes,
The *Atheist* to his own conviction serves,

* Vid. *Præadamita.* § Vid. Lib. 5. *De Rerum Natura.*

For all his earthquakes, floods, and deluges,
Prove only that the world corruptive is;
And since it is decay'd, and wastes so fast,
This plainly shews it has not long to last.
Immortal things immortal beauty hold,
Unchang'd, and sure of never growing old;
Whereas the world does almost ev'ry day
Give us fresh instances of its decay:
Unhappy *Naples* more than half o'erthrown
This dismal truth unwillingly must own:
And *Ætna's* flames shew by their constant rage
The world is come into her latest age.
Nothing from ruin can her fabrick save,
But nodding now she bends to'ards her eternal grave.

Thus does the world most evidently prove
The *Being* of that *God* who sits above;
For since from various reasons we infer
The world's nativity is plain and clear,

By

By reason cast, the *Atheist* quits the field,
And that the world is not eternal yield.
If not eternal, then it once was made;
If made, it certainly a Maker had.
Now all men this must for an axiom take,
That nothing can it self produce or make;
For that this contradiction would imply,
At the same time *to* be and *not* to be.
Some outward cause we therefore must explore,
Either of chance, or an eternal power.
The world's too well proportion'd and design'd,
To be the work of chance, ill-fhap'd, and blind.
God for her Maker she alone will own,
And throws herself at his almighty throne.

Nor does the world, and its harmonious frame,
The being of a God alone proclaim;
But *Moses*, by his wonder-working rod,
Gives us another proof here is a God,

And

And each effect surpassing nature's laws,
 Bids us look out for a superiour cause :
 In vain philosophers their wisdom try,
 And stretch poor nature to extremity,
 To make her solve each wond'rous mystery :
 To nature's-master they must often go,
 If of effects they would the causes know,

How strangely must the *Atheist* look to see
 The fire renounce its burning quality ?
 And things, which nat'rally increase its rage,
 Calm its fierce scorchings, and its heat assuage,
 Yet thus its nature did the fire forego,
 For *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego* *,
 In vain the tyrant did their ruin threat,
 And sev'n times o'er his stubborn furnace heat :
 Safe in the midst o'th' flames the brethren stood,
 And cool as summer breezes from the wood.

* See *Daniel* Chap. iii.

What power of nature can transform a flood
Of *crystal waters* into *scarlet blood*? *
Or make the sea without its motion stand,
And in a moment turn to *solid land*? †
Yet thus in ancient days did *Moses* show
The pow'r of God above, by miracles below.
What strength of art can quicken and restore
A man when dead, to what he was before?
Infuse new life into his frozen veins,
And a new soul to his forsaken brains?
Yet this did our all-pow'rful master do,
who rais'd from death himself and others too,
Can nature say, Awake ye dead, arise,
Shake off your sleep, lift up your drowsy eyes?
I will again once more your corps inspire,
Kindle your breath with my enliv'ning fire,
And give your soul back to its ancient friend,
Your soul, which, when I please, I take or lend:
No, she with modesty withdraws her head,
And challenges no power to raise the dead;

* See *Exod.* Chap. vii. † *Ibid* Chap. xiv.

But

But owns she has a Lord, whose awful sway
 She must not, cannot, dares not disobey,
 When he commands she leaves her wonted way. }
 He makes the water, earth, and air, and fire,
 When he sees fit, against themselves conspire.
 Makes *lyons*, though by nature fierce and wild, *
 Fearful and gentle as a new-born child;
 He makes the tender *lamb*s securely sleep,
 Whilst hungry *tygers* do the *sheep*-folds keep.
 Let him but speak, and nature stops her course,
 Abates her pace, and slackens all her force.
 At his command *the sun and moon stand still*, †
 And give his servants light their foes to kill.
 A word from him makes the clouds cease to rain,
 Another word makes them distil again. ||
 Tho' nature saith our noons are always bright, }
 Yet let him speak and there shall be no light,
 But day it self shall be *transform'd to night*. ¶ }

* See *Dan.* Chap. vi. † *Joshua* Chap. x. || *1 Kings* Chap. xviii.
 ¶ As in our *Saviour's* passion.

Thus

Thus does each miracles in letters plain,
And at a mighty distance to be seen,
Shew the great name of nature's sacred Lord,
By us with love and reverence ador'd.
To him the *Atheist* must his tribute give,
From whom alone he borrows leave to live.
His being sure he can no more deny,
Of which so many wonders testify.
The miracles stand fix'd in history,
Stamp'd by traditional authority,
To which no man of sense will give the lie. }
The credit of the world is much too strong, }
To be oppos'd by any single tongue. }
The facts he therefore cannot well disown,
Unless he has resolv'd to credit none
But what he sees, believing nothing told,
Or think no truth but what his eyes behold.
If not the facts, we take our strength from thence,
And thus we argue for our consequence.

If works are done which nature's power exceed,
 We in some higher power these wond'rous works
 must read.

The gifts of prophecy as plainly show
 There must be one to whom those gifts we owe
 Man's knowledge is too shallow to foresee
 What shall to morrow or the next day be;
 Much more to tell a thousand years events,
 Which all depend on future accidents,
 And lay those things before us, bright and clear,
 And just as if they were already here,
 Which shall not come to pass, till distant age
 Shifts scenes, and brings new prospects on the stage.

Yet thus of old did *Abraham* foretell
 That his poor off-spring should in *Ægypt* dwell, *
 And for the space of many a tedious year,
 The toilsome yoke of cruel *Pharaoh* bear.

* See *Gen.* xv. 13.

Exactly did the sad event agree
With what had been foretold in prophecy:
Thus was *Josiah's* birth and reign of old,
Some hundred years before they came, foretold. ||
And thus *Isaiab* told, as he foresaw,
That *Cyrus* to the *Persians* should give Law, †
That by his mighty arm the *Jews* should rise,
And, tho' then slaves, subdue their enemies.
And, that the matter might be free from doubt,
By name he mark'd this glorious monarch out.
Thus all the prophets did pre-signify
The blessed *JESUS's* *Nativity*,
And laid each circumstance so nicely down,
That by the character the God was known.

If all these prophecies are not fulfill'd,
We are content with shame to quit the field;
But if they are, as justly we believe,
The *Atheist* must be damn'd beyond reprieve,

|| 1 *Kings* xiii. 2. † *Isaiab* xliv. 45.

For they who shut their eyes, and will not see }
 The power of an all-knowing Deity, }
 Who looks with ease into futurity, }
 No mercy must expect, or pity pray,
 When the great God shall keep his judgment day.
 Man they confess is of too short a fight
 To see things future, sown in depth of night.
 Some nobler power they then of course must grant,
 Which does no measure of fore-knowledge want.
 This power is God; whom rashly they deny,
 They know not upon what account, or why.

But some perhaps will call for instances
 Out of profane and vulgar histories;
 Tho' without reason they this favour ask,
 Yet I would willingly accept the task.
 And here the ancient oracles afford
 A thousand prophecies, which word for word
 Exactly were accomplish'd and reveal'd,
 So clearly that they must not be conceal'd.

Some

Some were indeed told in a doubtful way,
But others clear as sun-shine at mid-day :
Such was the prophecy which did declare,
That *Cyrus* should the *Lydians* beat in war ; *
Such that which told it should the fortune be
Of *Xerxes*' navy to be beat at sea, †
When all things promis'd the quite contrary.

}

Before the bar then let the *Atheist* kneel,
And take conviction from his own appeal.
No more evasions can he hope to find,
But or must see, or must confess he's blind.
For, as when day don't enter thro' the fight,
We straight conclude the organs are not right :
So, if our *Atheist* still will persevere,
And neither truth nor solid reason hear,
We must conclude his soul so full of sin,
That she can't let her proper object in.

* See *Herodotus*. B. I. † *Ibid* B. VII.

Once more I'll try, if like a senseless rock,
 Fixt, and unmov'd, he'll stand another shock ;
 I'll ply him but with one more argument,
 From universal judgment and consent,
 And if this fails to work upon his soul,
 It is because his faculties are foul.

Let us survey the universe around,
 And search each nook where men are to be found ;
 No nation shall we meet beneath the sky,
 But what does worship some Divinity.
 Of this Divinity, which all believe,
 Too few there are that do aright conceive.
 Yet with one Voice they all agree in this,
 God *is*, altho' they know not *what he is*.

A *God-head* some attribute to the *sun*,
 Others with equal honours crown the *moon* ;
 Some to a *monkey* with devotion bow,
 Others religiously adore a *cow*, *

* See the *Alcoran*.

And

And by their misplac'd zeal shew they agree
I'th' gen'ral notion of a Deity.
Great part o'th' world believes *more* Gods than *one*,
None ever yet profess'd that there were *none*.

See then our *Atheist* all the world oppose,
And like *Drawcansir*, make *all men his foes*. *
See with what sawcy pride he does pretend
His wiser fathers notions to amend,
Huffs *Plutarch*, *Plato*, *Pliny*, *Seneca*,
And bids ev'n *Cicero* himself give way ;
Tells all the world they follow a false light,
And he alone of all mankind is right.
Thus, like a madman who, when all alone,
Thinks himself king, and ev'ry chair a throne,
Drunk with conceit, and foolish impudence,
He prides himself in his abounding sense.

* A character in Mr. *Dryden's* *Conquest of Granada*.

But soon this pride would to the ground be
brought,
If he'd allow himself a moment's thought.
For let him but consider well within
From whence this gen'ral notion did begin,
Who was its author, from what hint it came,
And our conceited bully will grow tame.

This notion then was either first embrac'd,
Because by nature on our hearts impress'd :
Or else, because a nat'ral tendency
Persuades us to believe a Deity ;
So that whenever any man we hear
The *being* of an all-wise *God* aver,
This truth with as much eagerness we own,
As soon as first discover'd and made known,
As do the eyes, whose organs are aright,
Suck in the beams of the sun's glorious light :
Or, thirdly, we from reason's sacred law,
This inference most evidently draw,

And,

And, with *St. Paul*, from things created prove
The *being* of that *God* who sits above:
Or, lastly, this was from tradition brought,
And by our fathers to the children taught.

If, in our search, we shall by nature find
This principle ingrafted on the mind,
Its truth of consequence we must pursue,
For nature's principles are always true;
Her steady light can never go astray,
But leads us to one right and constant way.

Or if the soul is by its nature bent,
At the first sight, to give its free assent
To this assertion, that a *God must be*,
And *has been* always from eternity;
The self same evidence will still remain,
To make the matter beyond question plain.
Man's soul is fram'd by nat'ral appetite,
In truth and reason's dictates to delight.

If then our souls, unprejudic'd and free,
 Do of themselves to this great truth agree,
 With reason argue and confess we must
 Their judgment equal, and their verdict just.

But if our reason does this truth evince,
 The *Atheist* never more must make pretence,
 E'en to the lowest pitch of common sense. }
 Mens company he must of course forsake,
 And senseless brutes for his dear comrades take.

If from tradition we this truth receiv'd,
 Which all our wisest ancestors believ'd,
 Into the same dispute again we fall
 About its rise and first original.
 How came it first to him who did begin
 To broach it to the world, and let it in?
 Nothing but an all-pow'rful, ruling hand,
 Mens hearts and mouths can equally command.

To *Adam* first God did himself unfold,
He to his children all his knowledge told:
Thus faith by reason strength'ned does obtain,
And thro' the world without resistance reign.

See then a cloud of witnesses appear!
For the whole world bears testimony here.
See how all nations in full concert croud,
And with one voice cry out *a God* aloud.
Before these let the *Atheist* shew his head,
And hear his dismal accusation read:
His fatal crime is of the deepest dye,
'Tis treason 'gainst the highest majesty.
His Lord and Maker he denies to own,
And rudely kicks against his sov'rain's throne;
Thro' all the bonds of right and nature breaks,
Nay, his own reason and himself forfakes.
Puff'd up with pride and saucy impudence,
Things he denies most evident to sense.

And, as old ZENO *motion* did dispute,
 And by his *walking* did himself confute;
 So he, altho' he ev'ry where descries
 Things made, a Maker foolishly denies.

The accusation read, the tryal's done,
 His guilt's as plain as is the noon-day sun.
 There's not one man in court but's heard to cry,
 The treason's clear; so, let the traytor die!

To sentence then we justly may proceed,
 And make the obstinate rebellious bleed.
 In lakes of brimstone must our *Atheist* dwell,
 Plung'd to the bottom of the hottest hell,
 Where no day enters, where no sun appears,
 And the sad place with its bright presence cheers;
 There he to all eternity must lie
 In pangs of death, but yet must never die;
 Doom'd by that power, whom he too late will know,
 To never-ceasing pains, and everlasting woe.

Nor

Nor will their guilt or punishment be less,
Who *scepticks* in the case themselves profess,
Who think the case some scruples may admit,
And so suspend their faith and thoughts of it.
We have no medium left for doubting fools,
No castles in the air for faithless souls.
Wing'd with belief of a Divinity,
Our happy souls shall to his mansion fly:
But disbelief, and *scepticism* we know,
Will soul and body into ruin throw.

Besides, in doubtful cases we deride
That man who will not chuse the surest side;
Prudence commands us with a cautious care,
Against the worst may happen to prepare;
And names those men alone discreet and wise,
Who chuse their road where certain safety lies.

For once then, let the case as doubtful go,
Whether there be a Deity or no,

Till

Till after death the point must needs remain
Unfolv'd, and death alone can make it plain.

A wise man therefore would believe it here,
That after death he may no danger fear.
Our faith is purchas'd at no mighty cost,
And we shall sleep securely if 'tis lost.
But if the sad event shall prove a God,
Then will the disbeliever feel his rod.

Why then will men their wisdom thus betray,
And by their folly cast themselves away?
In things of lesser moment and concern,
They can with ease the safest way discern;
But when th' immortal soul is made the stake,
With what contentedness the fools mistake!

If we on roads of war and danger go,
And are not sure but we may meet our foe,

Wifely

Wisely we arm against the worst event,
Lest made his slaves we should too late repent ;
This differs from our case in terms and name,
But in reality is just the same.
Belief of God our souls securely arms,
And makes them proof against all future harms.
But if unarm'd we venture to appear,
And find a God, 'twill cost us very dear.
Darkness and horror, pain and misery,
Will be our doom to all eternity.
Belief like weapons we about us bear,
To guard our selves from danger and from fear.
Thus arm'd, we hope to find a God at last,
After a life in peace and quiet past,
If we succeed, as there's no doubt we shall,
We save our ruin and eternal fall ;
If not, the worst event that we can have,
Is to lie senseless in the silent grave.

For the third sort, who by their lives dethrone
 That God, whom they for fashion's sake will own;
 These do more mischief in the world than those
 Who do with open force a God oppose.

'Tis much the better, and the wiser way
 To disallow a God, than disobey,
 Better to own no Lord, than this our Lord betray.

Some men, with fatal prejudices blind,
 Seek for a Deity they cannot find;

And this is some, tho' but a bad excuse,
 And no way fit for men of sense to use.

But they, who in their sinful courses live,
 And yet protest they do a God believe,

Speak contradictions, and must either think

That God will at their sin and lewdness wink;

(Which plainly shews their thoughts are much
 amiss,

And that they might as well affirm no God there
 is)

Or

Or else they only play the hypocrite,
And only say they do believe aright;
But in their hearts they faucily defy
The power and justice of a Deity.

Of all the three then, our last spark is worst,
And consequently will be most accurst,
For him the flames of hell, if it can be,
Shall still be rais'd to a more quick degree,
As a reward for his hypocrisy.

Thus have the *Atheists* been distinctly try'd:
The *first* for rashness, impudence and pride,
For his abuse of nature's sacred laws,
And holding off when reason prov'd the cause.
The *second* for his want of wit to chuse
The safest way, the dangerous refuse.
The *third*, for his profane hypocrisy,
And boldly telling a *religious* lie.

The tryal done, I have no more to say,
Their next *appeal* is on the *judgment-day*;
When to their shame God will his power exert,
And in their ruin will himself assert.

GLORY BE TO GOD.



A
S E R M O N
A T T H E
C O N S E C R A T I O N
O F

The Right Reverend Father in G O D,

W I L L I A M,

Lord Bishop of *C H E S T E R.*

P R E A C H ' D I N

K. Henry VII's Chappel in Westminster,

Upon SUNDAY, *February 8. 1707.*

By *W I L L I A M M I L N E R,* M. A.

And Chaplain to the L^d. Bishop of *C H E S T E R.*

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent data collection procedures and the use of advanced analytical techniques to derive meaningful insights from the data.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in data management and analysis. It discusses how modern software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and processing, thereby improving efficiency and reducing the risk of errors.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data security and privacy. It stresses the importance of implementing robust security measures to protect sensitive information and ensure compliance with relevant regulations.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It reiterates the importance of a data-driven approach and encourages the organization to continue investing in data management capabilities to support its long-term growth and success.



T O

The most Reverend Father in G O D,

J O H N,

By Divine Providence,

Lord Archbishop of Y O R K,

Primate of *England*, and Metropolitan.

May it please your Grace,



In obedience to your command, I have printed, and, with all dutiful submission, offer the following sermon to your grace's acceptance and patronage. I could not

VOL. III.

Z

think,

*think, it became me to object and delay, when your grace was pleased to approve and encourage the publishing of it, lest by so doing, I might seem to contradict its chief design, and give just occasion of offence. I was the less concern'd to expose it to publick view, because whatsoever defects may be in it, are abundantly supply'd by your grace's example. I might here take occasion to represent the piety, and prudence, the magnanimity and steadiness, and candour of your whole conduct. But I am very sensible, that your humility, which is a mighty ornament to all other virtues, will not permit. I shall therefore only beg leave to say, that I retain a very grateful sense of the favours I have received from your grace; and desire you would please to accept of this as a just (though very poor) acknowledgment of them. May your
grace*

grace long continue to be, what you now are, a support and ornament to the church and state: May you daily see the success, and reap the blessings of all your pious and prudent endeavours for the good of both.

I am,

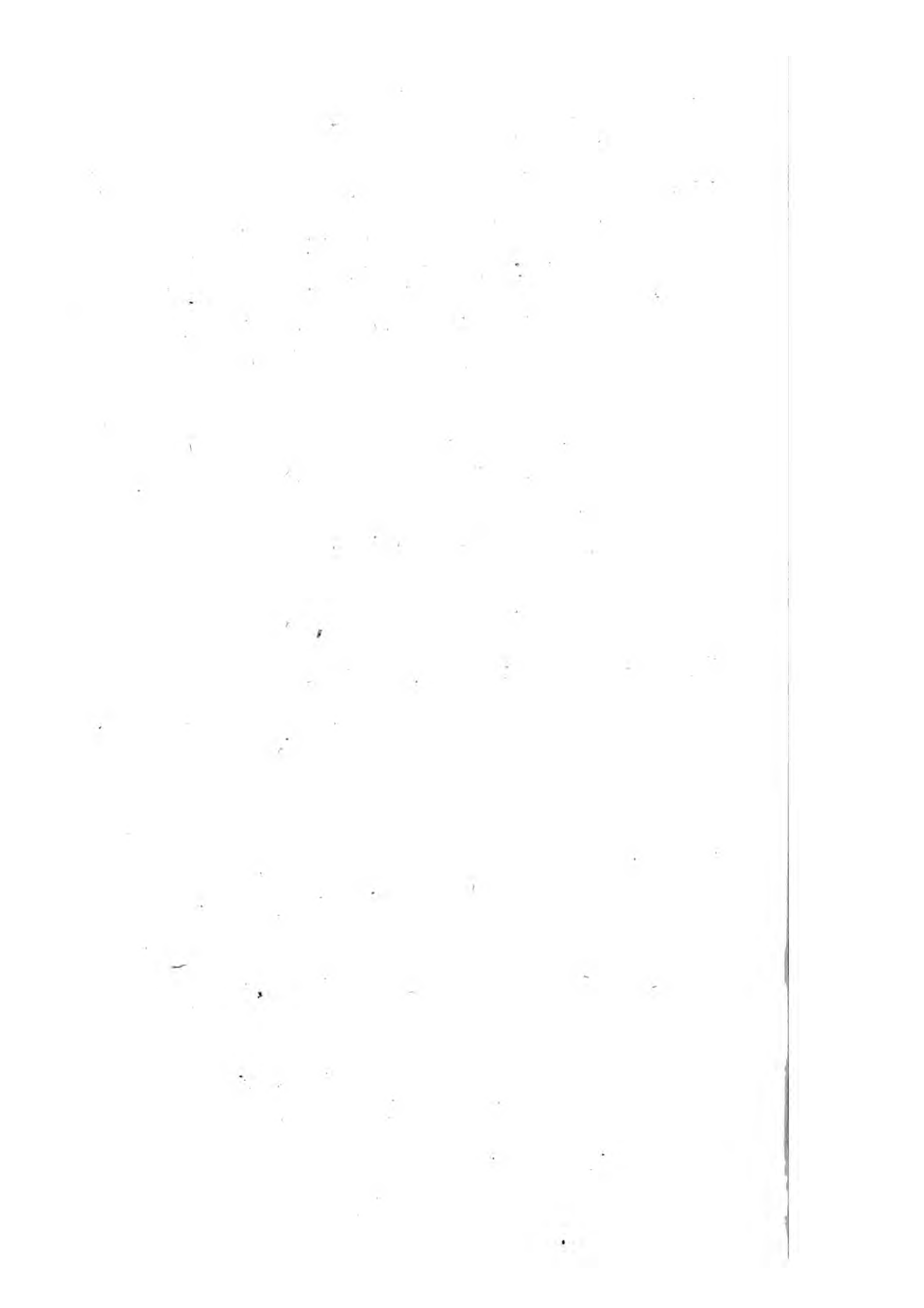
May it please Your Grace,

Your Grace's,

Most Obliged, and most

Obedient Servant,

W. MILNER.





2 C O R. VI. 3.

*Giving no offence in any thing, that
the ministry be not blamed.*



OUR blessed Saviour having offered himself a sacrifice for the expiation of the sins of mankind, and having overcome death by his resurrection from the grave, was constituted, and declared, universal Lord and King: Lord both of the dead, and the living: *Things in heaven, things in the earth, and things under the earth, i.e.* All creatures, angels, men, and devils were put in subjection under him, and obliged to own, and submit to that sovereign authority, and power, which was committed to him.

