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