Before his departure from this world, he began to exercise his royal power, and soon ordained, and constituted the ministers of his kingdom. He sent his apostles, in like manner, as his father had sent him, and gave them a commission to preach the gospel, in his name, to every creature, to *Jew and Gentile, i.e.* to all mankind, and assured them, and their lawful successors, of his protection and assistance continually, even to the end of the world. *Matth. xxviii. 2c.*

But when he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, he enter'd upon the more compleat execution, and full possession of that high authority he had received from his father: And in pursuance of those great, and glorious ends, for which he had received it, He gave gifts to men, He gave *some* apostles, and *some* prophets, and *some* evangelists, and *some* pastors and teachers: He gave these gifts to the wisest, and best ends and purposes; *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and*
of

*Eph. 4. 11,
12, 13.*

of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and according to his own gracious promise, he hath hitherto, in spite of all opposition, continued a succession of bishops, pastors and teachers, to instruct, guide, and govern his people, and by their means, hath in a marvellous manner propagated his gospel, confounded its opposers, and made the kings and princes of the earth bow before him, and worship him: and tho' his kingdom be not yet enlarged to its utmost extent, yet what he hath already done, is an earnest and a pledge to us, that he will go on conquering, and to conquer, till he hath made all his enemies his footstool.

Now, whether we consider the Author of the ministerial office, or the end of its institution, or the favourable providence, which hath in all ages attended it, one would think, that not only the office, but the ministers themselves also, should be out of the reach of reproach and contempt.

But yet so it is, the office it self is traduced by some, as a meer politic device and engine to support fraud and imposture,

and to over-awe the ignorant and unthinking multitude, into tame, servile, and unworthy compliances: and the ministers are defamed, as the great instruments of deluding and deceiving mankind, in the most gross and palpable manner, in order to serve their own interest, and gratify their ambition, by lording it over mens consciences, and thereby making them become an easy prey to them.

They, who minister in holy things, very well know the falshood and malice of the accusation. They know religion it self is struck at, and wounded through their sides. They know, that the enemies of religion in general, and of the christian religion in particular, are sensible, they cannot undermine it, while its ministers are held in esteem and honour; and therefore it is they rail, and rage so much against them.

But as this is no unusual or strange thing; so whosoever are employ'd in holy offices should not (at least upon their own accounts) be greatly concern'd and troubled at it. The greatest innocence, the most sublime piety, fervent zeal, incomparable meekness, humility, patience, contempt of the world, and unwearied diligence

gence to promote the glory of God, and the happiness of mankind, are no absolute defence and security, against the arrows, and venom, of a prophane, serpentine, malicious tongue. Our blessed Lord, and his holy apostles, did not escape the most unworthy, and bitter reflections and censures. The disciple, therefore, must not expect to be above his master, nor the successors of the apostles, may not take it ill, and murmur, if they sometimes fare, as the apostles did; but must rather do as they did, commit their cause to God, and possess their souls in patience, till in his own appointed time he bring forth their *righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day.* Or however it should happen as to their own particular case, yet herein is their comfort, that maugre all the art, and power of earth and hell, there shall never want a succession of lawful pastors and teachers; and tho' the honour of the priesthood may in some places, and upon some occasions (as a great divine of our own speaks) be over-clouded for a time, yet it shall never totally be eclipsed, nor swallowed up in a perpetual night. Wherever christianity shall flourish, and flourish it shall,

shall, notwithstanding all enmity and opposition, wise and good men (and they are chiefly to be regarded) will know them that labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them, and will esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.

1 *Thess.* 5.
12, 13.

But however this may happen, the ministers of Christ, the guides and governors of his church, will go on to do, what they already do: They will imitate, so far as they are able, the great God, whom they serve, by extracting good out of evil, and making even the defamation of their enemies redound the more to their praise and glory. They learn wisdom of their adversaries, since they must expect blame, they walk with the greater care and circumspection. They, after the example of our apostle, strive so much the more earnestly to *give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.* In which words you may please to observe these three things.

I. The duty, which the apostle recommends to us, from his own example, which is due care to give no offence.

II. The

II. The universality, or extent of the duty. *Give no offence in any thing.*

III. The reason of both, *that the ministry be not blamed.*

Now, tho' I do not precisely follow this method, or division of the words, yet I hope I shall come up to their principal design, if I can answer these three enquiries.

1. What it is to give offence?
2. Why we must give no offence in any thing?
3. How, or by what means, the ministers of Christ may so manage themselves, as to give no just occasion of offence, and thereby support the honour of the ministry, at least secure it from any great reproach and contempt? I am

1. To shew, what it is to give offence. Now (at least so far as I know) there are but two notions in the holy scripture, of giving offence, and scandalizing another. The one is, the unnecessary and causeless grieving, molesting, or troubling of him. The other is, the leading, or tempting of him, to any sin, or error in faith or practice. I say

1. There are some who tell us, that one notion of scandal or giving offence, is a needless

needless grieving, troubling, or vexing another man, either by doing, or forbearing any thing, which we were under no obligation, either to do, or forbear, at least in that juncture, and at that particular season, when we either did, or forbore to do it. Now whether this be the strict and proper notion of giving offence, or scandal, is not, at present, very material to dispute. For whether it be, or no, I believe it is certain, that where I am at perfect liberty, being under the obligation of no law, divine or human, to do, or forbear any thing, the doing, or forbearing of which, creates grief and trouble to another, and makes his life less easy and comfortable, than otherwise it would be : I say, in such case, it is very certain, I may abridge my self of my liberty, nay, it is fit, requisite, and necessary that I should deny my self. I must use my liberty with prudence, and charity. The law of humanity, and courtesie, must take place. It is not only unchristian, but it is selfish, unkind, inhuman, and argues much narrowness and sourness of spirit, to create grief, sorrow, and trouble to another, when I may as well, without any real, or apparent, detriment, to my self, or others, for whom

I am concern'd, forbear the occasion of it. If, indeed, I am under the restraint of any divine precept, or any just command of my lawful superiour, this, as I may shew afterwards, alters the case: here I must do my duty, and if offence come upon my so doing, it is an offence taken, and not given, and he who takes it must answer for it. And it may be very fit for him, to examine himself, and see, whether ignorance, or frowardness, or self-conceit, or a desire to prescribe to me, do not influence him too much. But, as I said, where I am at perfect liberty, here it becomes me to deny my self, rather than grieve and trouble my brother. Here the rule is, we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please our selves. Here we should be flexible, yielding, and complaisant, and imitate the apostle, *who became* ^{1 Cor. 9.} *all things to all men,* and pleased all men ^{22.} in all things, *i. e.* in all lawful things, *not* ^{1 Cor. 10.} *seeking his own profit, but the profit of* ^{33.} *many, that they might be saved.* But then,

2. There are others, who tell us (and they say it is the only true notion of it) that the giving offence or scandal, is the doing,
or

or forbearing any thing, which is a real temptation or inducement to error, or wickedness. Whatsoever directly, and in its own nature, or in general opinion, tends to lead a man into any sin, that is to say, either to do any thing which God hath forbidden, or to omit any thing which he hath commanded; this is an offence, and is usually expressed in holy scripture, by laying a snare, a trap, a stumbling block in any one's way, whereby he is deceived, and bruises, and hurts himself. Any thing a man does, which tends to discourage men from receiving the faith of Christ, or adhering to it, or walking worthy of it, is an offence. For example, to represent the great mysteries of the gospel as unreasonable and absurd, the precepts of it as over-rigorous and severe, or to enervate the force of its promises and threatenings, or to deride, molest, and persecute men for the sincere belief, and practice of it, is a great and grievous offence, and *Wo be to them, by whom such offences come*. Now that this is the true, and most common, if not the only notion of giving offence, is very fairly inferr'd from many passages of the *New Testament*. But I must not be tedious, and

Rom. 14.
13.
1 Joh. 2.
10.

Matth. 18.
7.

and therefore shall mention but a few. Says our blessed Lord, *Blessed is he who-^{Matth. 11.} soever shall not be offended in me, i. e.^{6.}* who shall not be tempted, through the meanness of the circumstances in which I appear, or the troubles and afflictions which will befall me, to reject my Person and Doctrine, or to fall from the belief and profession of it. So it is said of those, who received the seed, in stony ground, that *when tribulation, or persecution, did arise,^{Matth. 13.} they were by and by offended, i. e. were^{21.}* presently discouraged from cherishing the good seed of the word, in their hearts, and bringing forth the fruits of it, in their lives and conversation. So again it is said of Christ crucified, that *to the Jews he was^{1 Cor. 1.} a scandal, or an offence, i. e. the accursed^{23.}* and shameful death which he suffered, was a temptation to them to reject him, and hindered them from confessing him to be the Christ, the Saviour of the world. Yet once more, Upon our Lord's mysterious discourse, concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, many of his followers *John 6.60.* were offended, *i. e. thinking with themselves (tho' very ignorantly and unreasonably) that what he said was against the*
rules

rules of humanity, took offence, and presently forsook him, and in so doing forsook him, who had the words of eternal life. This is a short account of the first enquiry, *viz. what it is to give offence*: And the sum of all is this, that giving offence consists either in the obstructing the peace, quiet, and tranquillity of our neighbour, by any needless, imprudent use of our liberty: or, else leading him into sin or error, by any sinister, dubious and unlawful practices. And great reason there is why we should be cautious, how we give any such offence: Which is the next thing I proposed, *viz.*

2. To shew why, or upon what accounts, we must take heed that we give no offence, in any thing. Now the reasons obliging, and inducing, to the greatest care, and circumspection in this matter, are very weighty and various. I can only touch upon a few.

1. The honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the dignity of the calling to which he hath called his ministers, are a forcible reason, and great motive, to excite the utmost care and caution to prevent and remove all just occasion of offence. They
who

who are consecrated and ordained to holy offices, stand in a near relation to Jesus ^{1 Pet. 2.} Christ, *the great shepherd, and bishop of²⁵ our souls.* They are his servants, *i. e.* peculiarly and eminently so. They are his agents, by whom he carries on the great affairs of his church. They are the ministers of his spiritual kingdom. His ambassadors to men, intrusted with the word, or doctrine, of reconciliation, beseeching them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God: than which a more high, honourable, and beneficial trust, cannot be committed to men. They are the builders of his house, the stewards of his family, appointed to give every one their meat, in due season. They are the angels of his church, and stars in his right hand. In fine, they are co-workers together with him, continually watching for the salvation of those, for whom Christ died: Thereby pursuing the same great work, for which he came from heaven, and began upon earth, and still carries on, by the labours of his servants, and the powerful ministration of his Spirit, who accompanies their faithful diligence and eadeavours. How great and glorious a Master do they

serve ! How sacred and honourable is their office ! What care is requisite to fulfill it ! How inexcusable is it, to walk unworthy, either of it, or their great Master, who hath called them to it ! 'Tis no unusual thing to judge of men, from the quality of the persons they employ in their service : Now should the ministers of Christ (which God forbid) mistake, slip, and fall, and give great, and just occasion of offence, might not this seem to reflect some kind of dishonour upon him, by tempting the ignorant and prophane, to impeach his wisdom, in calling such to so weighty a charge, as he knew they were either unable, or unwilling, to fulfill ?

Besides, eminence of station attracts the eyes of beholders. The ministers of Christ are stars, the light of the world, *a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid.* They are exposed to public view, their persons and conduct cannot be conceal'd ; what they say and do, will be observed and known in the world. Now the more eyes are upon us, especially if the quick and piercing eye of malice, the eyes of those who watch for, and would rejoice in our falling, be upon us, the more care and caution

tion is requisite, to give no occasion to the ^{1 Tim. 5.} adversary to speak reproachfully, but to ^{14.} cut off occasion, from them who desire oc- ^{2 Cor. 11.} casion, to see us offend, and thereby to blame the ministry. ^{12.}

2. The end and design of the ministry, obliges to take heed of giving any just occasion of offence in any thing, whereby any blame, or reproach may be cast upon it. But what, I beseech you, is the great end of the work of the ministry? Is it not to reclaim men from ignorance and error, and sin and wickedness, and to lead them into the way of truth, peace, and holiness, and life everlasting? Now should any, who minister in holy things, for want of due care or diligence, lead into error, or offer any great temptation to sin and wickedness, or by an indiscreet use of their liberty, needlessly molest, grieve, or trouble other men, I doubt very much, whether the sacredness, and dignity of their office, would screen or exempt them, from that quick and severe exhortation we have, Rom. i. 21. *Thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thy self?* and thus thro' their fault, the ministry will be blasphemed in the world.

A a 2

3. The

2. The many and great difficulties which attend the work of the ministry, call for great care and watchfulness, that they who minister in holy things, be inoffensive, and blameless, in their whole behaviour and conduct. Some ancient writers have represented its difficulties so great, as it is next to impossible to overcome them. But tho' allowance must here be made for flights of rhetoric; yet it must be confess'd, that it is a very laborious, and difficult work. 'Tis the business of those who are consecrated and ordained to holy offices, to know, to declare, and defend the truth, and to discover, and confute error. It is their work, to remove and cure the prejudices, and reprove and reform, the vices of the age, in which they live. It lies upon them, to encounter irreligion and profaneness on the one hand, and to detect formality and hypocrisy on the other. They must condescend and suit themselves to the mean capacity and dulness of some, and oppose themselves with resolution and courage to the perverse obstinacy and malice of others: must instruct with meekness of wisdom,

² Tim 2. *rebuke with authority*, suffer no man to
^{15.}
 Tit. 2 15. despise them, censure the incorrigible, yet
 with

with a mixture of pity, and tender compassion, comfort the afflicted, bind up the broken-hearted, seek those that are lost, reduce those that go astray, prevent, and heal divisions, bear with the weak, encourage the strong, go through evil report and good, neither fearing nor flattering any, but in all things approving themselves the ministers of God. How great a work is here! it would almost discourage from the undertaking of it: And that which still adds to its weight is, That the ministers of Christ are subject to the same infirmities, that other men are: nay, they are exposed to some temptations, from which others are exempted. For they are, in the very nature and design of their function, to deal with all orders and degrees of men. High and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise, good and bad, are the object of their care. The various passions, appetites, affections, conversation, and actions of men come under their inspection and guidance. And who is sufficient for all these things! Who in that vast variety of cases, which must necessarily arise, can so order himself, as to *give no offence, in any thing!* It is true, it is a hard work, the difficulties attending it

are not to be foreseen, and scarce to be numbred. But difficulties must not dismay and deject; they should rather excite care, and quicken industry, and invigorate resolution. If the work be such, as it is difficult not to offend in the doing of it, and yet is such a work, as must of necessity be done; this is a good reason, to proceed in all cases, with so much the greater care, that so we may *give no just occasion of offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed*: And it should also be of great force with the people, to check that propensity, and forwardness they are guilty of, in taking offence, and censuring the conduct of their spiritual guides and governors. For I am perswaded, had they either skill, or temper enough to consider, examine, and weigh every thing in an equal balance (especially if they would but reflect, that they themselves are too too often the causes of those difficulties, which make it so very hard not to offend) they would find that instead of obloquy and contempt, they deserv'd love and honour. But,

4. Lastly, The success of the work of the ministry depends very much upon walking inoffensively, so as to give no occasion, to
the

the adversary, to blaspheme. Should the servants of the Lord, by any weakness, or mistake, or indiscreet and ill conduct, raise any great prejudices in the minds of the people committed to their care, it will very much obstruct the good effects of their doctrine, and all other endeavours for the good of their souls. Men will not abstract from the calling and the person; they will not distinguish between the man and his office: Or if some few have their senses so well exercis'd, as to discern between them; yet the doctrine is scarce received with that relish and pleasure, nor the endeavour to do good so acceptable, because offer'd by a disagreeable hand. Now if it be so, that giving any such occasion of offence to men, be the ready way to render our persons contemptible, and to hinder the desired effects of all our care and labour, this is a very forcible reason why we should follow the apostle's example, *viz.* so to persuade, as at the same time to *give no offence in any thing; that the ministry be not blamed.* I proceed to the last head, which is

3. To enquire how, or by what means, the ministers of Christ, the guides and governors of the church may so manage them-

elves, as to give no just occasion of offence in any thing, and thereby support the honour and authority of their office, at least secure their ministry from reproach and contempt. This I am sensible is a large subject, and I must not be tedious, and shall therefore point at some few things rather than discourse upon them. But yet before I can well do this, it may be fit, that I lay down a caution, and it is this, *viz.*

That they, who minister in holy things, are under no obligation to omit any necessary duty, but rather the contrary, for fear of giving offence to any, who are otherwise minded: For in such case they would really do the very thing, which they would avoid: They in truth would give very just occasion of offence, by violating their duty, which they were bound to perform, notwithstanding others would take offence at it. For example:

We teach that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that the everlasting Word, the eternal Son of God, who is consubstantial with his father, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and offered

offered himself a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. Now some pretend to take offence at this, and blame the ministers of religion, for obtruding contradictions and nonsense, upon the people, as the great mysteries of the faith. But if this be an offence, they cannot help it; it is an offence taken, and not given. They know these doctrines are agreeable to scripture, they know they are necessary and fundamental articles of our religion, and must earnestly contend for them, how much soever they displease those who are contrary-minded, lest otherwise they should be found in the number of those, who deny both the Father and the Son.

There are others, of the same temper with those the prophet *Isaiab* speaks of, *who say to the seers, see not; and to the* Isa. 30. 10. *prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.* My meaning is, there are some who are very desirous to be taught a way, how to reconcile the enjoyment of their lusts, and the hopes of heaven together, and represent our shewing the necessity of good works, in order to pardon, and peace with
 God,

God, and eternal life, as returning to mount *Sinai*, or the legal dispensation, and a kind of disclaiming the great grace and liberty, to which the gospel calls us. Now should
 Jer 23,31. they, *who minister in holy things*, to use the words of another prophet, *thus smooth their tongues*, they would be guilty of the most pernicious and fatal offence, and lead men headlong into the pit of destruction,
 Gal. 5. 13. No, *we have not thus learned Christ*: We dare not *use our liberty for an occasion to the flesh*, we cannot *turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*, thereby practically denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

So again, if we teach and maintain that the civil power is not the creature of the
 Tit. 3. 1. people, but *the ordinance of God*, and put men in mind to be subject to principalities
 Rom. 13. 1, &c. and powers, and to take heed of resisting them, not only for wrath, but conscience sake, and affirm with the apostle, that *they who resist shall receive to themselves damnation*: Some are mightily displeas'd, and charge the ministers of religion as pragmatical, and busy-bodies, and meddlers with what does not belong to them, and as carrying on a design, to oppress and enslave
 mankind:

mankind: Nay, do they but magnify their own office, assert the sacredness and dignity of it, and shew what reverence and submission is due to it, they can't escape: Men presently are offended, and cry out, as those of old, *Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi, all the Lord's people are holy.* Numb. 16. 3. Now if men be offended at this, I know no help, unless they themselves would please to rectify their own opinions; for so long as these things are taught, and enjoined in the scripture, they must not be overlook'd or neglected. Upon all fit and proper seasons and occasions, these truths must be taught, confirmed, and inculcated upon the consciences of the people.

Yet once more: Do they, who *minister in things pertaining to God*, represent the sinfulness and danger of divisions, and schism in the church? Do they shew the reasonableness and necessity of holding communion with the established church, so far as men are satisfied they lawfully may do it? Why, this also offends, and is represented (tho' very unjustly) as a mark of a rigid and persecuting spirit. But what then? so long as division, and needless separation, stand so branded, as they do in holy scripture,

ture,

ture, silence must not be kept, men must be called, to *mark* and avoid those who are the causes of them. Fit it may be, to please all men, in all lawful things, for their good and edification. But sure I am, that no man may forsake the principles of our holy religion, or neglect subjection to authority, or the practice of christian union and communion, for fear of offending any heterodox, licentious, factious, dividing party or parties of men. Having said thus much, to prevent any mistake, I now proceed to the mention of some particular, special instances of duty, by the practice whereof, all who are called to any holy office, may avoid giving offence, and support the honour of the ministry, at least secure it from very unjust censures, and reproach.

Here now I might proceed to an induction of several particulars, which either in their own nature, or in common estimation, are just grounds and occasions of offence, and for that reason are carefully to be avoided. Such as, dealing the word of God deceitfully, mixing errors with truth, using subtle artifices to recommend them, crafty interpretations to minister to pride, avarice,

Rom. 16.
17.

2Cor. 2. 17.

—4. 2.

1 Tim. 3.

3. 6.

1 Pet. 5. 2,

3.

and ambition, or to serve any secular interest, unseemly affectation of superiority and power, remissness or rigor in the exercise of it, doing things by partiality, mutual animosities, fierce opposition and jangling among our selves, want of gravity, seriousness, and attention, in the performance of holy offices, moroseness, fickleness, irresolution or feebleness of mind, cover'd with a pretence of caution and wariness; These, I say, and many other things of the like nature, deserve consideration, but I must not insist upon them, partly, because I believe (all invidious comparisons set aside) there is no church in the world, which is bless'd with a clergy, who, as to its main body, are more careful to avoid these, and suchlike faults, and infirmities, than that of the establish'd church: Partly, because the apostle, in the following parts of the chapter, hath directed to more particulars, in the practice of which he endeavoured to remove all occasion of offence, than the time will permit me to speak to: Some of which, may be peculiar to the apostolic age, some necessary in all ages; and with your patience, I would lay a few of these before you, rather

ther pointing at, than discoursing upon them.

1. The first thing the apostle recommends, is patience, resolution, and magnanimity, suitable to all events, which in the course of their ministry might befall them. This the apostle mentions in the verses following the text. Says he, *Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God; in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings.* It was the hard lot of the apostles, and the immediate disciples of our blessed Lord, to be esteemed the refuse and off-scouring of all things, to meet with the most unworthy and barbarous usage, from a stubborn and faithless generation, and at last to *resist, even unto blood, striving against sin.* But through the great mercy, and good providence of God, and the pious care of our governours, the bishops and pastors of the church have for a long time been exempt from these difficulties and trials; nevertheless it concerns them (and all christians) in the disposition and preparation

ration of their mind, to quit their dearest interests, and part with their lives, rather than renounce their religion, and sin against God. And where this disposition and temper of soul is visible, it will procure respect and honour. Such resolution and constancy, is a clear and full proof of sincerity, and the sincerity of such persons being unquestionable, it is a mighty advantage to the reputation and success of their ministry: But tho', as I said, the ministers of Christ are excused from extreme hardships and trials, yet there are other trials, which they are, and may be, exposed to, which will sufficiently exercise their patience, magnanimity, and firm resolution. It is no easy thing to contend with the obloquy and contradiction of unreasonable men, and such are almost every where to be met with. To overlook the ignorant censures of some, and contemn the malicious slanders of others, to overcome evil with good, to pity and pray for those who despitefully use them, is a great trial. But then to do thus, is a sure sign of a great and generous soul, and an excellent mean to gain respect and reverence, and to win upon the fierceness of those, who hate them. But this is not all;
even

even that which may seem to be (and which really is) a great advantage to the clergy, the due honour I mean, which is sometimes conferred upon them, requires a firmness of mind to prevent its becoming a snare, and a temptation, and an occasion of offence. For the apostle says, they must know how to bear *honour* as well as *dishonour*, and *good report* as well as *evil report*; and it may be a question, whether it be not as difficult to bear prosperous as adverse events. How hard a thing is it to receive honour, and to use it aright, without discovering any mixture of ostentation and vanity; without shewing partiality, remissness, or rigor; without any neglect, or contempt of inferiors, or any seeming affectation of exercising authority over them! The temptation is strong, and insinuating, and requires much prudence, and great firmness of mind, to discover, resist, and overcome it. But he that can effectually do it, will in this point remove much occasion of offence, and support the honour and veneration, which is justly due to his ministry. To proceed.

2. A second thing which the apostle mentions, *v. 6.* is *Pureness*. By which some of great learning and judgment, understand

derstand the particular virtue or grace of chastity. A virtue no less amiable than necessary, and its contrary vice every where odious and detestable. But blessed be God, in our own, and all the reformed churches, there can be no great danger of offending in this matter; the forc'd celibacy of the clergy, being taken off, which heretofore produc'd innumerable scandals, and still, where it is impos'd, as in the church of *Rome*, gives just occasion of offence, by the multitude of impurities, consequent upon it. But tho' this sense of the word must by no means be excluded; yet, I rather think, the apostle us'd it in a greater latitude, so as to comprehend innocence and holiness, or a conformity of heart and life to the will of God, walking in all his commandments blameless. An even, regular, constant tenor and course of goodness, will prevent blame, and command veneration and honour; but if this be wanting, nothing else will do it. For (to use the words of an excellent person) power may be dreaded, riches may be courted, wit and knowledge may be admired, but only goodness is truly esteem'd and honour'd. I need not say much upon this head, it being confess'd,

and own'd on all hands, that purity, and holiness, and universal goodness, are the best and surest expedient to prevent blame, and to procure respect and esteem among men. I rather rejoice, and glory in this, that so many bright examples of an unaffected, steady, uniform, diffusive piety and goodness, are even in this degenerate age to be found among us, in whom those words of God, are in some good degree verified, *Them that honour me, I will honour.*

3. A third thing the apostle mentions, is knowledge. A thing pleasant to the mind, as light is to the eye, earnestly desired, and highly esteemed among men, and its contrary defect, as despicable and vile. We are far from taking away the key of knowledge from the people; to allude to the words of *Moses*, we could wish that *all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.* But then we cannot but wish, at least a double portion of it, upon his ministers, that all who attend upon holy offices, might in this respect be as much superior to others, as their station is above them in the church. But what knowledge is it which the apostle recommends?

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Is it skill in languages, history, philosophy, and other arts and sciences? I cannot say that this was the apostle's meaning. But yet, with submission, neither do I think they must be wholly excluded, because they are of excellent use, and very necessary, to attain to that which certainly was his meaning. The apostle means knowledge in matters of religion, the nature and attributes of God, his will, his word, his providence, his works, or in other words, a clear, distinct, and comprehensive view of the whole gospel revelation in all things necessary to salvation; together with a dextrous, prudent, persuasive, powerful way, of instructing others in the same Truths, and enforcing them upon their hearts and consciences: To attain to these is our peculiar study, and most proper business, and any conspicuous defect herein, will be attended with blame, and reflect upon the ministry. But whosoever hath attained hereto is approved of God, *a workman that needeth not be ashamed, being able rightly to divide the word of truth.* How easy are men's consciences, when they know they are under the conduct of such guides. How cheerfully do they go on, in their way, when

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they are sensible their guides are able, and willing, and desire nothing so much as to lead them in right paths! and O how happy are the people of this kingdom whom God hath blessed with abundance of such guides! (and may their number increase every day more and more.) Happy indeed, if they did but know their own happiness, and would use the opportunities and advantages, which are put into their hands, I mean, by more frequent application of themselves to them, for resolution of their doubts, for advice and direction in matters of difficulty, for comfort in their distress, and for encouragement in all things, pertaining to life and godliness. Who more likely to be faithful and true, than such as *keep the key of knowledge, and so watch for men's souls, as those who must give an account to God for them?* But,

4. The apostle further directs to long-suffering, and kindness. I join both together, because they have a mutual relation to, and dependance upon each other. Now by these I understand bearing with the weakness and infirmities of men, pitying their failings, waiting for their amendment, over-looking their injuries, treating them
with

with decency and respect, performing real acts of civility and kind offices, doing them in an obliging way, and with a willing mind, and in a graceful and becoming manner. And who sees not how necessary these things are, to recommend our persons, and our best endeavours for the good of souls? These are things acceptable to God, and approv'd of men, and do not only prevent blame and offence, but conciliate love and honour to the ministry. Such facility, gentleness, and goodness, give freedom of access, and insinuate, like oil, into the affections, and are attended with proportionable success: Whereas on the contrary, moroseness, and austerity of carriage (especially where affected) in men otherwise very good, raise prejudices against their persons, and obstruct the good effects, of their best designs and endeavours. But I hasten, and shall bespeak your patience only, whilst I mention one particular more; namely,

5. Love unfeigned. Now should I say, that by this we are to understand that sincere, fervent affection wherewith the ministers of Christ should mutually embrace each other, I might perhaps not come up to the apostle's full design, but I think should

not be much beside my present purpose, which is to remove all blame from the ministry. Now should the servants of the Lord, who, above all others, are obliged to be united in the firmest bonds of brotherly love, be defective herein; much more should they indulge to mutual animosities, and fierce opposition; this would be a great offence, and their ministry would be blamed. I am sure, there never was more reason for them to walk in love, than in this degenerate age, wherein so many enemies are so restless in their endeavours to divide, that so they may destroy them, and then rejoice in their ruin. But to say no more of this, by love the apostle means hearty good will to all mankind, especially to those who are committed to their care and conduct, that so they may see, they seek not theirs, but them. Love demonstrating it self in a general concern for the souls of men, labouring after the salvation of the meanest creature for whom Christ died, and condescending to inferior Offices, for their spiritual good: Love discovering it self in a sollicitude to instruct the ignorant, recover the erroneous, reform the wicked, encourage the good, comfort the broken-hearted

hearted, and imparting all spiritual blessings to them in Christ Jesus, praying for, and blessing them, in his Name: Love manifesting it self, in visiting the sick, relieving the needy, comforting the fatherless and the widow, forgiving the injurious, censuring the obstinate with pity and tender compassion; I say so diffusive, sincere, fervent a love to the souls of men, would not fail of correspondent returns of love; and where there is mutual love, there will be no great disposition either to give, or to take offence.

I have now gone through the things I proposed to speak to, and though much more might have been added, and several inferences and conclusions drawn from what hath been said, yet (holy fathers and brethren in our Lord Jesus) I see I have but just time to express the most sincere and fervent desires of my soul: That the great God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would be continually present with you, in the management of that great and honourable trust which he hath committed to you: That he would go on to inspire you more and more, with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit

of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of our Lord: That he would direct, support, and comfort you in all your labour of love, and make you happy instruments in his own hands of turning many unto righteousness, whereby ye may shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Wise God, be honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

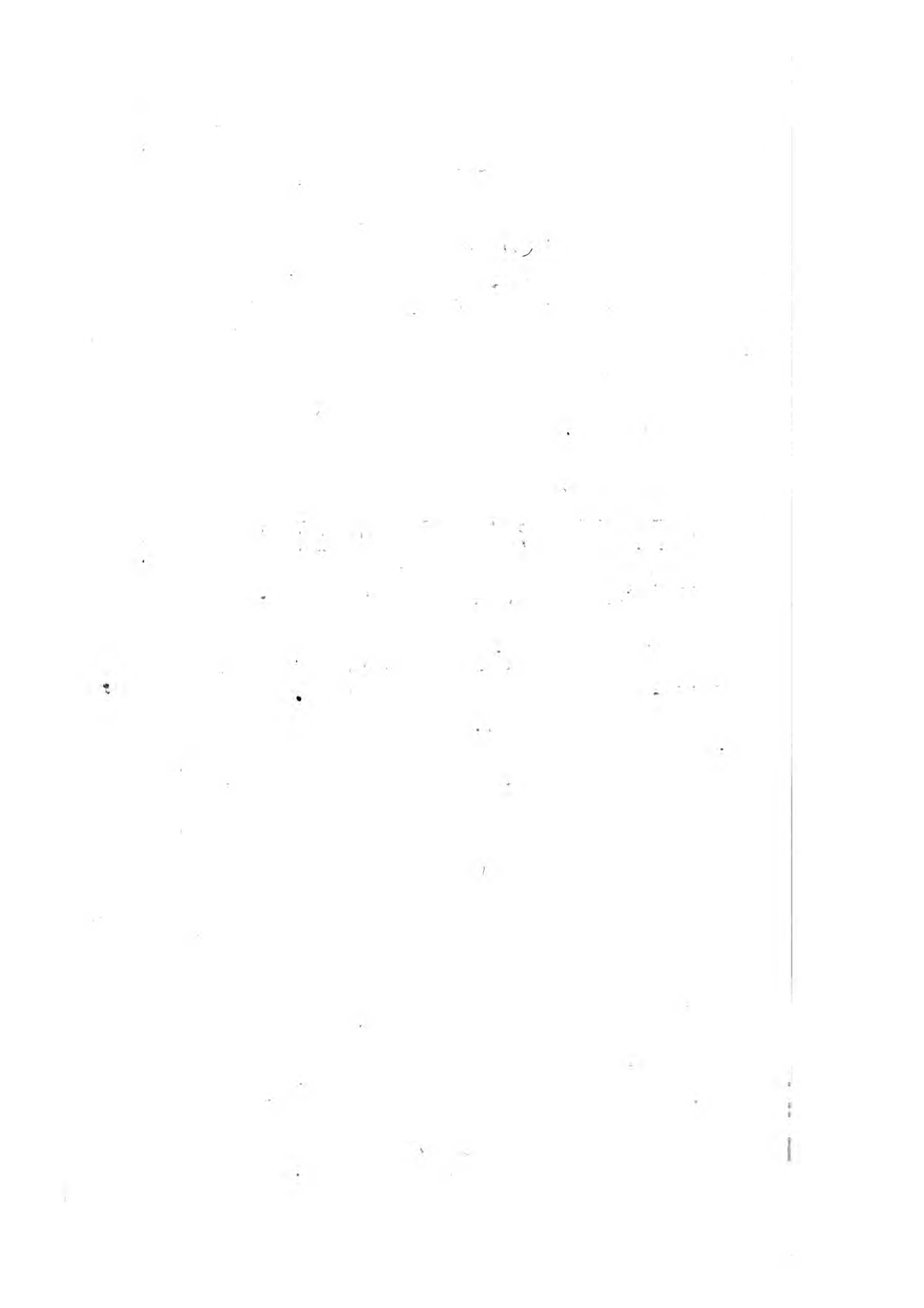


A
SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
DUTIES of the CLOSET:
Consisting of a
REGULAR COURSE
OF
DEVOTIONS,
Both STATED and OCCASIONAL:

In Purfuance to the DIRECTIONS
laid down by Sir *WILLIAM DAWES*,
in his aforeſaid Book.



L O N D O N :
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Advertisement

T O T H E R E A D E R.



HOWEVER looks into *The Duties of the Closet*, will soon perceive, that the most Rev^d. Author of it, instead of furnishing us with a *Set of Devotions* of his own, has refer'd us to such *Forms*, as may be found interspersed in such *Books* as he there recommends: This certainly was the effect of his great modesty, but at the same time it left a defect upon the Book. Persons, who expected, in *The Duties of the Closet*, all the *Offices*, which its *Title* seem'd to import, found themselves disappointed; and, in being oblig'd
to

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to turn to other *Tracts*, as they went along, met with some trouble to themselves, if not obstruction in their addresses to God. To remedy this inconvenience therefore, and withal to make this useful Book as complete as possible, we have thought proper to annex the several *Forms* which our author refers to, and which make up a *complete System of Devotions, both stated and occasional*, without the help of any other books: But, at the same time, we thought our selves concern'd to continue his Lordship's own *Devotions* in the order, wherein he had placed them, that the deviation from his method and design might be as small as possible.

T H E

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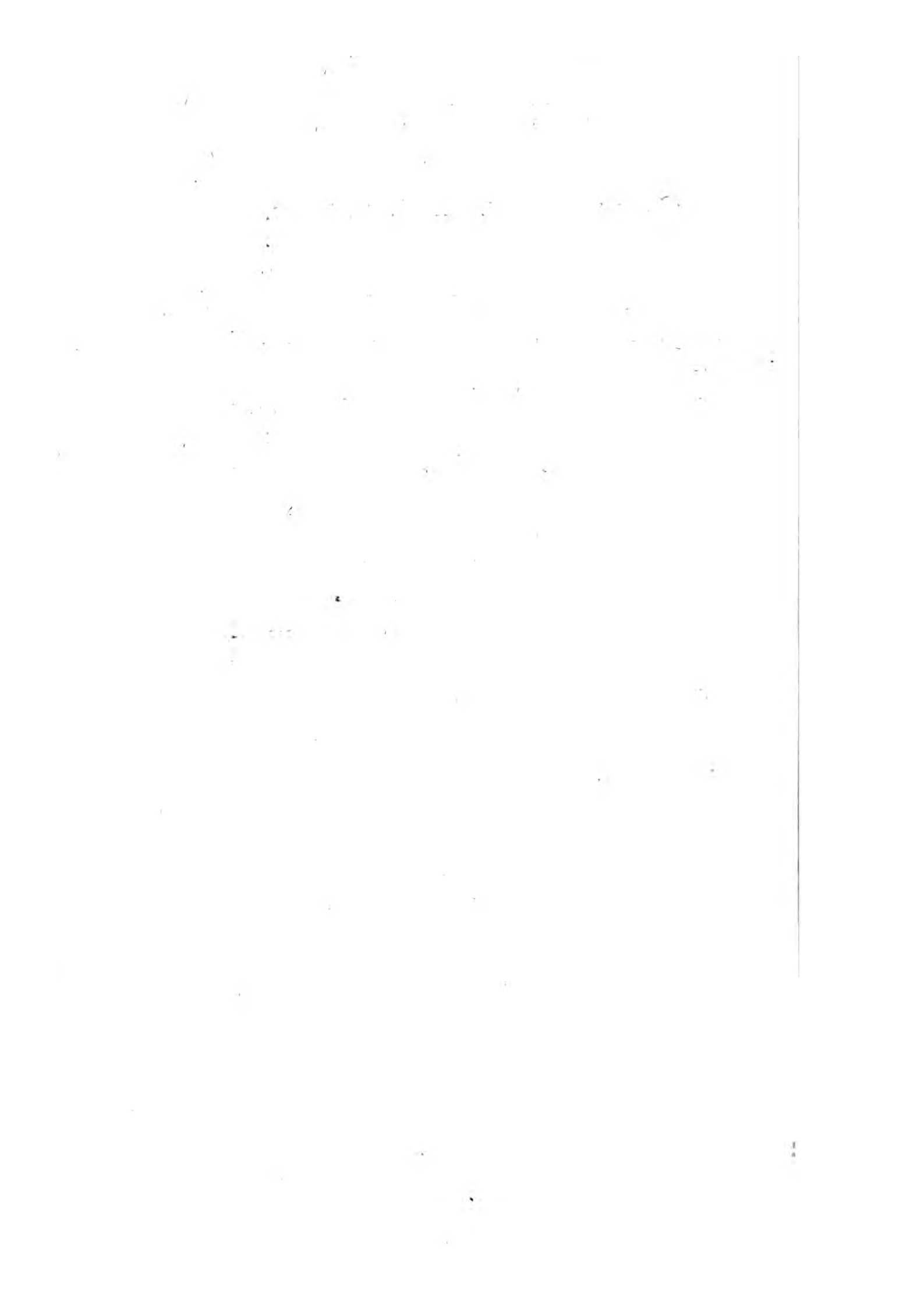
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A
SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
Duties of the C L O S E T.

MORNING DEVOTIONS.

DIRECTIONS for MORNING.

 *W*HEN thou awakest from thy sleep, suffer not (without some urgent necessity) any worldly thoughts to fill thy mind, till thou hast first paid thy more solemn devotions to almighty God; and therefore during the time that thou art dressing thyself (which should be no longer than common decency requires) exercise thy mind in some spiritual thoughts. Consider (for example) to what temptations thy business

A Supplement to the

or company that day are most like to lay thee open, and arm thyself with resolutions against them; or consider what occasions of doing service to God, or good to thy neighbour are, that day, most likely to present themselves, and resolve to embrace them, and also contrive how thou mayest improve them to the uttermost. But especially, it will be fit for thee to examine whether there have been any sins escaped thee since thy last night's examination. If, after these considerations, any further leisure remains, thou mayest profitably employ it in meditating on the general resurrection (whereof our rising from our beds is a representation) and of that dreadful judgment which shall follow it; and then think with thyself in what preparation thou art for it, and resolve to husband carefully every minute of thy time towards the fitting thee for that great account. As soon as thou art ready, retire to some private place, and there offer up to God thy morning sacrifice of praise and prayer.

*A Prayer to be said at the beginning of
our devotions.*

O PEN my mouth, O most glorious and incomprehensible Lord God, to bless and praise thy divine Majesty; cleanse my heart from all loose, wandring, and distracting thoughts; enlighten my understanding, help my memory, inflame my will, purify my intentions, excite my devotion, elevate my affections, and compose and discipline every faculty of my soul and body.

That I may worthily, reverently, and religiously perform this my morning sacrifice, and that, in vertue of that most pure and perfect prayer, which thou, O blessed Redeemer! living upon earth, didst offer up to thy eternal Father, saying,

Our Father, &c.

*A Supplement to the**A Confession for morning.*

O Righteous Lord, who hatest iniquity, I thy sinful creature cast myself at thy feet, acknowledging that I most justly deserve to be utterly abhorred and forsaken by thee: For I have *drunk iniquity like water*, gone on in a continual course of sin and rebellion against thee, daily committing those things thou forbiddest, and leaving undone those things thou commandest. Mine heart, which should be an habitation for thy spirit, is become a cage of unclean birds, of foul and disorderly affections; and out of this abundance of the heart my mouth speaketh, and my hands act; so that in thought, word, and deed, I continually transgress against thee; nay, O Lord, I have despised that *goodness* of thine which should *lead me to repentance*, hardening my heart against all those means thou hast used for my amendment. And now, Lord, what can I expect from thee, but *judgment and fiery indignation*, that is indeed the due reward of my sins: But, O Lord, *there is mercy with thee that thou mayest be feared*. O fit me for that
 mercy

Duties of the Closet.

5

mercy, by giving me a deep and hearty repentance, and then, according to thy goodness, let thine anger and thy wrath be turned away from me. Look upon me in thy Son, my blessed Saviour, and for the merit of his sufferings pardon all my sins; And, Lord, I beseech thee, by the power of thy grace so to renew and purify my heart, that I may become a new creature, utterly forsaking every evil way, and living in constant, sincere, universal obedience to thee all the rest of my days; that, behaving my self as a good and faithful servant, I may, by thy mercy, at last be received into the joy of my Lord. Grant this for Jesus Christ his sake, my only Saviour and Redeemer,

A Prayer for the morning.

O Most holy, blessed and glorious majesty of heaven and earth. Who art before all things, because they all received their being from thee; and who art of thy self infinite in all perfections: before thee, who art so great and incomprehensible, I most humbly prostrate my self this morning, rejoicing in this happy liberty which

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thou vouchsafest me, of retiring my thoughts a little from this world, to look up unto thee, the Father of my being. I adore and praise thy eternal power, wisdom and goodness. I heartily acknowledge the duty which I owe thee, both as I am thy creature, and as I am a christian. I bewail all my neglects of it, my backwardness unto it, or coldness in it. I intreat thy gracious pardon, and ingage myself, for the time to come, more heartily and firmly to thy obedience; beseeching the grace of thy holy Spirit to inable me to perform all those ingagements which are upon me. And blessed be thy fatherly goodness, which hath so often prevented me with that grace: I owe to it all the good thoughts and inclinations that are in my heart; all those motions that I feel in my soul towards thee, as my chiefest good; with all the effects and fruits of them in my life and actions; which encourage me to hope in thee for the constant help of it, to further me in well doing unto the end.

O thou, who hast sent thy Son from heaven to dwell among us; who hast not spared his life, but given him up for us
all;

all; who hast raised him from the dead, and *made him heir of all things*; who hast given him all *power in heaven and earth*, that he may bless us, and do us good: deny not the desires of a soul, that offers up it self intirely in sincere affection to thy service, but assist me so mightily from above, that I may make thee my constant acknowledgments likewise, for the sensible fruits of his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation produced in my heart; growing more and more in all wisdom, righteousness, purity, humility, goodness, and every other divine vertue. For which end preserve me alway in such a ferious temper of mind, that the sense of my duty to thee may make me always ready and forward to it; and the sense of my weakness, may make me watchful and diligent; and the sense of my former negligence, make me fervent in spirit; and the goodness of thy commands may render me more fruitful and abundant in the work of our Lord; and the great danger I have escaped, and the blessedness before me may make me persevere most patiently in all well doing, with joy and thankfulness; so that I may be like to Christ Jesus, my gra-

cious Lord and Master, and do him honour here in this world, and walk worthy of the great privileges he hath bestowed on me, and make grateful returns for all the vast receipts I have had from thy most bounteous mercy. O that all my acknowledgments, and pious affections, may be turned into actions of holiness and piety, and all my actions may be spirited with zeal, and all my zeal be regulated with prudence, and my prudence be void of all guile, and joined with perfect integrity of heart; that adorning my most holy faith and profession by a religious, upright, charitable, and discreet conversation, whilst I am here, I may receive approbation and praise, at the day of the Lord Jesus, and be numbred among thy saints in glory everlasting.

This, O Lord, is the sum of all my desires. Dispose me, by every thing that befalls me, for eternal life, and it sufficeth. I wholly leave my concerns in this life to the wisdom of thy goodness, that thou mayst order what thou judgest to be fittest for me. I trust thee with my self, and all I have; hoping thou wilt preserve me
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from all things hurtful, and lead me to all things profitable for my salvation.

The like I wish to all the world; that unbelievers may be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of thy dear Son; and they who are called by the name of Christ, may depart from all iniquity. Inspire all kings and princes of the earth with great wisdom and charity; and make them like to thee, the Lord of all, who art good unto all, and pleased in mercy. Indue all our pastors and guides with true knowledge, piety and zeal; and give me, and christian people grace to receive their instructions with a meek, humble and obedient heart. Thou knowest the sorrows, troubles and perplexities of all afflicted persons, for whom I implore thy compassionate relief: support them with a lively faith and hope in thy precious promises; dispose them thereby to a more strict observance of thy holy commands; and convert their present sufferings into endless joys, when they have brought forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. And whilst thou art pleased to continue to me that ease, plenty and prosperity which I enjoy, fill me with such a
sense

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sense of thy undeserved goodness, that I may be the more ready to do good to those, who are in misery; and, by a sober and moderate use of thy blessings, be prepared to endure patiently whatsoever change, thou shalt be pleased to order for me into a worse condition. Preserve me all this day in innocence, and in love to thee, and to all men; and since in all my ways I acknowledge thee, do thou direct my paths, and teach me to guide my affairs with discretion. Thou art my hope and my confidence, my satisfaction and my peace, my glory and my joy; therefore never leave me nor forsake me; but conduct me safely by thy counsel through all the businesses and enjoyments, through all the temptations and troubles of this life, to that blessed place, where our Lord Jesus liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, world without end.

Amen.

A shorter Prayer for the morning.

ALmighty God! who dwellest in the highest heavens, and yet vouchsafest to regard the lowest creature upon earth, I humbly adore thy sacred majesty, and, with all the powers of my soul, exalt and praise thy holy name, for the infinite blessings thou hast so freely bestowed upon me; for electing me in thy love, and creating me after thine own image; for redeeming me by thy Son, and sanctifying me with thy holy Spirit; for preserving me in all the chances and encounters of this life, and raising up my thoughts to the hope of a better; and particularly for thy gracious protecting me from the dangers of this night, and bringing me safely to the beginning of this day. Continue, O Lord! thy mercy to me; and as thou hast awakened my body from sleep, so raise my soul from sin, that I may walk soberly, righteously, and godly this day, in all holy obedience before thy face.

Deliver me, O merciful God! from the evils of this day, and guide my feet in the ways of peace; strengthen my resolutions,
to

to embrace with gladness, the opportunities of doing good; and carefully avoid all occasions of sin, especially those, to which my nature is most prone, and which experience hath confirm'd to be most dangerous to my soul. And when, through frailty, I forget thee, do thou in mercy remember me; that, as I often fall by the evil inclination of my nature, I may always rise again by the assistance of thy grace. Make me diligent in the duty of my calling (or state of life wherein thou hast placed me) that I may not be too solicitous for these fading riches, but in all the miscarriages and crosses of the world, absolutely submit to thy divine pleasure, and wholly rely on thy merciful providence. Let thy blessings be upon all my actions, and thy grace direct my intentions, that the whole course of my life, and the principal design of my heart, may always tend to the advancement of thy glory, the good of others, and the eternal salvation of my own soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

An Intercession.

O Blessed Lord, whose mercy is over all thy works, I beseech thee to have mercy upon all men, and grant that the precious ransom, which was paid by thy Son for all, may be *effectual* to the saving of all. Give thy enlightning grace to those that are in darkness, and thy controverting grace to those that are in sin: look with thy tenderest compassion upon the universal Church. O be favourable and gracious unto *Sion*, build thou the walls of *Jerusalem*. Unite all those that profess thy name to thee, by purity and holiness, and to each other, by brotherly love. Have pity, O Lord, on all that are in affliction; be a father to the fatherless, and plead the cause of the widow; comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, heal the sick, relieve the needy, defend the oppressed, and administer to every one according to their several necessities. Let thy blessings rest upon all that are near and dear to me, and grant 'em whatsoever thou see'st necessary either to their bodies or their souls.

Rewards

Reward all those that have done me good, and pardon all those that have done, or wish'd me evil; and work in them and me all that good which may make us acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving.

O Gracious Lord, whose mercies endure for ever, I thy unworthy servant, who have so deeply tasted of them, desire to render thee the tribute of my humblest praises for them. In thee, O Lord, I live, and move, and have my being: Thou first madest me to *be*, and then, that I might not be miserable, but happy, thou sentest thy Son out of thy bosom to redeem me, from the power of my sins by his grace, and from the punishment of them by his blood, and by both to bring me to his glory. Thou hast by thy mercy caused me to be born within thy peculiar fold, the christian church, where I was early consecrated to thee in baptism, and have been partaker of all those spiritual helps, which might aid me to perform that vow I there
made

made to thee ; and when, by my own wilfulness or negligence, I have failed to do it, yet thou in thy manifold mercies hast not forsaken me, but hast graciously invited me to repentance ; afforded me all means both outward and inward for it, and with much patience hast attended, and not cut me off, in the acts of those many damning sins I have committed, as I have most justly deserved. It is, O Lord, thy *restraining* grace alone, by which I have been kept back from any the greatest sins, and it is thy *inciting* and *assisting* grace alone, by which I have been enabled to do any the least good ; therefore, not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name be the praise. For these and other thy spiritual blessings, *my soul doth magnify* the Lord, and all that is within me praise *his holy name*. I likewise praise thee for those many outward blessings I enjoy, as health, friends, food and raiment, the comforts, as well as the necessaries of this life, for those continual protections of thy hand, by which I and mine are kept from dangers, and those gracious deliverances thou hast often afforded out of such as have befallen me ; and for that mercy of
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thine, whereby thou hast sweetned and allayed those troubles, thou hast not seen fit wholly to remove; for thy particular preservation of me this night, and all other thy goodness towards me. Lord, grant that I may render thee not only the fruit of my lips, but the obedience of my life, that so these blessings here may be an earnest of those richer blessings, thou hast prepared for those that love thee; and that for his sake, whom thou hast made the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him, even Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A conclusive Prayer.

REceive, O merciful Creator this my morning sacrifice, which I have offered up, and grant that it may be to the glory and honour of thy great name, and to the eternal salvation of my own soul.

Accept, O omnipotent Creator! my poor endeavours. Pardon, O merciful Redeemer, thou great exemplar and pure idea of all wisdom, all my defects and negligences. Give me, O Holy Ghost! efficacious grace, to put in due practice my present purposes and resolutions. *Glory be to the Father*

ther and to the Holy Ghost; for the benefits of my creation, redemption, sanctification: As it was in the beginning, when the morning stars praised thee, is now, in the church-militant, and shall be world without end, in the church-triumphant. Amen.





EVENING DEVOTIONS.

DIRECTIONS for NIGHT.



A night, when it draws towards the time of rest, bethink thyself how thou hast passed the day; examine thine own heart what sin, either of thought, word or deed, thou hast committed, what opportunity of doing good thou hast omitted, and whatsoever thou findest to accuse thy self of, confess humbly and penitently to God, renew thy purposes and resolutions of amendment, and beg his pardon in Christ; and this not slightly, and only as of course, but with all devout earnestness, and heartiness, as thou wouldest do, if thou wert sure thy death were as near approaching
as

as thy sleep, which for ought thou knowest may be so indeed, and therefore thou shouldest no more venture to sleep irreconciled to God, than thou wouldest dare to die so. In the next place consider, what special and extraordinary mercies thou hast that day received, as if thou hadst any great deliverance, either in thy inward man, from some dangerous temptations, or in thy outward, from any great and apparent danger, and offer to God thy hearty and devout praise for the same; or if nothing extraordinary hath so happened, and thou hast been kept even from the approach of danger; thou hast not the less, but the greater cause to magnify God, who hath by his protection so guarded thee, that not so much as the fear of evil hath assaulted thee. And therefore omit not to pay him the tribute of humble thankfulness, as well for his usual and daily preservations, as his more extraordinary deliverance. And above all, endeavour still by the consideration of his mercies, to have thy heart the more closely knit to him; remembering that every favour received from him is a new engagement upon thee to love and obey him.

*A Supplement to the**A Prayer before the beginning of our
Devotions.*

O Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner.

Lord, I know not what to pray for as I ought, O let thy spirit help my infirmities, and enable me to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable unto thee by Jesus Christ.

A Confession for the Evening.

O Most holy Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, how shall I, abominable wretch, dare to appear before thee, who am nothing but pollution? I am defiled in my very nature, having a backwardness to all good, and a readiness to all evil; but I have defiled myself yet much worse by my own actual sins and wicked customs. I have transgressed my duty to thee, my neighbours, and myself, and that both in thought, in word, and in deed, by doing those things which thou hast expressly forbidden, and by neglecting to do those things which thou hast com-
manded

manded me. And this not only through ignorance and frailty, but knowingly and wilfully, against the motions of thy spirit, and the checks of my own conscience to the contrary. And, to make all these out of measure sinful, I have gone on in a daily course of repeating these provocations against thee, notwithstanding all thy calls to, and my own purposes and vows of amendment; yea, this very day I have not ceased to add new sins to all my former guilts. And now, O Lord, what shall I say, or how shall I open my mouth, seeing I have done these things? I know that the wages of these sins is death; but O thou, who willest not the death of a sinner, have mercy upon me. Work in me, I beseech thee, a sincere contrition, and a perfect hatred of my sins; and let me not daily confess, and yet as daily renew them; but grant, O Lord, that from this instant I may give a bill of divorce to all my most beloved lusts, and then be thou pleased to marry me to thyself in righteousness and holiness. And for all my past sins, O Lord, receive a reconciliation; accept of that ransom thy blessed Son hath paid for me, and

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for his sake whom thou hast set forth as a propitiation, pardon all my offences, and receive me to thy favour. And when thou hast thus spoken peace to my soul, Lord keep me, that I may not turn to any folly, but so establish me with thy grace, that no temptation of the world, the devil, or my own flesh, may ever draw me to offend thee: That being made free from sin, and becoming a servant unto God, I may have my fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Prayer for the Evening.

O Lord, the Creator of the world, and the Redeemer of mankind; who knowest all things, and canst do what thou pleasest, and wilt do that which is best for thy children. I fall down before thee in the lowliest manner, to express my fear and reverence of thy almighty power; my admiration of, and submission to, thy unfathomable wisdom; my hearty love and thankful acknowledgment of thy wondrous goodness; my trust and confidence in thy faithful promises; with
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my readiness, and sincere purposes to perform all obedience to thy holy commands.

Possess me, I beseech thee, with such a deep and strong sense of thy supreme authority over all, of the obligations I have to thee, and the great kindness thou hast done me in engaging me to be thy servant; that religion may be the very business of my life, and my greatest pleasure may be to please thee in every thing, and my highest design to attain that blessed immortality, which Christ Jesus hath promised.

O lift up my affections more and more to those things above, where he is: That heaven may have my heart, while this world hath my body; and I may have perfect contentment in well doing, and patient suffering; and the good hope I have of being eternally beloved of thee, the Lord of heaven and earth, may make me rejoice evermore. Free me from all inordinate cares for the things of this life; from all distrust of thy good providence; from all repining at any thing that befalls me: and inable me in every thing to give thanks; believing that all things are ordered by the greatest reason, and shall work together for good to those that love thee.

I doubt not of thy fatherly affection to those that study, in all sincerity, to approve themselves unto thee; and therefore still resolve to leave my self intirely to thy wise counsels, that thou mayst dispose me into such a condition as thou seeest best in this world. Remember me but of my duty; quicken and excite me to it; strengthen me in the doing of it; support me under all discouragements; advise me in all difficult cases; and comfort me with a stedfast belief of thy holy word; and I shall ever be giving thanks and praise unto thee, who dealeth so bountifully with me.

And now, O most gracious and liberal benefactor! with my whole strength, with all the faculties of my soul and body, I praise and magnify thy holy name for thy great and innumerable benefits, proceeding purely from thy bounty, and intended wholly for my good, particularly for preserving me this day in the midst of so many dangers incident to mankind, and delivering me from the variety of calamities and miseries as are due to my sins.

Thou art my Creator, O my God, and merciful protector; thou art the ultimate
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end of my being, and supream perfection of my nature; under the shadow of thy wings is perpetual repose, and from the light of thy countenance flows eternal joy and felicity: To thee glory and honour, to thee adoration and obedience, be ascribed from all thy creatures for ever.

And since thou hast ordained us the day to labour, and the night to take our rest; as I praise thee for the blessings of this day past, so I beseech thee for thy protection this night to come: Let the eye of thy providence watch over me, and thy holy angels pitch their tents round about me, that, being safely delivered from all dangers, and comfortably refreshed with moderate sleep, I may the better be enabled to perform the employments of my calling and state of life, and faithfully persevere in the duties of thy service, and so daily advance to new victories over my passions, and to a more perfect observance of thy commandments; till, having passed my days in thy fear, I may end them in thy favour, and rejoice with thee for ever, in thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth,

reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Shorter Prayer for the Evening.

Blessing, glory, honour and praise be again returned to thee, O Father of mercy, from a most thankful heart; which offers up it self also in holy devotion to thee. Who art my soveraign Lord, my most loving Saviour, my Deliverer and Benefactor; the Fountain of all the good things we enjoy at present, and the hope of my soul for ever and ever. Blessed be thy renewed kindness to me this day past; both to my self and my relations, to my soul and my body, in my transgressions with men, and in the liberty thou allowest me of addresses to thyself. Pardon, good Lord, whatsoever hath escaped me in thought, word, or deed, contrary to my duty; and accept of those sincere intentions, and unfeigned purposes, which were, and I hope shall always be in my heart to study to approve myself to thee in all well-doing.

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It is but just and reasonable that I should follow thy will, and not my own; and in a grateful sense of what I have received from thee, I ought to be moved to employ all the powers of my soul and body for thee. But such is the goodness of thy will, that is for my ease and pleasure, and greatest happiness, to be absolutely led and governed by it. I am sensible, O Lord, how much I am indebted to thee, for teaching me by Christ Jesus, and also strongly obliging me to exercise myself to all godliness, purity, righteousness, humility, goodness and truth. And accordingly I thank thee above all things, for his holy instructions and example; for the hope thou hast given us by his blood, that thou wilt be so merciful to our sins, as not to deny us the power of thy holy Spirit to enable us to follow him, and obey his commands; and for that exceeding great and precious promise which he hath given us of immortal life, to encourage us to follow him willingly and cheerfully, even to the death.

O that I may feel a lively and steadfast faith in his word, continually working with great power in my heart; exciting me to
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an unwearied diligence, and zeal, and love, and patient continuance in my duty towards thee, and towards all men; that so my hope in thee may grow and increase, and I may joyfully expect that hour which shall translate me hence, to the eternal happiness of the other world. And during my stay here, I commend myself to thy good providence, which hath hitherto been so tender of me. I trust thee wholly with myself, and all belonging to me; and am willing in every thing to be disposed of, as thou see'st good. This night I flee unto thy almighty protection; hoping thou wilt keep me safely, and whether I awake in this or the other life, I shall still be praising thee; whose mercy endureth for ever,
Amen.

An Intercession for the Evening.

WITH these prayers for myself, I present my supplications likewise to thee, O Father of mercies for the good of the world. Pity the follies of mankind; deliver them from their sins, and miseries. Hear the groans of every part of the creature, that is yet subject to the
bondage

bondage of corruption, and bring them all into the glorious liberty of thy children. Hear the daily prayers of the catholick church. Free her from all foul and dividing errors: let the truth, as it is in Jesus, prevail, and peace be in all her borders. O that all christian kings and governors, may follow after peace and infue it. Make thy ministers the messengers of peace; and dispose the hearts of all christians to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Inlighten the minds of all Jews, Turks and Infidels with the knowledge of thy truth. Give repentance unto sinners; and increase of grace and strength to all thy faithful servants. Reduce those that wander out of the way; confirm and settle those that stand; and grant them a stedfast resolution to persevere in faith, love and obedience. Relieve and comfort all those that are in any distress. Make the earth to bring forth her increase in due season. And let all honest and industrious people be succeeded and blessed in their labours. Remember all those to whom I am indebted for my birth, education, instruction or promotion. Thou, who art rich in mercy, reward and recompense

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pense their care and love. Grant forgiveness and charity to all my enemies. Continue good will among all my kind neighbours. Assist those who are dying and leaving this world. Fit them for a better place; receive the souls which thou hast redeemed with thy Son's most precious blood, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and give us all a glorious resurrection and eternal life. *Amen, Amen.*

A Thanksgiving.

O Thou Father of mercies, who art kind even to the unthankful, I acknowledge myself to have abundantly experimented that gracious property of thine: For, notwithstanding my daily provocations against thee, thou still heapest mercy and loving-kindness upon me. All my contempts and despisings of thy spiritual favours have not yet made thee withdraw them, but in the riches of thy goodness and long-suffering thou still continuest to me the offers of grace and life in thy Son. And all my abuses of thy temporal blessings thou hast not punished with an utter deprivation of them, but art still pleased
to

to afford me a liberal portion of them. The sins of this day thou hast not repayed, as justly thou mightest, by sweeping me away with a swift destruction; but hast spared and preserved me according to the greatness of thy mercy. What shall I render unto the Lord for all these benefits he hath done unto me? Lord, let this goodness of thine lead me to repentance, and grant that I may not only offer thee thanks and praise, but may also order my conversation aright, that so I may at last see the salvation of God, thro' Jesus Christ.

A conclusive Prayer.

O Lord, pardon the wandrings and coldness of these petitions, and deal with me not according either to my prayers or deserts, but according to my needs and thine own rich mercies in Jesus Christ; in whose blessed name and words I conclude these my imperfect prayers, saying,

Our Father, &c.



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS.

A Meditation for Sunday Morning.



O ! this is the appointed season ; this the solemn feast-day of immortal spirits ; wherein the Lord makes a feast of fat things for them : A feast of wines on the lees ; of wines on the lees well refined ; wherein he fills our hungry souls with good things : Our souls hungering and thirsting after righteousness, with the bread of heaven, and food of angels ; with heavenly repast, spiritual nourishment, and the inward consolations of the Holy Ghost ; whereby they grow in grace, are nurtured up to a perfect manhood in Christ Jesus, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of approaching glory !

Lo !

Lo, this is the day wherein blessed souls, prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, maintain an holy traffick and commerce with heaven; wherein they hold a more immediate and peculiar communion with their God, with all the blessed and glorified inhabitants above: This the day wherein we lie most open to the kind propitious influences of the holy Spirit; wherein *Jacob's* vision of a ladder reaching from heaven to earth, and of angels descending and ascending thereon, is again verified: for on this day more especially is there a mutual intercourse between heaven and earth; on this day more especially is it that blessed angels visit us, instill into us good inclinations, drive out of us bad ones, are present in our religious assemblies, are witnesses to our pious and devout behaviour amidst divine worship, and join with us (tho' in an unseen, unheard manner) in celebrating the praises and perfections of the Deity; in gratefully acknowledging the divine goodness and mercy of their and our common Parent and Preserver, of their and our supreme Governor and most bountiful Benefactor.

Let those then, O God, apply themselves to other delights, to other exercises, as if tired and cloyed with thy service, who are indifferent to the light and favour of thy countenance; who experience not the joys, the holy enravishments of holding communion with thee the Father of spirits, and God of all consolation. Let them busy their time with other employments, and waste this holy day in negligence and omission of duties, who think they can do too much for God and their own souls, too much for the securing to themselves a blessed eternity. As for us, give us grace, O Lord, to be wiser and better, to be unweary'd and indefinient in thy service. All the day long of this consecrated season give us to have our delight, our meditation in thy word, that all the week after we may find the spiritual comfort and benefit thereof.

The day appointed in memory of a less divine favour and mercy, ought to give place to that held in celebration of, and thankfulness for, a much greater act of God's goodness; consequently the *Jewish* sabbath ought to be superseded by that of the *christian*.

Arise

Arise then, O my soul, and put on a dress suitable to the meeting of thy Lord. Put on the wedding-garment of righteousness, of devout and zealous affection, and go to the espousals, to the marriage-feast of the Lamb Christ Jesus; there, with an holy reverence, and awful humility, worship thou before him in his sacred temple: he will greet thee with love, *his banner over thee will be love*; he will entertain thee with the good things of his house; he will regale thee with spiritual dainties, and fill thee with the graces, with the joys and comforts of his blessed Spirit. But see, that thou goest to meet him prepared; put off then thy shoos from off thy feet; put off thy corrupt, sensual, terrene affections, for the place whereon thou art to stand is holy ground, is a place peculiarly consecrated and set apart for religious worship, and for thy holding communion with thy God and Saviour. O may no vain and wandering thoughts, no base and sinister ends, no carnal, earthly and sensual desires, no coldness and deadness of affection toward holy duties, hinder thy spiritual communion with the Father of spirits, with the God of all joy and heavenly consolation.

Suspend then, O christian, who art about to approach the temple of thy God, suspend thy mean employments of this world; lay aside thy distracting earthly cares, purify thy heart, cleanse thy self of all irregular appetites, come to the courts of thy Saviour all holy and pure, that thy soul and body may be a fit temple for the spirit, the spirit of holiness to reside in; that being prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, thou mayest be in the spirit on this the Lord's day; may'st pray with believing, and with zeal and ardour of devotion; may'st praise God with joyful lips, and, with the best praise, an holy and exemplary life; may'st hear with attention, and receive the word of God in the love thereof, with a design to practise it; may'st approach the table of thy Lord with some degree of worthiness; and may'st feast there, and confirm thy faith and hope, and all other thy graces, with that delicious spiritual banquet.

A Prayer for Sunday Morning.

O Most holy and eternally blessed: *The Deut. x.*
heaven, and the heaven of heavens is^{14.}
thine, the earth also with all that therein is.

Thou art every where, and canst not be excluded from any place; but art present to the greatest secrets of my soul, and seest the closest and most retired thoughts of my heart. Thou knowest very well with what designs and affections I now bow myself before thee, and canst not be deceived by any words, that I am able to speak in thy praise, whilst my heart is far from thy fear and love.

Behold, O Lord, my heart is full with desires to be possessed with a mighty reverend sense of thee, and all the benefits thou hast bestowed on me; and to be lifted up to heaven in love to thee, and joy in thee, whilst I bless and praise thee, and speak good of thy name. I here remember, with all humility and thankfulness, that thou art my Creator; and acknowledge thy care and providence over thy ancient people in blessing and sanctifying a day,

wherein thou thy self restedst from thy works, that they might cease from all other employments; and admire thy wonderful works, extol thy power, bless thy goodness, and am astonish'd at thy wisdom, in making, preserving, adorning, and governing this excellent frame of the world. *The heavens declare thy glory, O God, and the firmament sheweth thy handy-work.* The sun, the moon, and all the host of heaven proclaim the greatness and splendor of thy majesty. *The whole earth is full of thy rich goodness: so is the great and wide sea, wherein are things moving innumerable, both small and great living creatures.* There is nothing but what speaks of thee; and above all, the children of men, whom thou hast wonderfully made, and curiously wrought, and impressed with thine own image, that they might understand thee, and love thee, in all and above all things.

Psal. civ.
24.

The variety, the order, the steadfastness of all thy works in this great world, abundantly utter thy adorable perfections: but thou, O Lord, by thy goodness in giving thy Son for me, and then raising him up from the dead, and setting him at thy
right

right hand, hast given us new matter of wonder and praise, and consecrated a better rest and holy-day of rejoicing; wherein I should behold the glories of another world, and have before my eyes the happiness thou intendest for me there, together with all the excellent means which lead unto it. Thou givest me occasion not only to reflect upon all the good things, thou hast provided for my body, which I can never acknowledge enough (the very health and ease of one day deserving the thankfulness of many) but I must also remember, that I am thy *redeemed* one, and that thou hast done great things for my soul in thy Son Jesus, who is entered into the heavens for me, and gone to prepare a resting place for all those that follow him. This exceeding riches of thy grace infinitely surpasses all my acknowledgment; since all the praises I am able to render thee, are less than is due for thy temporal blessings. To this love I owe the knowledge of thee, the true and only God; my freedom from idolatry, and a vain conversation; the true principles of holy living; the benefit of repentance; the promise of a pardon; the assistance of

thy holy Spirit; the ministry of thy angels; the hope of immortal life, and the pledges, our Lord hath left me of his endless love.

What is man that thou art mindful of him? what are the sons of men that thou dost at all consider them? Thou hast crowned us with glory and honour here below, and raised us to a dominion over the works of thy hands. Thou hast indued us with understanding to know thee, and with will to love thee; whose most excellent wisdom, almighty power, and surpassing goodness, I discover in all thy works of wonder. But what is sinful man, that thou shouldest so much regard him, as to send after him, to seek and save him, when he was lost? Lord! what grace was this, that thou shouldest vouchsafe to speak with me, and communicate any thing of thy mind to such a forgetful and ungrateful wretch as I am? But that thou shouldst speak to me by thy Son, and declare thy mind in such words of grace and favour, and publish such kind intentions towards me, and recover me, with so much cost, and purchase me to thy self with the precious blood of thy Son Jesus, and send thy holy Spirit to purify
me;

me; that I might have thy image renewed in me, and be made fit society for thy self again, and restored to immortal life: Lord! how much doth it exceed all belief, hadst thou not given me, in tender mercy, such abundant assurance of it? I have those reasons to bless thee, which the angels have not. I must admire thee, not only as the great *Creator* and *Preserver* of all things (which I heartily do) and give thee the glory of all thy marvelous works; but also as the *Redeemer* of mankind out of a forlorn condition, by the manifestation of thy self in the flesh, by the blood of thy Son, the constant breathings of the Holy Ghost, the light of thy gospel, and an unwearied patience, which hath waited on me, and propounded to me no less happiness than to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, who is advanced far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that also which is to come.

I praise thee, O God, I magnify thy most holy name; I confess my self bound to thee, above all other creatures, that I have any knowledge of; for I
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am twice thy creature, and thou hast a double title to all I have. O stir up all that is within me to bless thee, and love thee, and offer up the sacrifice of thanksgiving to thee. Fill my heart with joy and gladness, that I have another opportunity, wherein to recount thy mercies to me; to be further instructed in thy mind and will declared by my Saviour; and to be under the comfortable influences of heaven; to cherish those holy thoughts, affections, and resolutions which are begun in me, and to promote my growth and increase in all wisdom, goodness and virtue.

So that every day may become an holy rest to the Lord, by ceasing to do evil, and constantly doing well; and I may glorify thee throughout my whole life; in all my actions *shewing forth thy praises, who hast called me out of darkness into thy marvelous light*, according to thy abundant mercy in Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

¹ Pet. ii.
9.

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A Meditation for Sunday Evening.

THIS is the day which the Lord hath made, I will rejoice and be glad in it: O let me worship and fall down, and end the day as I have happily begun it: Nay, rather let me end it with more zeal and devotion, with greater perfection and alacrity of holy obedience. Let me come before God's presence with thanksgiving, and offer up my evening sacrifice of prayer and praise. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not any of his benefits: Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities: Who hath redeemed, on this day, thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness: Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, and thine heart with hidden consolations: Who maketh thee glad with the light of his countenance, and filleth thee with the nourishing dainties of his house, as with marrow and fatness: Who caused thee to rise this day from death and condemnation to a lively hope of eternal glory; may thou
rise

rise from the death of sin, to a life of righteousness. O praise the Lord therefore for his undeserved goodness: Praise him for the inestimable mercy of thy redemption: Bless him for all his ordinances of grace here, which may be happy means of bringing thee to glory hereafter.

But ah! how careless are they of their souls on this day, who waste part of it in fruitless sports and recreations, who allow not so much time for God's service on the Sunday, as they do to their worldly concerns and employments on the week-day! Alas, little do such consider the worth of their immortal spirits, or how the due observance of the sabbath would derive a blessing upon them all the week after! Little do they consider, how nothing at all too much is one whole day in seven, spent in God's worship, hereby to set their hearts right again, after having been disturbed and corrupted with six precedent days worldly follies and vanities.

Dost thou require of me, O Lord, but one day in seven for thy more especial service, whenas all my time, all my days are thy due tribute; and yet shall I grudge thee that one day? Have I but one day in
the

the week a peculiar season of nurturing and training up my soul for heavenly happiness, and shall I think the whole of this too much, and judge my duties at an end, when the publick offices of the church are only ended? Ah where, in such a case, is my zeal, my sincerity, my constancy and perseverance of holy obedience? Where my love unto, my delight and relish in, pious performances? Would those, who are thus but half-christians, be content to be half-saved? Would those, who are thus not far from the kingdom of heaven, be willing to be utterly excluded thence, for arriving no nearer to a due observance of the Lord's day? Am I so afraid of *sabbatizing* with the *Jews*, that I carelessly omit keeping the day as a good christian? Where can be the harm of over-doing in God's worship, suppose I could over-do? But when my Saviour has told me, after I have done all, I am still an unprofitable servant, where is the hazard, where the possibility of doing too much? Whereas, in doing too little, in falling short of performing a due obedience on the sabbath, I may also fall short of eternal life!

Ah!

Ah! are not six days in the week sufficient for depraving of our souls? sufficient for these inferiour sublunary vanities? But must I divide too God's day between him and the world and spend the evening thereof in needless visits and compliments, in vain, if not wanton, talk and converse, in sensualizing sports and pastimes? Ah! those, who have thus an outward form of godliness, without the inward power thereof; those, who are only for the least of holy obedience, which will just save 'em; how hazardous a thing is it, whether they shall be saved at all! their being thus cold and lukewarm in God's service (as their being afraid of doing too much in it shews they are) evidences that they have but little love for God and goodness; that if they have any, it burns not flagrant in their breasts, but is nigh unto expiring: evidences, that they find little pleasure, little gust and appetite in the discharge of holy duties on the sabbath; for did they find much, they would continue their duties on this day to the end thereof, were it but to continue their spiritual delights and satisfactions, their spiritual transports, and holy enravishments!

Have

Have I, as a christian, more sublime and exaltedly holy precepts than had the *Jews*; have I more great and precious gospel-promises, to encourage me to their performance; have I more powerful assistance to enable me to perform them in a more high and perfect manner; and yet can I be of opinion, that a less holy observance and hallowing of the christian sabbath, is required of me, than was of the *Jews*, with respect to their day of rest and pious performances?

Ought I not to afford my God as much of my time in his day, as I allow to worldly employments on others? Can I imagine too much may be done in his service? Can I suppose an over-purchase of heaven? that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, is enough sure to reward the utmost of my frail defective services.

O the day, the eternal day, when I shall enjoy an everlasting sabbath, when I shall be let into the holy of holies, into the sanctuary of heaven, into the inmost glories, and choicest felicities of my God; When I shall drink at the fountain-head of those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore! Blessed Lord,

Lord, prepare me by the means of grace for this thy kingdom of glory. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Sunday Evening.

O Lord most high, the holy One, who inhabitest eternity, who only hast immortality, and art most blessed in thy own incomprehensible perfections; thou art to be feared and loved, and worshipped and praised, by me and all reasonable creatures who have any knowledge, how great, how mighty, how wise and merciful thou art. All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and I more especially ought to bless thee, whom thou hast made to understand thy most adorable excellencies, which are far beyond the highest of all my thoughts. And I have yet a more particular obligation to thee, for thy marvelous love in Christ Jesus, whom thou hast sent in great humility to visit me, who am but dust and ashes, to make his abode with me, to testify thy great love to me, and assure me of thy good will, notwithstanding my many offences; and to make me *exceeding great and precious promises*; to invite me to approach thee, and to encourage my

my obedience to thee. I thank thee that he hath sealed them with his blood; that thou hast confirmed them by his resurrection, and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; and that thou hast given me so many happy opportunities to acquaint myself with the truth and purity of the christian religion, which comforts me, in this state of mortality and misery, with the blessed hope of eternal life.

Blessed be thy goodness for that great consolation; that thou hast shewn me the way to it by his doctrine and example; and assured me of thy holy Spirit to enable me to follow after him to that glory, which he possesses. Blessed be thy goodness, that I have felt it so often in my mind and heart; inspiring me with holy thoughts, exciting in me devout affections and godly resolutions, filling me with divine joys, and with comfortable expectations of the glory, that shall be revealed. I thank thee, that thou hast permitted me this day to attend upon thee, together with my christian brethren, in the publick duties of thy worship and service; that there I have received any good instructions, any holy exhortations, and christian encouragements,

ments, to proceed and go forward in the course of well doing; and have begun, in any measure, that eternal rest, which I wait for with all the faithful, when I shall praise, and thank, and love thee, O heavenly Father, better than I can do now, whilst I am in this frail body, and *absent from the Lord*.

In particular, blessed be thy name, O Lord, for the solemnities of thy worship vouchsafed me this day, for the means of grace, and instruments of salvation afforded me: O make them beneficial, make them efficacious and saving unto me. Thou, blessed Saviour, hast hallowed this day, by thy resurrection, by thine appearance thereon, and joining with thy disciples in holy duties: O give me grace also to hallow it, by observing it with all religious reverence; by being on the wing of inflaming devotion; and by performing with sincerity, all the remaining offices of this holy season. Set home, O God, thy word read and preach'd upon my heart, and cause me to bring forth much fruit of good works in my life and conversation.

Cause

Cause me, holy Father, to close this day, dedicated to thy service, with the strength, vigour, and utmost elevation of both my soul and body; praying with all fervency of prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving; meditating with all fixedness of thought, and spirituality of affection; confessing and bewailing the defects and imperfections of my best religious performances; begging pardon for them, grace against them, and entertaining stedfast purposes of amendment for the future; so that, by the holy exercises of thy kingdom of grace here, I may become duly qualified for the fruition of thy kingdom of glory hereafter. To which I beseech thee bring me, for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Monday Morning.

I Humble myself, O Lord of heaven and earth, before thy glorious Majesty; I heartily acknowledge thy soveraign dominion over me and all creatures; I praise and magnify thy eternal power, wisdom, goodness, and truth; and I render thee my most unfeigned thanks for the innumerable

benefits which thou in thy bounty hast loaded me with ; above all for the gracious declaration, thou hast made of thy good will to me in Christ Jesus, by whom thou hast invited and encouraged sinners to return to thee, and directed them in the way to everlasting bliss.

I blush to think of my shameful forgetfulness of thee, and ingratitude to thee, to whom I owe all that I have in this world, and all my hopes in the next. I most humbly implore thy tender mercies in the forgiveness of all my sins, whereby I have offended, either in thought, word, or deed, against thy just and holy laws : For I am truly sorry for all my mis-doings ; I utterly renounce whatsoever is contrary to thy will, and here devote my self intirely to the obedience thereof. Accept, O most merciful Father, of this renewed dedication, which is made of my whole man, body, soul and spirit to thee ; and as thou dost inspire me with holy resolutions, so accompany them always with the assistance of thy grace, that I may be able every day to offer up my self more sincerely, and cheerfully to thee ; with more pure affection,

fection, and hearty devotion, and ready disposition to thy service.

I adore thy great grace which hath brought salvation to me, and *teaches me* Tit. ii. 11. *that denying all ungodliness and worldly* ^{12.} *lusts, I should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* I will endeavour, O Lord, to preserve a grateful sense of thy mighty love in my mind, and to follow the doctrine and example of thy Son Christ Jesus, as becomes those, who have such a blessed hope, and look for so great salvation at the day of his glorious appearing. I desire, above all things, to be so pure and undefiled, so meek and gentle, so humble and lowly, so just and merciful, so peaceable and patient, so contented, and thankful, as my blessed Lord and Master was; and I hope that thou wilt fulfil all the gracious promises he hath made to us, which I esteem far greater treasure, than thousands of gold and silver: They are the support, the comfort, satisfaction of my heart; and nothing I ask, but that it may be to thy servants according to his word.

Thou hast mercifully kept me the last night (blessed be thy continued goodness) and raised me again to see the light of this

morning; receive me likewise all this day into thy protection, to which I most humbly commit myself. I trust myself, and all belonging to me, with thee my Creator and Redeemer. I submit to thy orders, and am willing to do and suffer what thou pleasest, *waiting for the mercy of our Lord Christ Jesus to eternal life.*

Jude 21.

And I desire, thou knowest, the good of all mankind, as well as my own, especially of all christian people; that they may all walk worthy of the gospel, and live together in unity and godly love. For which end, I pray that all christian kings, princes and governours may be wise, pious, just, and merciful; endeavouring that all their subjects may lead peaceable lives under them, in all godliness and honesty. And more particularly, that our sovereign may be blessed with a religious, quiet, long, and prosperous reign; and his ministers of state, and officers of justice, may conscientiously discharge the trust, that is reposed in them, seeking, in their several places, how to right the oppressed, to comfort the afflicted, to provide for the poor and needy, and to relieve all those that are in misery. Bless all our spiritual pastors
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and instructors; succeed their labours, and give me grace to follow their godly admonitions; *To esteem them very highly in love for their works-sake; and to be at peace among ourselves.* ^{1Thess. v. 13.} The same blessings I crave for all my friends, relations and acquaintance; that we may all live in perfect love and peace together, doing our duty to thee, to each other, and to all men so faithfully, that we may give a comfortable account of our selves, and rejoice together at the great day of the Lord Jesus. In whose holy words I beseech thee to help me still more heartily to offer up my desires to thee.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Monday Evening.

Almighty and most merciful Father, by whom I was made, and in whom I live, move, and have my being; to whose tender compassions I owe my safety the day past, together with all the comforts of this present life, and the hopes of that which is to come. I praise and laud thee, O Lord, the Creator and Governor of the
D d d 4 world;

world; I ascribe all greatness, might, majesty, wisdom, riches, and bounty to thee, whom all the host of heaven continually admires and acknowledges with the most joyful reverence. I bow myself likewise before thee, and worship thee, in an humble sense, that I am nothing in compare with thee, and have nothing but what I receive from thee. *Unto thee do we give thanks, O God, our exceeding joy, who daily pourest thy benefits upon us.* Blessed be thy great goodness, for my continued health, for my food and raiment, my peace and safety, the society of my friends, the love of my neighbours, and the success of my honest labours: but, above all things, for sending Jesus Christ into the world to dwell among us, to die for us, and to direct us in the way to immortal life. I thank thee that I feel in my heart any motions towards thee, and that I have made the least progress in the paths of life. O Lord I present myself here before thee, to be inspired with such a vigorous and full sense of thy love, as may move me more powerfully towards thee, and put me forward with greater earnestness, zeal, and diligence in all my duty. There is nothing

Pf. lxxv. 1.

— xliii. 9.

— lxviii.

19.

nothing in heaven or earth, that I can desire, but to be beloved of thee, who possesseth both, and art able to make thy friends as great and happy, as thou pleasest. Assist me, therefore, by thy grace, to the recovery of such a lively image of thee in all righteousness, purity, mercy, and faithfulness, and truth, that I may know that thou lovest me. O that Jesus, the hope of glory, may be formed in me, in all humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, peaceableness, and absolute surrender of my soul and body to thy holy will and pleasure: *That I may no longer live, but Christ* Gal. ii. 20. *may live in me, and the life I lead in the flesh may be by the faith of thy Son, O God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.* The remembrance of that love is most dear and precious to me. I cannot often enough make mention of so great kindness, as his making himself freely an offering for my sins. It moves me again to offer up myself sincerely to thee, to do thy will, O God, as my blessed Lord and Master did. I repose also an intire confidence in thee, and still trust myself with thee, who hast *not spared thine own Son, but given him* Rom. vii. *up for us all.* I will humbly and reverent-

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ly accept of whatsoever thou sendest me; and in every thing give thanks, which is thy will concerning me in Christ Jesus. I hope thou wilt never leave me, nor forsake me; but conduct me safe, through all varieties and changes of my condition here, in an unchangeable love to thee, and an holy composure and tranquillity of mind in thy love to me, till I come to live with thee, and enjoy thee for ever.

And now that I am going to lay myself down to sleep, take me into thy gracious protection, and settle my spirits in such quiet and delightful thoughts of Jesus, that I may be willing to leave this world, and go to him, *who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with him.*

1 Thess. v.
10.

To his blessing I commend all mankind, of whatsoever rank and condition they be, high and low, rich and poor, that they may all be so happy, as to do their several duties carefully, and to enjoy contentedly whatsoever is needful for them. I leave all I have with thee, especially my friends, and those who are dear unto me; desiring that, when I am dead and gone, they may lift up their souls in this manner

ner unto thee, and teach, those that come after, to praise, love and obey thee; and that, if I awake again in the morning, my mouth may likewise praise thee again with joyful lips, and I may still offer myself a more acceptable sacrifice to thee through Christ Jesus. In whose words I beseech thee to hear me, according to the fullest sense and intention of them.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Tuesday Morning.

ALL honour, glory, and praise be given to thee, O Lord, my Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter, by me, and by all the world. Thou art worthy of all my love, service, and obedience, being most excellent in thine own nature, and of so abundant kindness to me thy creature. I most humbly therefore prostrate myself before thee this morning, to make thee my thankful acknowledgment for all thy benefits, and tender thee my most hearty and affectionate service, and wait upon thy bounty for the continuance of thy grace and mercy to me. Though I am
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not worthy, I confess, of the least regard from thee, whom I have so much neglected, and whose love and clemency I have too often abused; yet I hope thou wilt accept of this small oblation which I make of myself, my soul and body, with unfeigned devotion to thee. Pardon and forgive me, I most humbly beseech thee, all my past offences, the remembrance of which is grievous, and bitter to me; and vouchsafe me the grace of thy holy Spirit, to enable me to do thy will with greater care and diligence for the time to come. Let it ever accompany and assist me, according as thou seest me sincerely desirous and studious to please thee, in all the actions of an holy life, in chastity and temperance, justice and fidelity, mercy and charity, meekness and humility, patience and contentedness, innocency and peace; and in continual prayers, praises and thanksgivings to thee, the Father of mercies, in Christ Jesus my Lord.

I see how frail and weak my body and all its enjoyments are; and therefore I the more earnestly desire to have my soul enriched with those immortal treasures of thy divine grace. O that I may never
cease

cease most zealously to seek and pursue them; that I may think myself happy enough in the possession of them; and may rejoice in nothing so much, as in *having our fruit unto holiness*, that in the *end* I may attain *eternal life*. Suffer not my spirit to sink too deep into the love of any, the dearest good, that I have in this world; but rather, by all these earthly things, which thy goodness affords to me for my support, ease and delight, raise my mind and heart to those celestial enjoyments, which will yield me eternal pleasure, and satisfaction. Set my affections principally on things above. Make me so wise as to provide myself friends that never die; and to be still preparing myself by all divine qualities for their company and society; that so they may *receive me*, when I remove hence, *into their everlasting habitations*.

Thus now I commend myself this day, to thy most gracious protection, guidance, and blessing; hoping that the same good providence, which preserved me and my habitation the last night, from fire, and innumerable other dangers (for which I thank thee) will guard me this day from
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all evil, and mischief, and bring me, in safety of soul and body, to praise thee in the evening. Help me thankfully to receive, and soberly to use, all thy mercies; quietly to do my own business, and bear my own burthen; to be just in my dealings; innocent and harmless in my conversation; well-pleased with the prosperity of my neighbour; desirous of the good of all the world; especially that they may all love, and honour, and join together in magnifying and praising thee, my Lord and Governour, whose name is excellent in all the earth.

More particularly, I implore thy mercies towards these kingdoms wherein I live. Remember not against us our high provocations. Spare us good Lord, and have patience with us; if perhaps we may bring forth better fruit, becoming thy holy gospel, and all the care that thou hast taken about us. Indue our soveraign with much wisdom from above, that he may always discern what is most profitable for us, and earnestly pursue it to the utmost of his power. Bless him in his relations, in his counsellors, in his judges, and all other officers, in all the nobility, clergy, gentry,

gentry, and commonalty of the realm; that every one of them may uprightly and zealously do their duty, to the maintaining of thy true religion, and the increase of piety, honesty, and brotherly love among us. Comfort and relieve all those, that are in any distress, trouble, or anguish, either of body or of mind; and give me a tender and pitiful heart towards them, ready to help and ease them, according to my abilities: That I, following the example of my merciful and compassionate high-priest Christ Jesus, may have *now* the benefit of his intercession for me, and at last be admitted into the high and holy place where he is. In whose blessed name and words, I conclude my prayers.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Tuesday Evening.

I Fall down before thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, and worship thee in the deepest humility of my soul, acknowledging that I am thy creature, who stand infinitely bound unto thee, by innumerable blessings and favours, which thou hast
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conferred upon me, out of thy mere bounty and goodness. I owe my life to thee alone, and all the comforts of them, together with all the hopes I have hereafter, either in this world, or the other. And blessed, for ever blessed be thy merciful kindness, for giving such glorious hopes by the Lord Jesus, by his death and resurrection, by his ascension, and being inthron'd at thy right hand, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost to be a witness of his majesty and glory. I rejoice, O Lord, in that great salvation, which thou hast sent unto me, and cannot but be still praising thee, whose love hath so abounded towards me, beyond all my thoughts and desires. Pardon, I most humbly beseech thee, out of the same grace and mercy, all my past neglects of thee, my insensibleness of thy benefits, my carelessness, or inconstancy in my obedience, and particularly whatsoever I have done or omitted this day, contrary to those holy purposes and resolutions wherein I stand engaged to thee.

And vouchsafe me the assistance of thy holy Spirit to inable me to perform those vows better, which here I renew of greater

ter gratitude, and more chearful and stedfast obedience to thy divine Majesty, for the time to come. Awaken my mind to frequent and serious reflections upon thy undeserved and most bountiful mercies towards me. Touch my heart with such an ingenuous and dutiful sense of them, that my will may be overcome to yield itself wholly and absolutely to thee. And, that I may feel them constantly provoked to love and good works, help me ever to set my Lord and Master, by whose name I am called, before my eyes; and to admire his unspotted purity, his condescending humility, his tender-hearted charity, his meekness of wisdom, his hearty trust in thee, and resignation to thee, his forgiveness of injuries, his patience under reproaches and cruel torments, his peaceable and contented spirit, his acknowledging thee in all things, and ever seeking thy honour and glory: That being in love with all these, and valuing them more than life it self, I may never cease my endeavours, till this image of my dear Lord and Master be formed in my heart.

O Lord Jesus, favourably behold these holy desires, wherewith my soul aspires

towards thee. Preserve and maintain them ; encourage and increase them ; make me restless and unwearied, till they be accomplished in the enjoyment of this great blessedness.

Thou, who hast begun a good work in me, finish and compleat it, I most humbly and earnestly beseech thee. Give me thy grace continually for my seasonable relief and succour ; that I, persevering in well doing, may have a solid and lively hope in my death, of coming to see thee in that high and holy place, where thou livest and reignest for evermore.

As for all the things of this life, I most heartily refer my self to thy Fatherly Wisdom and Goodness, O Lord God Almighty ; trusting thou wilt order for me that which is most convenient, and bless my honest diligence with such a competent portion of it, that I may have the more leisure to give continual praise, honour, blessing and thanksgiving to thee, whose mercies endure for ever.

Accept, I pray thee, of my thankful acknowledgments at this time, for those which this day hath added to the rest of thy benefits, which thou hast been continually

ally heaping upon me ever since I was born :
And let all the people of the earth praise
the name of the Lord, which is highly ex-
alted above all blessing and praise. O that
all the kingdoms of the world would be-
come the kingdoms of my Saviour Christ :
and that all they, who acknowledge his au-
thority, would religiously obey his holy
laws ; that all wars, oppression, and cru-
elty may cease among christian people, and
they may live together in brotherly love
and unity. Make our soveraign and all
his realms happy by a great increase of
true knowledge, godliness, and virtue every
where. Bless all my friends ; forgive my
enemies ; requite all the kindness of my
benefactors ; comfort every one of thy de-
solate and afflicted servants ; and turn their
mourning and heaviness into joy and glad-
ness at the last.

And now that I am going to repose my
self ; keep me, I beseech thee, and all be-
longing to me, in safety. Refresh my wea-
ried spirits with comfortable rest and sleep ;
and when I awaken again in the morn-
ing, direct my thoughts immediately to
thee, my merciful Preserver ; and help me
to imploy all my renewed strength to thy

honour and glory, according to thy will declared by Christ Jesus; in whose blessed Name and Words I commend myself to thy infinite Mercies.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Wednesday Morning.

O Most great and mighty Lord, the Possessor of heaven and earth; All the angels worship and adore thy incomprehensible Majesty with the humblest reverence, and rejoice in rendering praise, blessing, and thanksgiving to thee, the Father of spirits: For thou hast created all things, and in wisdom hast thou made them all, and spread thy tender mercies over all thy works. It is no less my happiness, than my duty, to joyn my heart and voice with that heavenly host, most gratefully to acknowledge thy bounty to me among the rest of thy creatures, and thy particular grace and favour in our Lord Jesus Christ, my most merciful Saviour and Redeemer. I can never sufficiently admire that love, which gave him to die for me, and hath
made

him the Lord of life and glory; that he may be the Author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him. All the love I have is too little to give to thee, to whom all my services are due by a former title. My highest praises fall infinitely short of thy most excellent Majesty; and I am ashamed of the most affectionate thanks I can render to thee for those inestimable benefits, which thou hast conferred on me, and so long continued to me.

How much greater reason then have I to be abashed at my shameful ingratitude and disobedience to thy divine Majesty, for which I am heartily sorry, and do now most earnestly repent my self of it; unfeignedly resolving and protesting to be more faithful to thee for the time to come. Pardon me therefore, good Lord, and receive me unto thy mercy. Accept of my renewed vows to study and to do my duty conscientiously towards thee and towards all men. And as thou hast excited those holy desires and purposes in my heart, so enable me to perform them constantly in the whole course of my life.

My blessed Saviour hath told me, that thou wilt as readily give thy holy Spirit to them

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that ask it, as a parent will give bread unto his hungry children; O Father of mercies, let it be unto me according to his word. Cherish these little beginnings of goodness, which thou seest in my soul; and prosper all my endeavours to attain a greater measure of it: And since, at the best I am but an unprofitable servant, and can do no more than was my duty to do; enable me to do every thing, which thou hast commanded me, heartily, with a good-will, and true love to thy service.

I know this is all that can, in the least, commend me to thy free grace and favour; and therefore I most humbly again devote myself to do thy will, with a cordial affection to it. I would ever approach unto thee with delight and pleasure; and feel it the joy of my heart, to think of thee, to praise thee, to give thee thanks, and to offer myself with absolute resignation to thee. O that mercy may always please me, as it pleaseth thee! That I may be strictly just and righteous; may cheerfully pass by injuries; freely deny all desires of sinful pleasures; willingly submit to thy fatherly corrections; and perform the duties of my several relations, with singleness of heart.
Make

Make me so mindful of the great love of my Lord and Master Christ, that I may be zealously concerned for his glory, and use my utmost diligence to do him and his religion some honour in the world; delighting to commemorate his death and passion, making a joyful sacrifice of my soul and body to him, and desiring most earnestly that his *kingdom may come*, and all mankind submit themselves to his government.

Fulfil, most merciful Lord, all my petitions; and as thou hast mightily protected me, and my dwelling, this last night, from fire and thieves, and whatsoever might disturb my repose (blessed be thy goodness) so accompany me all this day with thy blessing; that I may please thee in body and soul, and be safe under thy defence; who art nigh to all those that call upon thee, even to all those that call upon thee in truth.

And, O that all those, who are forgetful of their duty to thee, may be awakened to a lively sense of all thy benefits, and fill the whole world with thy praises. Stir up especially the minds of all christian people, to enquire after and follow the truth, as it is in Jesus; abandoning all vice and wickedness, and exercising themselves to have

consciencs void of offence towards thee and towards all men: And dispose the hearts of all their kings and princes, to make themselves the greatest examples of christian piety to all others. Bless these kingdoms, and endue our soveraign with such excellent wisdom, and holy zeal for thine honour and glory, that we may see many good days under his government. O! that true religion, justice, mercy, brotherly-kindness, and all things else, that are praise-worthy, may so flourish among us; that we may enjoy the blessings of peace and plenty, and there may be no complaining in our streets.

I recommend likewise to thee all our friends and neighbours; all the poor, the sick, and other afflicted persons; desiring those mercies for them, which I should ask for myself, were I in their condition: *O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth; put away from them and me, I humbly beseech thee, all hurtful things, and give us those things which be profitable for us,* according to the large declarations which thou hast made of thy abundant goodness to mankind in our Lord Jesus;
in

in whose words I conclude my humble supplications unto thee; saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Wednesday Evening.

ALmighty and everlasting God, the sovereign Lord of all creatures in heaven and earth, and my most merciful and gracious Father in thy Son Christ Jesus, I most heartily acknowledge, that my being, and all the comfort of it depends on thee, the Fountain of all good. I have nothing but what I have received thence; and is owing intirely to thy free and bounteous love, O most blessed Creator, and to the unsearchable riches of thy grace, O most blessed Redeemer.

To thee therefore be given by me, and all creatures, whom thou hast made to know how great and how good thou art, all honour, glory, and praise; all love, service, and obedience, as long as I have any being. *It is but meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord;*
and

and devoutly resign both soul and body to thee, to be absolutely governed and ruled according to thy holy will and pleasure. I am heartily sorry that I have not done it from the very beginning of my life till this time. I am ashamed to think of my injustice and ingratitude, in following my own desires so long, and rendring myself no sooner most humbly obedient in all things to thee. My hopes are only in those infinite mercies, which have spared me notwithstanding, and opened my eyes to see my errors, and touched my heart with some sense of my duty.

And I hope in them not only for a pardon, which I earnestly implore according to thy gracious promises made in Jesus Christ, but for the power of thy Holy Spirit, to further and promote those godly resolutions, which I feel already in my heart, to live as becomes thy creature, and as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ, who was early dedicated to thee, and has often since vowed himself to thy service. As thou hast made me to understand the reasonableness and goodness of all thy laws, so incline my will to be more and more in love with them, till they be writ upon my heart.

Stir

Stir up my will to *love them exceedingly*, and to cleave unto them as my very life. Let thy grace continually prevent and follow me, to keep alive such a powerful sense of thee, and of the love of my Lord and Saviour in my mind, that I may naturally fear and reverence thee, and study to be approved of thee, and beloved by thee, and account it my highest perfection and happiness to be like thee.

O! that it may ever be the joy of my heart to be righteous, as thou art righteous; to be merciful, as thou, my heavenly Father, art merciful; to be holy, as thou, who hast called me, art holy, in all manner of conversation; to be endued with thy divine wisdom, and to resemble thee in faithfulness and truth. O that the memory of my blessed Saviour, and his admirable example may be always dear unto me; that I may cheerfully follow him in his humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, peaceableness, and delight to do thy will, O God, in every thing, as he did. Accept, I most humbly beseech thee, of these desires of my soul after thee; And graciously assist and strengthen them, according as I unfeignedly offer them up unto thee.

Accept

Accept likewise of my thanks for thy merciful preservation of me all this day, by which I am come in safety to the conclusion of it, and am here before thee with a new load of thy benefits, added to other innumerable blessings, which thou hast formerly bestowed. I am bold again likewise to commit myself unto thee this night; and to trust in thy merciful protection and care over me, when I can take no care of myself, or any thing else belonging to me. Defend me from all the powers of darkness, from all evil men, from fire, and all such sad accidents; And raise up my spirit, together with my body in the morning, to such a vigorous sense of thy continued goodness, as may provoke me all the day long to an unwearied diligence in well-doing.

And the same mercies that I beg for myself, I desire for the rest of mankind; especially for all those, who are called by the name of Christ. O that every member of that body, of which he is the head, may do their duties with all fidelity, according to the several offices, to which thou hast assigned them. That kings may be tender-hearted, as the fathers of their countries

tries; and all their subjects may be dutiful and obedient to them, as their children: That the pastors of the church may feed their flock with true wisdom and understanding; and the people all may submit unto them, and follow their godly counsels: That the rich and mighty may have compassion on the poor and miserable; and all such distressed people may bless the rich, and rejoice in the prosperity of those, that are above them. Give husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, the grace to behave themselves so in their several relations, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and being an honour to his Religion here, may receive immortal honour and glory hereafter from the hands of Christ Jesus; in whose holy name and words I continue to beseech thy grace and mercy towards me, and all thy people every where; saying,

Our Father, &c.

A

A Prayer for Thursday Morning.

O Eternal Lord God, infinite in thy Greatness, incomprehensible in thy glory, the mighty monarch of heaven and earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords; Behold a poor and penitent sinner, who am ashamed to lift up my eyes towards heaven, and unworthy to take thy sacred name into my sinful mouth. I confess and acknowledge my ingratitude, and manifold impieties; and I am sorry, from the bottom of my heart, that ever I should offend so good a God, so gracious a Father, who deserv'st from me, and from all flesh living, most profound love, honour, and obedience. **O** heavenly Father, I am ashamed that I should be so dis-ingenuous in my choice, as to prefer the trifling objects of flesh and sense, to the true and solid satisfaction of a virtuous life; that I should sell my affections to these transitory creatures, which are so far from affording me either quiet of mind, peace of conscience, purity of soul, or perfection of spirit, that they leave me nothing but trouble, confusion, and remorse:
Amidst

Amidst all which disorders, I find no other refuge nor remedy, than to return to thee, my Deliverer, and sure help in time of need; to offer my soul to thee, most merciful Creator, and in the profoundest humility of a distressed creature, with a broken and a contrite spirit, to implore thy mercy and reconciliation.

O that my head was water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for my my manifold sins! I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me; but thou art my Father, even the father of mercies, whose love and compassion has neither limits nor measure: therefore, hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Make me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me. Let all my wishes be ever conform'd to thy will; and let my hopes still rely upon thy mercies. O let it be my chief aim, to live according to thy divine laws, and my only satisfaction to meditate on thy love. Grant that I may not delight in any temporal pleasures, to such a degree, as to disengage my affections from glorious thoughts and speculations; let me not rest in them as my sovereign, nor pursue

view them as my principal good, since they are too vain and uncertain, too uncapable and unworthy to quiet and content my soul, which aims at a higher mark; which hopes one day (not thro' any merits of mine, but thro' thine infinite mercies, and for the sake of my dear Redeemer) eternally to behold thy amiable countenance, and to contemplate thy lovely perfection without weariness; to enter into thy kingdom, and be there joyfully transported with the unveiled glories of thy divinity.

And, now, O thou Preserver of mankind! I offer unto thee my soul and body, this day and ever. I most thankfully acknowledge that thou hast been my defender ever since I was born, and hast particularly manifested thy provident care, in the preservation of me the night past. To thee therefore I commit my self this day, beseeching thee that I may publish thy praise not only with my lips, but in my life; by giving up my self, from this very moment, to thy service, and by walking before thee, this day and ever, in such a desire of promoting thy glory, and my own eternal welfare, as never more to adventure
the

the loss of thy grace, by the committing of one wilful sin.

Hear me, most merciful God, and imprint these important resolutions with indelible characters in my heart; that I may bring forth the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy name, thro' the merits of *Jesus Christ*, who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end, and in whose words I conclude this imperfect prayer.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Thursday Evening.

O God, thou divine and unlimited fountain of all knowledge! Pardon me, that I have not hitherto obeyed thy righteous laws and commandments; that I have not regarded the beauty of my soul, and the great importance of thy promises and threats. Pardon me, I most humbly beseech thee, that I have so seldom considered the state of my conscience, and so resolutely persisted in a sinful course. O Lord! have mercy upon me: I am guilty, I am guilty, and have nothing to plead for myself but

the blood of *Jesus*, that all-sufficient propitiation for the sins of the whole world. O Lord! I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me, the burthen of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me, most merciful Father, and, for *Jesus Christ* his sake, forgive me all that is past, and grant that the sense of these my miscarriages, may render me more careful and vigilant for the future. Withdraw not thy grace from me, neither refuse to help me; and tho' all my days have been spent in sin and vanity; yet vouchsafe to assist me abundantly with thy grace, and the more strongly to draw me to thee; that, making more haste, I may recover my time before I go hence and be no more seen. O Lord! I beseech thee that death may not take me out of this world, before I arrive to that degree of holiness, which thou requirest of me; that is, till I am united to thy holy Spirit by a pure and perfect life.

O my God! how infinite is thy goodness, how manifold thy blessings, how innumerable thy benefits, temporal and spiritual! and can I suspect that thou, who hast done so much for me, will not accomplish what is behind? 'Tis true, O

Lord!

Lord! my sins are many, and grievous; I confess it, and am confounded and affrighted at the remembrance of them: But is there any blemish so foul, which my Redeemer's blood can't cure? Thy mercies and merits, dear Saviour, are so immense, that should my conscience alone be burthen'd with the sins of the whole world, thy mercies are infinitely greater: I will therefore remember thy sacred wounds, O Saviour, and there will I hide my self till my iniquities are pass'd over.

I praise, magnify, and adore thy great and holy name for all thy instances of comfort and providence, especially for that most meritorious sacrifice of thy self upon the cross, for the sins of the whole world, and that thou hast left us, as a lively memorial of thy bitter passion, the holy sacrament to our great and endless comfort. O invincible King of glory, let every tongue bless thee, and every creature celebrate thy bounty, for this inestimable blessing. I know, O dear Jesus, in thee is all I need, all I can desire, my health and safety, my hope and strength, my honour and glory. Quicken therefore and cherish the *soul of thy servant,*
for unto thee, O blessed Jesus! do I lift up

my soul. It is my earnest longing to receive thee with a becoming reverence and devotion; I find my spirits begin to languish and sink, for if I fast too long, I perish for want of seasonable recruits from this heavenly sustenance. I am sadly sensible of my infirmities, and frequent relapses into sin, and how urgent my occasions are for these repeated refreshments: I quickly cool after my warmest resolutions; my purposes of goodness sicken and languish apace; and these decays must end in spiritual death, did not this divine sustenance cleanse and renew my affections; confirm my purposes of doing well, and excite and inflame my zeal and love for God and good works. O blessed Redeemer, pity me; and tho' my life be not so perfect, that I am always in a fit disposition to communicate, yet accept me into the number of those *that are weary and heavy-laden* with the burthen of their sins, that I may receive some *refreshment*. O give me this sovereign balm of wounded consciences; this great preservative of decaying souls: so shall I approach nearer to thee indeed, and each sacrament prove a fresh advance toward heaven: So shall my soul be filled with the treasures of
thy

thy mercy, and the ravishing foretaste of that bliss, which shall be always growing, till it be consummated at last, in that eternal feast above, the marriage-supper of the Lamb in thy kingdom. And to this purpose I conclude this prayer in the words of his own appointing.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Friday Morning.

O merciful Jesus, Redeemer of the world, whose sacred head was crown'd with thorns, whose hands and feet were extended on the cross, and cruelly bored through with nails, whose side was pierced with a spear, and whose whole body was ignominiously crucified between two Thieves!

What tongue can express those acute pains which thou didst suffer? or what mind, confin'd in flesh, can expand it self to conceive the reproach and ignominy, which were put upon thee? What hadst thou done, O dear Redeemer, to bring thee, as a criminal, before thy enemies bar? Or how hadst thou deserved to be treated with

such rude and insolent, such unrelenting and triumphant barbarity? What passage of thy whole life could they fix an accusation upon? What crime alledge to countenance so rigorous a sentence? If none (as none they could) how camest thou to be condemned after such a barbarous manner? 'Twas I, wretched creature that I am, that gave thee all those pains; 'twas I deserved the death that thou enduredst; and my offences were the cause of thy intolerable grief; thus low, O Son of God, did thy humility stoop! thus fervent was thy love! thus boundless thy compassion!

And now, my God and Saviour, *What reward shall I give, what return can I make, for all the benefits thou hast done unto me?* Surely it is not in the power of man to find out any requital answerable to such bounty: for how should the narrowness of a finite mind extend to any thing that may be compared to infinite compassion? How should a poor creature be capable of any recompence suitable to the mercy of an almighty Creator? And yet, my dearest Saviour, so wonderfully is this matter ordered, that even man, even I, a poor miserable creature, may find something
which

which thou art pleased to accept in return, if, by thy grace, my soul be broken and humbled, and my *flesh crucified with its affections and lusts*. This, blessed *Jesus*, is the utmost my condition will admit, and this, tho' but little in it self, yet, when proceeding from the principle of holy love, thou art graciously pleased to accept, as the utmost poor mortals can do in acknowledgment of their great Maker. This is the cure of sinful souls; this the soveraign antidote thy mercy hath provided for us.

I beseech thee therefore, by *thy tender mercies, which have been ever of old*; pour thy grace into my heart, that I may be restored to spiritual health and soundness. Let me drink of thy heavenly sweetness, and be so ravished with the taste, as ever after to disrelish the sensual delights of the world, to despise its pleasures, and cheerfully encounter the afflictions of this present life; and so to fix my heart upon true and noble joys, as always to disdain the empty and transitory shadows, which flesh and blood is so foolishly fond of, and so fearful of parting with.

Let me not, I beseech thee, esteem or delight in any thing, but thee; let all that

this whole world can give without thee, be counted no better than dross or dung. Let me hate most irreconcilably whatever displeases thee; and what thou lovest, let me most eagerly desire, and incessantly pursue. Let me feel no satisfaction in any joys without thee; nor any reluctance in the greatest sufferings for thee. Let the mention of thy name be always a refreshment, and the remembrance of thy goodness an inexhaustible spring of comfort to my soul; and, *let the law of thy mouth be dearer unto me, than thousands of gold and silver.* Let me aim at nothing so much as to do thee service; nor detest and avoid any thing in comparison of sinning against thee: And, for what I have unhappily done of that kind already, I entreat thee, my only refuge and hope, to pardon for thine own mercies sake. Let my ears be ever open to the voice of thy law, and suffer not my heart, this day, or ever, to *incline to any evil thing*; that I never comply with them that practise wickedness, nor take shelter in trifling pretences to excuse or indulge myself in doing what I ought not. And once more I beg thee, by thine own unparalleled humility, that *the foot of pride may*

may not come against me, nor the hand of the ungodly cast me down, that so, admitting no pretence of deviating from thy laws, I may be found in the true way to thy kingdom of glory, who livest and reignest for ever and ever. And to this purpose I conclude with the prayer which thou hast taught me.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Friday Evening.

O Most holy and eternal Lord God! who incessantly demonstrates thy unspeakable mercy towards sinners; and such is thine unparallell'd love and condescension, that even when they offend and trespass against thee, thou forbearst not to heap thy loving-kindness upon them; I, most sinful wretch, yield thee most humble and hearty thanks for thine incomprehensible goodness in creating me after thine own image, rendering me capable of everlasting glory, and in providing so many other creatures for my use and sustenance.

I bless, I magnify, and adore thy great and holy name; for thine inestimable love
in

in the redemption of the world, by our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby thou hast graciously delivered my soul from eternal death; and hast purchased for me an entrance into everlasting Glory! I also return thee all possible praise and thanks, for having singled me out, amongst so many thousands, that know thee not, and lie buried in ignorance and error; I gratefully recount this mercy of being thy servant, and a member of the holy catholick church; of being partaker of thy meritorious and all-sufficient sufferings, and all other thy spiritual blessings; as also for preserving me, so many times from those inevitable dangers, which my sins would have long ago cast me into, had not thy inestimable goodness delivered me. For these, and all other thy benefits, namely, for those thou hast this day most bountifully bestowed upon me, [*Here call to mind such benefits as you have received this day.*] O most gracious Father, I offer thee the most sincere, and most dutiful thanks that my poor heart is capable of affording, beseeching thee to accept of them, as a testimony of my unfeigned gratitude.

And

And now, O most glorious God, I humbly beg the light of thy grace, to know wherein I have any ways offended thee, either by thought, word, or deed, that I may see my sins with sorrow, and thy forbearance and long-suffering with joy, and with a full purpose of amendment of life. [*Here examine how you have employed the day.*] Thou see'st, O Lord, my sinfulness, and knowest my misery, much better than my self. I am sorry with all my heart, that I should still offend so good a God, and wish that my sorrow were far greater. I acknowledge thy mercies to be unspeakably great, for *delivering my soul from the nethermost hell*; thy tenderness is so apparent, that it even astonishes me; thou wilt not suffer me to undo myself, but makest as tho' thou saw'st not my offences, that thy forbearance might win me to repentance. So full of mercy, are all thy ways, O God, which I now plainly perceive, and have a deep and grateful sense of, and am even lost in wonder and amazement at thy kindness, which hath all along watched over me for good, and saved both body and soul from eternal death. Thine therefore be the whole of this, which lives
by

by thy clemency, and every part of me a sacrifice of praise: For, *thou art a God full of compassion, long-suffering, plenteous in goodness and truth, and shewing mercy unto thousands in them that love thy name.*

Now at length, O Lord my God, I plainly perceive the equity of that command, which enjoyns me to *love thee with all my heart, and with all my mind, and with all my soul, and with all my strength;* at all times, with a most ardent, and never-ceasing affection: because I should perish each moment, didst not thou renew the gift of life by thy preservation, and continuance of it, and every moment thou bindest me faster to thee, by the addition of new, and the repetition of former, benefits. As therefore no hour, no minute passes by, without some instance of thy bounty; so it is fit that none should pass, without my grateful and affectionate remembrances of so kind a benefactor; without such zealous and constant love of so good a God, as my frail nature, and narrow soul can extend to. This is indeed what ought to be; therefore, O most gracious God, *from whom every good and perfect gift cometh,*

cometh, and in whom is no variableness nor shadow of change, endue me with the grace of repentance, and amendment of life: O instil into me better principles of love and obedience; and let me distaste all terrestrial enjoyments, whenever they come in competition with my duty to thee: For if my soul could but get above the mean affections of such mutable things as are unworthy of its chief concern, and fix its thoughts and desires on thee alone, it would advance to a nearer resemblance of that supream perfection, whose likeness it wears, and be at length admitted to a clear vision of the divine majesty in immortal bliss. These are the glories which thou wilt one day confer upon the souls of the righteous; and in the meanwhile, by the prospect of them, thou dost support and fill thy creatures with joy and comfort inexpressible. Surely, my God! No eye hath seen, or can see the things thou hast prepared, for those that love thee, unless thou, who hast prepared, do also vouchsafe to reveal them. For, as is thy majesty, so is thy mercy, and infinite are the rewards, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; infinite, as thy

own essential happiness, and the inexhaustible multitude of thy mercies.

I entreat thee, therefore, O Lord; who art great, incomprehensibly great, whose power knows no bounds, nor kindness any measure, to protect me this night from all perils and dangers, that I may yet see the light of another day, and have a longer space to finish my repentance. All which I humbly implore for *Jesus Christ* his sake, in whose name and words I farther pray.

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer for Saturday Morning.

O Lord, all thy works praise thee, and declare the greatness of thy majesty, power, wisdom and bounty, which surpass all understanding. *Thou art good unto all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works. Thou art holy in all thy ways, and righteous in all thy doings; and keep-est truth for ever. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. We all decay and perish, the heavens themselves*
wax

wax old like a garment, but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

I adore thee, O Lord most high, and most willingly join my heart and voice, this morning, together with all the host of heaven and earth, to laud and praise thy glorious name; and give thanks unto thee, whose mercy endureth for ever. I think myself happy that I know thee; that I live under the care and providence of thine almighty and most wise goodness; and that I have a good hope, not only of thy blessing and favour here, but of life for evermore.

Blessed be thy name, for sending thy Son Jesus to give me these hopes, by his death, and resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Blessed be thy name, who hast trained me up in his religion, and given me the means and opportunities to know that love of thine, which passes knowledge. I thank thee for all the blessed operations and motions of thy Holy Spirit in my heart; and that thou hast so early inclined me to fear thee, and love thee, and place my contentment and satisfaction in thy love and favour, which is better than life itself. And
that

that thou hast also added a number of other mercies, for my comfortable subsistence in this world ; having granted me so long health, peace and plenty, a great many friends, loving relations, and acquaintance ; and continued the enjoyment of them to this day, though I am so unworthy of the least of thy favours. I thank thee, O God, that now thou hast graciously renewed thy kindness unto me, in protecting me the last night from all the powers of darkness, and every evil accident, and raising me up this morning in health and safety to praise thy goodness.

More especially I praise thee for any sense I have of these thy mercies ; humbly waiting on thee for the encrease of it, and for thy gracious pardon of all my unthankfulness and undutiful behaviour towards thee ; which I most heartily bewail, and desire, and will endeavour to amend.

And for that end I implore the help of thy Holy Spirit, which our Lord hath encouraged me to ask of thee ; and told me thou wilt not deny to those that earnestly seek it, and continue to knock importunately at the gate of mercy for it. I believe all his promises to be faithful and true ;
and

and therefore humbly depend on thy mighty power to strengthen and enable me to do my duty towards thee, and towards all men, with care, and diligence, and zeal, and perseverance to the end. Endue me, good Lord, with a spirit of true and fervent devotion to thee, my Creator and Redeemer; with an upright, just, and charitable heart to all my neighbours; and with a temperate, contented, and humble mind, in every condition and state of life, unto which thou shalt please to call me.

Help me to be meek and gentle in my conversation; prudent and discreet in ordering all my Affairs; good and useful in every relation; observant of thy fatherly providence in every thing that befalls me; grateful for thy benefits; patient under thy chastisements; and readily disposed to every good word and work. Preserve in me a constant remembrance of thine all-seeing eye; of the many promises and vows I have made of fidelity to thee; of thine inestimable love in Jesus Christ, whereof thou hast given me so many pledges; and of the great account I must give to him, the judge of all, at the Day

of his appearing; that so I may continue *stedfast and unmoveable, and be abundant in the work of the Lord; knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

Deliver me, I beseech thee, from all inordinate cares and desires; from vain hopes and causeless fears; and so dispose my heart, that death itself may not be dreadful to me; but I may welcome it with a chearful countenance, when and howsoever it shall approach me, in sure and certain hope of everlasting life thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name and words I farther call upon thee.

Our Father, &c,

A Prayer for Saturday Night.

O Most glorious Lord God, who dwellest in that light, which no mortal eye can approach, who hast made the sun to rule the day, and the moon and the stars to govern the night; *let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as incense; and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.* O let my praises and thankful remembrances

membrances of thy loving-kindness be ever acceptable in thy sight: For I laud and magnify thy glorious name, O Father of mercies, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the goodness and tender compassions, with which thou hast been pleased to remember and relieve my misery. For the preservation of me the day past, and the many benefits thou hast bestowed upon me according to the greatness of thy mercy. This, O my God, is a subject boundless as thy goodness; that *goodness*, which exerted it self in commanding me out of nothing, and, when that being, which thou gavest, was rendered liable to eternal misery, a fresh, and yet more valuable instance of thy mercy was that of bestowing on me a new and better life, when I was worse than nothing.

O thou overflowing spring of endless love! How shall I worthily magnify thee, or at least, how can I forget thy incomprehensible, thine unparallel'd benefits; when thou didst take upon thee the form of a servant, and wert made a man of unspeakable sorrow, and all this for poor mortal creatures? O the riches of the goodness of thee, my God! O that it were in my power

to make a suitable return for love, which passes not my thanks only, but even my knowledge ! O ! *that my ways were made so direct*, that my whole life might be one continued act of gratitude and obedience ! I know, blessed Lord, most merciful Father, that thou art worthy to receive all duty, and honour, and praise for ever : I am sensible that thou art my rightful Lord, and I thy poor servant ; that the utmost I can do is thy just due, and that I ought to take unspeakable delight in thanking and obeying thee ; that nothing else but this should give me any satisfaction, and that, when I have laid my self out intirely upon it, I still have done too little. This is the real persuasion, this is the earnest desire of my soul ; and where my power falls short of my inclination, there do thou, I beseech thee, strengthen and supply what is wanting by thy grace, that my deeds and deportment may bear testimony and proportion to my pious disposition.

Thy mercy, O my God, is exceeding great, which hath hitherto assisted me, and therefore from the Experiences I have hitherto had, *I will* this night (through thy divine assistance) *lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for* I am very
 well

well assured, that 'tis thou, O Lord, only that makest me to dwell in safety. Defend me from the terrors of the night, and from all evil thoughts, or impure dreams. O never let the remembrance of thy manifold mercies towards me depart from my mind, but let it kindle in me such a grateful sense, as may more and more incite me to love and obey thee; that awaking in the morning with a heart so inflamed with the remembrance of thy goodness, and so endeared to the practice of virtue, I may joyfully celebrate thy praise, and perform the duties of thy day as thou commandest. And this I humbly beg for Jesus Christ's sake, in whose name and words I farther pray.

Our Father, &c.



OCCASIONAL DEVOTIONS.

A Prayer for Growth in Grace.



God, who art the most excellent nature, the perfection of all beauty, and the fountain of all graces; who dost infallibly understand what is best to be chosen, and invariably chuse by the best and purest reason: Look down, I beseech thee, upon me, thy poor defective creature, who am ashamed of my self to see how unlike thee I am; how I am laden with imperfections, and how, after all my religious endeavours, my nature is still vitiated with unreasonable lusts and affections; how much vanity and impertinence there yet remains in my mind, how much perverseness in my will, how much spiritual and carnal iniquity in my affections and appetites. Lord, I have been long contending with this corrupt nature,

ture, and yet upon all occasions I find myself too too prone to be--- [*Here name the particular infirmities, that stick closest to your nature.*] Woe is me ! even my fairest graces have their spots and blemishes, my purest dispositions their sinful intermixtures, and my best works their flaws and imperfections. O my God ! have pity on me, who here lie fighting at thy feet, under a miserable diseased nature ; and as thou hast begun the blessed cure in me, so, for Christ his sake, I beseech thee, to compleat it ; that, being entirely recovered, and raised up unto newness of life, I may, in the perfect health and vigour of my soul, serve and glorify thee for ever. For which end, I beseech thee, confirm me more and more in the belief of those immortal pleasures beyond the grave, which thou hast treasur'd up for those that love and obey thee ; that by the strength of a lively faith, and vigorous hope, my soul may be rais'd above this world, and learn to despise and trample upon all its gilded vanities, whenever they present themselves, either to allure or to terrify me from pursuing the heavenly enjoyments. Excite in me such a vehement thirst after those rivers of pleasures

fures above, as may every day render me more cool and indifferent towards earthly things, more contented and satisfied under all the events and issues of thy providence, and more active and vigorous in my heavenly calling. And I beseech thee to inspire me with such clear and lively apprehensions of thy essential beauties and perfections, and of thy bountiful love and boundless benevolence to all thy creatures, as may every day more and more raise and improve my love to thee; that this, being the great spring and principle of all my actions, may continually excite me to a cheerful obedience to thy will, and a vigorous imitation of thy perfections. O cause me to love thee for thy self, and religion for thee, and the instruments of religion, in order to thy glory and my own happiness; that so, founding my content upon thee, and the blessed interests of a virtuous life, I may grow in grace, and be rich in good works, and go on, with a satisfied and triumphant spirit, from imperfection to strength, from acts to habits, and from habits to confirmation in grace; and may be still more and more confirmed in all the heavenly graces, till they are finally consummated

summated into everlasting glory. And when, by thy grace and assistance, I have perfectly conquer'd the corrupt nature within, and the temptations without me, and am arrived into the state of everlasting triumph, I will lay all my victories at thy feet, and, with palms in my hand, and *Allelujahs* on my lips, celebrate thy praises to eternity. Hear me, O my God! in this, and whatever else thou knowest to be needful for me, even for Jesus Christ his sake, my only Saviour and Redeemer.
Amen.

A Prayer for resolution in well-doing.

O Most blessed God, the fountain of wisdom, power, strength, and all other perfections: from whose bounty I have formerly received, and at present enjoy, innumerable blessings, and have no hope for the future, but what arises from the same everlasting spring of all good, which is never weary of deriving its benefits unto us. I ought, in a sense of my intire dependence upon thee, to be very
humble,

humble, very thankful, exceeding solicitous for thy favour, and desirous of thy good will, sorrowful for my neglects of thee; ashamed of the pitiful returns I have made to thee; and most peremptorily resolved, and zealously bent to approve my self hereafter to thy divine Majesty, in all well doing.

Accordingly I am now prostrate before thee to implore the continued powerful presence of that infinite grace, to which I owe *these* holy thoughts, that are in my mind, and by which alone I can hope to perform and accomplish them. Possess me, O God, with such a full and lively sense of thy undeserved and unwearied love and kindness to me, in passing by so much ingratitude, and so many transgressions, in laying on me such strong and manifold obligations to be happy by obeying thee, and in affording me such powerful assistances to attain that happiness; that I may love thee proportionably with a more constant and steadfast affection, and feel an unalterable will settled in me, to do the duty thou requirest of me, into whatsoever state and condition of life, thou shalt be pleased to dispose me.

When

When I have loved thee all that I can, I am sensible I have loved thee but a little ; because I myself, and all that I can do, is so inconsiderable. How small a thing then is it, how poor and contemptible, that I return unto thee ; when I love thee not so much as I am able : O blessed God, cause such a delightful sense of thy goodness to fall upon my heart, and to abide with me, that all the powers of my soul may strain themselves to love thee, and unite themselves unto thee, in an unalterable choice of thy will, to be the sole governor of all my designs, and desires, and actions, throughout the whole course of my life. I love my self most, I see, when I love thee intirely, and serve my self, by doing thee all faithful service. In union with thee I am at rest and peace ; and in constant adherence to thee consists my eternal safety and security. To thee therefore, with the deliberate and full consent of my will, I devote my self ; resolving to love and serve thee, with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. I vow unto thee, as I have done often, all sincere obedience ; and protest

test against every thing that is contrary to thy holy commands, as contrary also to my own sense and judgment, to my most sober and serious thoughts, and to my most advised counsels and resolutions. They all acknowledge how just and reasonable, how good and pleasant, how profitable and beneficial, how honourable and glorious it is to be a *doer* of thy will, which besides the present contentment and satisfaction of it, hath a great recompence of reward. O preserve in my mind a constant remembrance, how dearly I am bought by the precious blood of thy Son Christ; how early I was dedicated to thy service; how often I have since found abundant cause to determine I would be thine; how I have condemned my self for the breach of those holy purposes, and what great satisfaction of mind I have had in the keeping of thy commandments; that so I may never wilfully offend against so many forcible reasons obliging me to my duty, but be swayed by them, notwithstanding all the temptations of the world, the flesh, or the devil, to persevere in a resolved obedience to thee for ever. And, by the power of
thy

thy Holy Spirit, I beseech thee to make them clearer, stronger, and more effectual; that I may have the same thoughts, passions, inclinations, and purposes now, which I shall be apt to have when I come to die. For which end, help me often to place myself before thy judgment seat, and to consider that I must give an account for all that I have received; for thy holy gospel, for thy divine inspirations, for the counsels and exhortations of thy ministers, for all the means and helps of growing better, and for all the encouragements I have, even from the good things of this life, which thy bounty bestows upon me: That by a careful preparation for such a reckoning, I may be kept close and steadfast to my duty, in hope of that exceeding glorious reward, which our Lord will bestow upon all his faithful servants, at the day of his appearing. *Amen.*

A Prayer in case of dangerous Temptation.

O Almighty God, who art every where, and more especially present to those souls, that look up unto thee, with an high esteem of thy favour and grace, and with hearty desires to continue in thy love, by patient continuance in well doing. In this humble faith in thy divine goodness, and with a due fear and reverence of thy glorious Majesty, I prostrate my soul and body before thee; to put my self into thy most gracious protection, and to beg the powerful assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to preserve me wheresoever I am, in a dutiful observance of all thy holy commands.

I am sensible, O Lord, that we live in a world of temptations, and that our nature is weak, ready to yield to them, and that our affections are apt to wander after vanity, that sudden passions oftentimes transport us from our duty. But I know withal, that a sense of thy all-seeing eye, and of the life to come, and of the rewards and punishments which thou wilt render according to our works, will certainly

tainly over-awe all sinful motions in me, and break the force of the strongest temptations, that assault me. And therefore the greater the danger is, the more earnestly I sue unto thee, to be possessed with a piercing sense, and lively remembrance of these things, which may abide with me alway; and especially this day, in every place and company into which I shall come. O that I may not be so forgetful of thee, and of my own good, as, for the small and momentary pleasures of this world, to hazard the loss of those great and eternal joys, which we expect in the other life: But enable me, O most gracious God, so to behave my self, that when I have passed through all the employments and occasions of this day, I may bring my self back again into thy presence, so pure and undefiled, that I may begin those joys, which are to come, in chearful praises of thee; and in a comfortable sense that thou dwellest in me, and art leading me by thy holy Spirit to immortal happiness, through Jesus Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

A Prayer after a Relapse.

I Cast down my self before thee, O most holy Lord of heaven and earth, with an humble, sorrowful, and penitent heart, adoring thy infinite grace, which suffers such a vile and miserable sinner to approach thy presence. I am thine indeed, dedicated long ago to thy service, which I have since chosen, as the most perfect freedom; But so much the greater reason I have to be abashed before thee, and to be astonished at thy forbearing mercy, which prolongs the life of such an one as I am, who have been so false to thee, and to my own resolutions. I remember, in the bitterness of my soul, how many obligations thou hast laid upon me to observe and obey thee; how often I have acknowledged the justice and goodness of thy precepts; and how frequently I have promised and vowed to conform my self unto them; and what great and precious promises thou hast made to me of invaluable blessings; and yet, wretch that I am, I have been drawn aside from thy ways by easy and slight temptations; and for a small and momentary

tary pleasure or gain [*Here mention the particular sin*] have ventured the loss of thy favour, which is better than life itself.

O God, that thou shouldst have patience with so perfidious, so ungrateful, so senseless a creature as I am! That thou shouldst permit me to see the light of the sun, and hast not condemned me to utter darkness, in weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! But that thou givest me leave to look towards heaven, and that I have an heart to speak unto thee, and still may call thee, Father, saying, *Father, I have sinned against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* O the riches! O the unfear- chable riches of thy grace! I can never sufficiently abhor and loath myself for my foul revolt from thee, who art so kind and gracious; especially if I should still continue to abuse such tender mercy and compassion towards me. Tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, I acknowledge, is the due portion of those, that do evil: and if thou shouldst abandon me, and cast me out of thy sight, I must confess that thou art righteous, and that I reap but the fruit of my own ways, and suffer the deserved punishment of my late iniquity.

But thou, O God, delightest in mercy, and *there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.* Thou hast sworn that thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return and live; and hast sent thy Son Jesus, with the most indearing argument of the greatest love, to persuade us to return unto our duty. Behold, O Lord, I return, with grief and affliction of spirit, that I have offended thee: detesting the thoughts of doing the like again, and resolving to be more careful, and diligent, and circumspect, for the time to come. O let me live to the praise of thy omnipotent grace, enabling me to perform these resolutions in a more strict and exact obedience to thy holy commands, the rest of my days. Mercy, mercy, I most earnestly beg, O father of mercies, for the sake of him that died for me; not merely for the pardon of my sins, but for a divine power to enable me to subdue them. I desire not thy infinite goodness to bear me out in rebellion against thy righteousness, purity, and truth; but that by thy goodness I may be partaker of them; that my repentance may be accepted; and that it may be hearty and steadfast, never to
be

be repented of. I desire no peace, quiet, and ease in my heart, but in a constant and resolute opposition of all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil; and in the hope I have, that, through thy gracious assistance, it shall be victorious.

O settle me, I beseech thee, in this holy disposition, that I may preserve an intire friendship with thee hereafter, by an happy agreement with thy will and pleasure in every thing. And for that end make me *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; That being sensible of my own great weakness, I may more earnestly depend upon thy aid from above, by an humble and vigorous faith in thy almighty goodness. Maintain such a clear light in my mind, that may keep me from being deceived with the vain shadows and empty appearances of satisfactory pleasure in any thing of this world. Fortify my will with the power of thy divine love, that I may overcome all sensual affections, that arise in me at any time against thy sacred commands: And possess me with such a lively hope of those good things, which Christ hath promised in the other life, that may make me active and zealous, steadfast

and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Thou knowest the secrets of all hearts; let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon me, according as I deliberately and sincerely chuse to *cleave unto thee with purpose of heart.* O cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me: *But hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a constant spirit in me. Make my heart to be sound in thy statutes, that I may never be ashamed. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; Then shall I be upright, and innocent from the great transgression: The words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart shall then be accepted in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen, Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for hope of pardon.

O Eternal, and most blessed God, the fountain of all good; from whence all creatures derive whatsoever they enjoy. They are all poor and indigent things, full of necessities and wants, which are continually supplied out of thy fulness. But the wants of our souls are the most lamentable; because, besides the poverty of creatures, we have made a great many needs to ourselves, by our wilful departure from thee, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. I in particular stand in need of thy pardon, of thy converting grace, and the greater supplies of thy Holy Spirit, which I know not how with any confidence to expect: But that all these wants are not too big for thine infinite goodness to relieve, in that thou hast been pleased most compassionately to consider our miserable condition, by sending Christ Jesus into the world, and filling him with all the treasures of thy grace and mercy, that he might dispense them to me, according to my several necessities.

O how excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, how surpassing is thy love, that will pass by the insolent offences of thy creatures against thy high authority, and soveraign goodness; and not let them eternally perish without a remedy, for that forlorn condition, into which they have brought themselves! Blessed, for ever blessed, be thy sparing mercy, which hath *delivered Christ Jesus for our offences*; and testified thy acceptance of his sacrifice of himself, *by raising him again for our justification*. Blessed be thy name for the gracious declaration which thou hast made, *That if any man sin, we have an advocate with thee, Christ Jesus the righteous, who is the propitiation for sins*. I most thankfully receive these glad tidings, *which are worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*. Thanks be to thy tender mercy, which hath restored me to a possibility of recovering thy grace and favour: The smallest hope of it I acknowledge, is more valuable than the greatest abundance of all the enjoyments and pleasures of this present life.

What

What praise therefore, what love, what obedience am I bound to render unto thee, who hast given me such a good hope of peace and reconciliation with thee; and thereby delivered me from the horror of my own guilty mind, remembering that I have adventured to oppose my will to thine. I ought for ever, with the most zealous devotion of a grateful and obedient heart, to admire and stand amazed at thy inconceivable grace, which will not strictly mark what is done amiss, but accept of my repentance and amendment, instead of an intire and constant performance of my duty to thee. *O the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of thy love in Christ Jesus*, which is the satisfaction of my heart, and the joy of my life, which would otherwise be intolerably grievous and burthenfome to us, whilst I remember myself to be a sinner.

Fill me, O Lord, with a most ardent love to thee, now that I here offer up myself, in truth and sincerity of heart, to be wholly disposed by thee. Behold, O Lord, my will lies at thy feet; I would have no will of my own, but desire only that thy will may be done: And fill me with an

holy fear of thee, that thy indulgent mercy may not make me remiss, and negligent, and presumptuous again to offend thee; but that a perpetual sense of my new obligations to thee, in reviving my hopes in thee, which I had forfeited, may render me more watchful, more diligent, more earnest and solicitous, more humble and distrustful of my self, and more fervent to implore the powerful succours of thy divine grace.

O that it may be as natural to me to pray to thee, as it is to breathe. And thou, *who fillest the hungry with good things,* pour into me life, and strength, and vigour; and in a constant dependance on thee, and hearty endeavour to do thy will. *Strengthen me, I beseech thee, with might by thy Spirit in the inner man;* that, notwithstanding the strongest temptations, wherewith I may be assaulted, and notwithstanding the weakness and feebleness of my own spirit to resist them, I may persevere courageously in well doing unto the end; may finish my course with joy, and lay myself down to rest in an holy hope, that I shall enter into a state of safety and security
from

from all danger, and remain for ever in the joy of my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer in the time of any Affliction.

O Just and holy Lord, who with rebukes dost chasten man for sin; I desire unfeignedly to humble myself under thy mighty hand, which now lies heavy upon me. I heartily acknowledge, O Lord, that all I do, all I can suffer, is but the due reward of my deeds; and therefore in thy severest inflictions I must still say, righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. But, O Lord, I beseech thee in judgment remember mercy, and though my sins have enforced thee to strike, yet consider my weakness, and let not thy stripes be more heavy, or more lasting, than thou seest profitable for my soul. Correct me, but with the chastisement of a father, not with the wounds of an enemy; and though thou take not off thy rod, yet take away thine anger. Lord, do not abhor my soul, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure, but pardon my sins I beseech thee; and if yet in thy fatherly wisdom thou see fit to prolong thy corrections,
thy

thy blessed will be done. I cast myself, O Lord, at thy feet, to do with me what thou pleasest. Try me as silver is tried, so thou bring me out purified. And, Lord, make even my flesh also to subscribe to this resignation, that there may be nothing in me, that may rebel against thy hand; but that, having perfectly suppress'd all repining thoughts, I may chearfully drink of this cup; and how bitter soever thou shalt please to make it, Lord, let it prove medicinal, and cure all the diseases of my soul, that it may bring forth in me the peaceable fruit of righteousness: That so these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, thro' Jesus Christ.

A Prayer in trouble of mind.

O Lord, *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*; I acknowledge and adore thy eternal power, wisdom and goodness: I render thee my most hearty thanks for all the benefits, thou hast freely bestowed on me, from my first coming into the world, until this time.
Many

Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Above all, I bless thee for that great demonstration of thy love and good will to mankind in Christ Jesus, whom thou hast sent into the world to save sinners; and for bringing me to the clear knowledge of him, faith in him, some love, I hope, towards him, and unfeigned affection to thy holy will, declared to us in his blessed gospel.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth up, and hitherto been marvellously gracious to me; hide not, I beseech thee, thy face now from me; and put not thy servant away in displeasure. Thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation: But, for Jesus Christ his sake, I humbly intreat thee to pardon and pass by all my neglects of thee, and unthankfulness to thee, and offences against thee. And, as I here sincerely devote and dedicate my whole self, soul and body, to thy service; so help me, O my God, and further me in the performance
of

of my duty by the grace of thy Holy Spirit. To thee all hearts are open, and from thee no secrets are hid; deal with me according to the earnest desire and full purpose of my soul, to conform myself in all things to thy holy will.

Settle in me an unmoveable faith in thy infinite mercies, a constant love and cheerful affection to my duty, and a readiness of heart to obey thee, and to submit to thy wise appointments in every condition. The whole earth is full of thy mercy; thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing: O refuse not the humble desires of my poor soul, which gaspeth after thee, even as the thirsty land. Thou, who givest to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens when they cry; O satisfy me early with thy mercies, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days. Compose my broken and disturbed thoughts; quiet my troubled and disordered spirit; and appease all the ragings and tumults there, by a sweet sense of thy most tender mercies, which have been ever of old, and endure continually.

Banish from me all causeless fears and jealousies; deliver me from all unprofitable sadness

sadness and dejections of spirit; keep me from rash judging of myself, and much more from charging thee foolishly. Bestow upon me a chearful spirit, by an humble hope in thee; and by referring myself wholly to thee. Endue me with such wisdom and uprightness, that I may neither neglect my duty, nor suspect thy gracious acceptance of me. Give me an hearty zeal to do the best that I am able; and a settled persuasion that thou requirest no more of me.

Defend me, O my gracious God, from dishonouring thee and my religion, by distrusting thy goodness, and calling thy loving kindness in question towards those, that are sincerely bent to please thee. Remove all troublesome imaginations from me, and give me a clear understanding of thee, and of myself: Or, when I am in darkness and confusion of thoughts, grant me so much light and judgment, as not to conclude myself forsaken by thee, but to reflect upon thy long continued favours to me, and many deliverances of me; that so I may resolve still to hope in thee, to bear my present trouble patiently, and to resign my will absolutely to thy good pleasure.

And,

And, good Lord, enable me to look beyond these clouds to that blessed state; whither my Saviour is gone, in which there is no darkness at all; and, in an humble hope of coming to the same place where he is, to content myself with any condition, whilst I am here, so far remote from that region of light and glory:

Hear me, most loving and merciful Father, I most humbly beseech thee. Pity my great dulness and deadness of heart. Strengthen my weak and feeble endeavours. Support my fainting spirit, and cause it humbly to hope in thee for ever. Confirm and establish every good thought, desire and purpose, which thou hast wrought in me. Perfect that which thou hast begun. Make me to grow in wisdom, faith, love, and willing obedience. Conduct me hereafter so evenly and steadily, so peaceably and quietly, so chearfully and securely in thy ways, that I may glorify thee whilst I live, by encouraging others to accompany me in thy service; and when I come to die, may resign my soul unto thee with an undisturbed mind, and in an holy hope of a joyful resurrection of the body at the great day of the Lord Jesus; to
whom

whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for Deliverance.

O Blessed Lord, who art gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil; I thankfully acknowledge before thee, that thou hast not dealt with me after my sins, nor rewarded me according to my iniquities. My rebellions, O Lord, deserve to be scourged with scorpions, and thou hast corrected them only with a gentle and fatherly rod; neither hast thou suffered me to lie long under *that*, but hast given me a timely and a gracious issue out of my late distresses. O Lord, I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble, and hast known my soul in adversity. Thou hast smitten, and thou hast healed me. O let these various methods of thine have their proper effects upon my soul; that I, who have felt the smart of thy chastisements, may stand in awe and not sin: and that I, who have likewise felt the sweet refreshings of thy mercy,

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cy, may have my heart ravished with it, and knit to thee in the firmest bands of love; and that by both I may be preserved in a constant entire obedience to thee all my days, through Jesus Christ.

A Prayer for success in any extraordinary business.

ALmighty and most merciful Father, the supreme governour of the whole world; who disposest and orderest all things in heaven and earth with admirable judgment, and canst not possibly err in what thou doest, nor fail of what thou designest. I adore, in the humblest reverence of my soul, thy most glorious majesty; thy eternal power, holiness, goodness and truth, which are all beyond my comprehension: And more particularly I adore thy unspotted justice, and all-seeing wisdom, which penetrates into the deepest secrets, and spies out all the ways of the sons of men, and renders to every one of them according to their doings.

I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that

that walketh to direct his steps. The success of all our counsels and actions depends on thy pleasure; and when we have *devised the way* we intend to go, thou givest it what issue seems good in thine eyes. *There are many devices in a mans heart; nevertheless thy counsel, O Lord, that shall stand.* I will therefore *blesse thee, O Lord my God, alway, and desire of thee that my ways may be directed, and that all my paths and counsels may prosper: for thou thy self givest all good things, and thou humblest whom thou wilt, and as thou wilt.*

Accordingly I now most earnestly recommend my self, and all my concerns to thee; who hast bid me *in all my ways acknowledge thee, and thou wilt direct my paths.* I trust in thy wise and good providence *with all my heart, and lean not unto mine own understanding.* I hope in thy mercy that thou wilt so direct, assist, and prosper all my thoughts, designs, and endeavours, that they may attain their desired end. And above all things I desire that I may have grace to design and seek for nothing, but what is just and honest, pious and charitable, praise-worthy and of

good report. Bless me, good Lord, with that integrity of heart, in which thou so much delightest; and then bless me with wisdom and good understanding in all my affairs, that *I may guide them with discretion. For it is thou that ledest into wisdom, and directest the wise. In thy hand are both we and our words: all wisdom also and knowledge of workmanship.* Leave me not therefore, O Lord, *Father and Governour of all my whole life,* leave me not to my self alone: but *send out thy wisdom from the throne of thy glory, that being present, she may labour with me. And turn away from me vain hopes.* Indue me also with a patient, contented, and untroubled spirit, that I may wait on thee as long as thou pleasest: And whatsoever the event shall be, enable me to rejoice in thee as my portion in this world, and to rest perfectly satisfied in thy love, and in the assured hope of good things in the other.

I humbly recommend likewise to thy merciful guidance, all those with whom I have intrusted any of my concerns; that they may manage all their undertakings with skill and prudence, justice and fidelity; and do for me, as they would that I, or
others,

others, should do for them. Make me ever mindful, that *all my works are as the sun before thee, and thy eyes are continually upon my ways*; that I may never dare to do any thing but what thou approvest, and of which I may give a comfortable account, at the great day of judgment. *Amen.*

A Prayer for health, &c.

MAN, that is born of a woman, as thy sacred word, O eternal truth! teaches us, *but but a short time to live* and, during this his short stay on earth, *is subject to many miseries.* His life is a *flower*, which dries up, and withers away, on the same day, it is display'd: 'Tis a *blast*, soon gone, and dissipated: 'Tis a *stream of water*, which swiftly slides by, disappears, and never more returns: 'Tis a *shadow*, flying away, as soon as form'd: 'Tis *smoak*, which, as it rises, vanishes: In sum, 'tis a meer *vapour*, having no solid consistence and permanency. This is the short, fickle, uncertain nature of man's life; and I ask thee not, O great Lord of life and death, to change it for me; I only beg that thou would'it be pleas'd in giving me health,

to grant me also grace to make the right use of it, to thy glory and my own salvation. O my God, put thy fear in my heart, that a dread of thy displeasure may be instrumental to the keeping my body in subjection and subordination to the spirit; that so I may employ its strength in acquitting my self of my christian obligations, and performing the several duties of my place and condition. Take from me, O Lord! all desire of superfluities, which serve only to satisfy the senses, and minister to vice; and let me rest fully contented with such conveniencies, as will sustain me in this my earthly pilgrimage: And grant, O Lord! that when my *earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolv'd, I may have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternally in the heavens*; and that for his sake, who by his precious blood hath purchased it for me, even Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for an easy and happy death.

O Most blessed Saviour and Redeemer Jesus, who died'st for the salvation of the whole world, and desirest not, *that any*

any should perish; to whom I never present my prayers without hopes of mercy, relying on thy gracious promise, that *whatsoever shall be ask'd in thy name, shall be granted*: I beseech thee therefore, that thy grace may accompany me all the days of my life, that I may, by an holy conversation, and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for the coming of thee my Lord, and be ready to *enter* with thee at whatsoever hour thou shalt come.

O Lord, the eternity of glory or misery depends on the last moment of my life. Then it is, that the tempter will try all ways to prevail over the weakness of my spirits; at that time, all the sinful passages of my life will come rushing into my memory, to strike me with a sad resentment of what 'tis too late to remedy. Give me, therefore, O most merciful Lord God, in this passage (which is so full of peril, and of so great importance) all those christian dispositions, which are requisite for a holy and happy death; O grant that the remaining part of my life may be spent in the offices of religion, in works of charity, and in contemplation of heaven, and divine love:
unto

And, at the time of my death, impute not unto me the follies of my youth, nor any of the errors or miscarriages of my life; but strengthen me in my agony: let not my faith waver, nor my hope fail, nor my charity be disordered; but be pitiful and compassionate to thy servant, in every circumstance wherein I shall be defective. Grant this, O Lord, for thine own bowels and compassion's sake. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving for Recovery.

O Gracious Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, in whose hand my time is, I praise and magnify thee, that thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, and restored me to health again: it is thou alone, O Lord, that hast preserved my life from destruction, thou hast chastened and corrected me, but thou hast not given me over unto death. O let this life, which thou hast thus graciously spared, be wholly consecrated to thee. Behold, O Lord, I am by thy mercy made whole, O make me strictly careful to sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto me. Lord, let not this reprieve
 thou

thou hast now given me, make me *secure*, as thinking that my Lord delayeth his coming ; but grant me, I beseech thee, to make a right use of this long-suffering of thine, and so to employ every minute of that time thou shalt allow me, that when thou shalt appear, I may have confidence, and not be ashamed before thee at thy coming. Lord, I have found by this approach towards death, how dreadful a thing it is to be taken unprepared ; O let it be a perpetual admonition to me to watch for my Master's coming ; And when the pleasures of sin shall present themselves to entice me, O make me to remember how bitter they will be at the last. O Lord, hear me, and as thou hast in much mercy afforded me time, so grant me also grace to work out my own salvation ; to provide oil in my lamp, that when the bridegroom cometh, I may go in with him to the marriage. Grant this, I beseech thee, for thy dear Son's sake. *Amen, Amen.*

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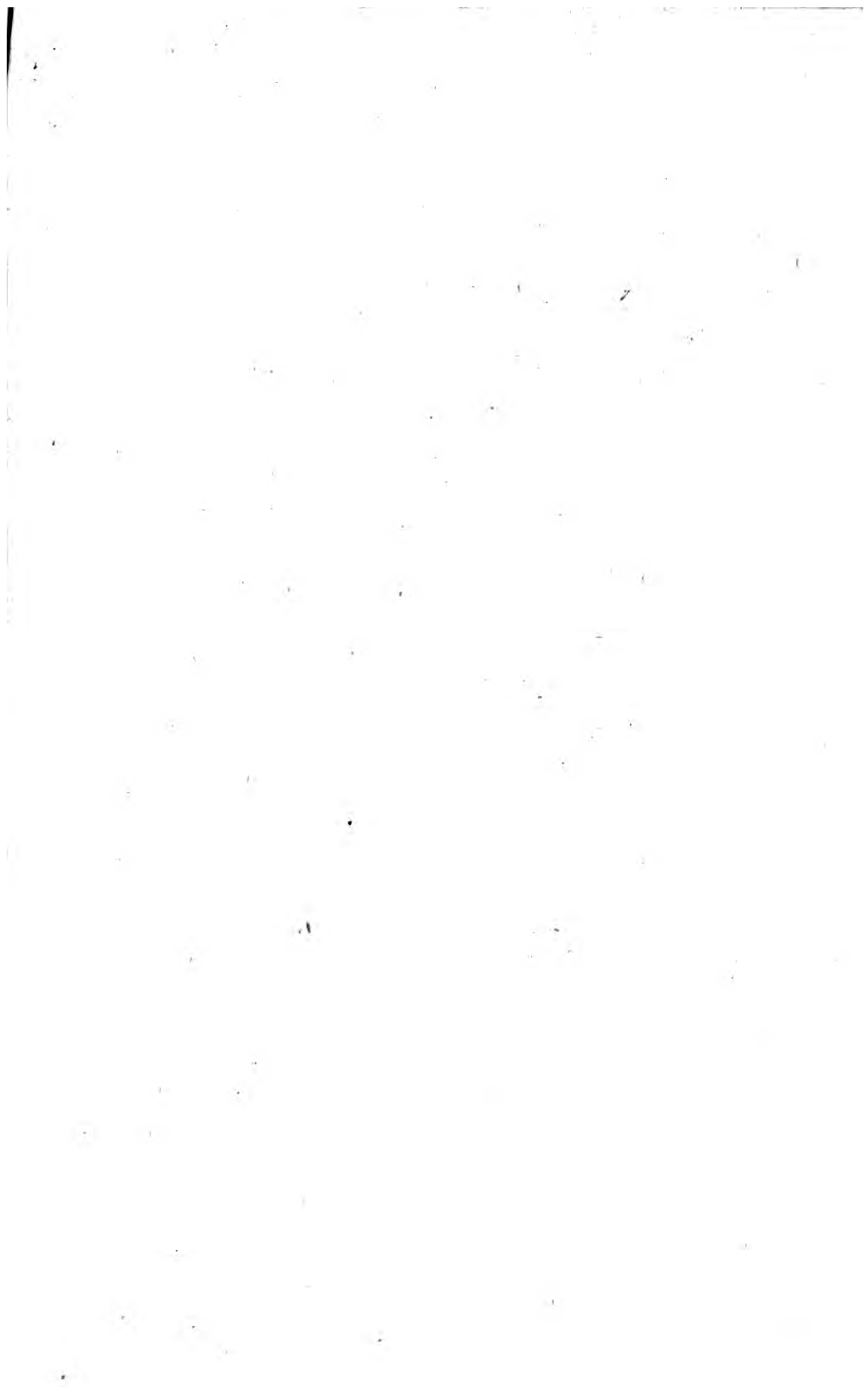
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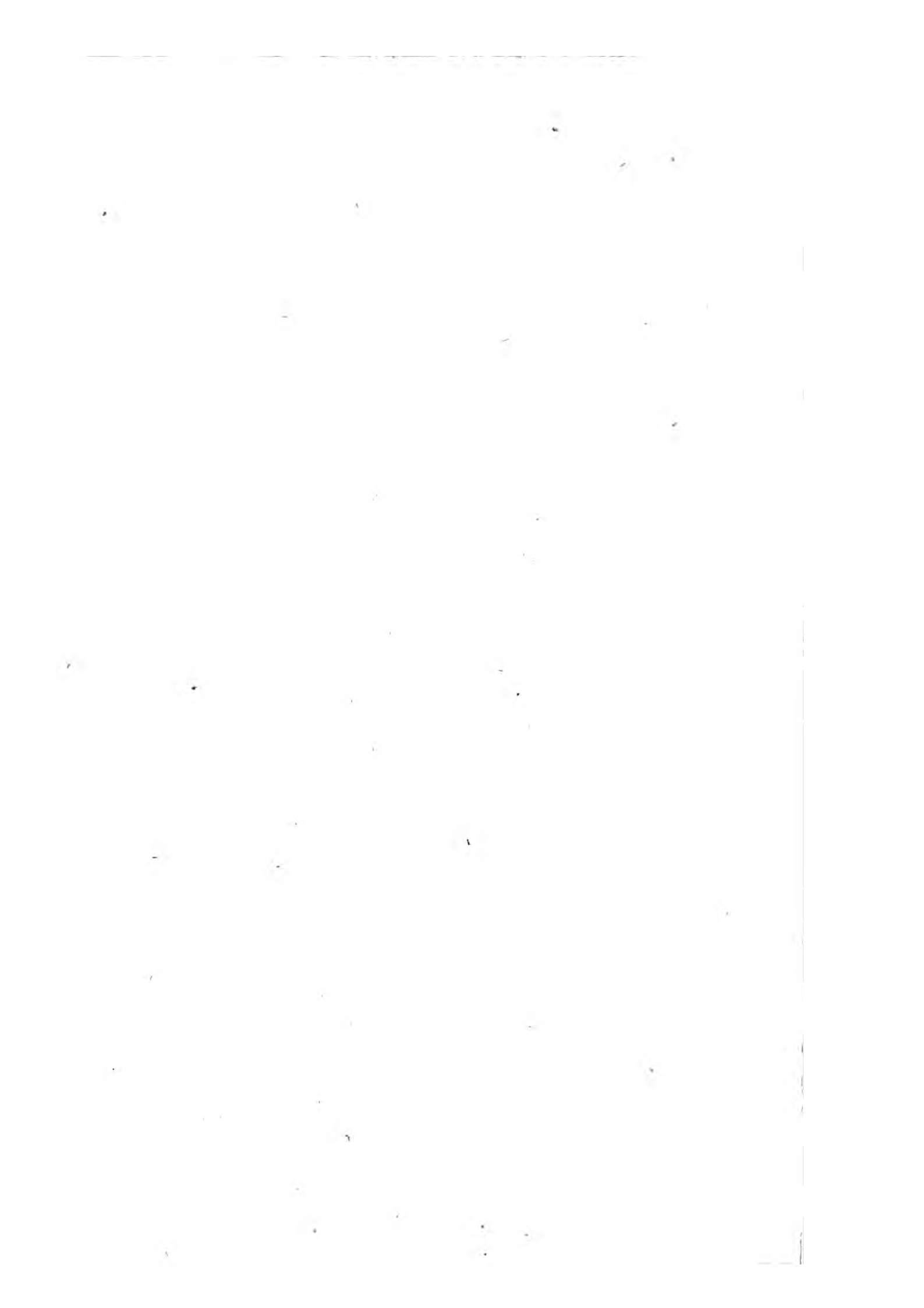
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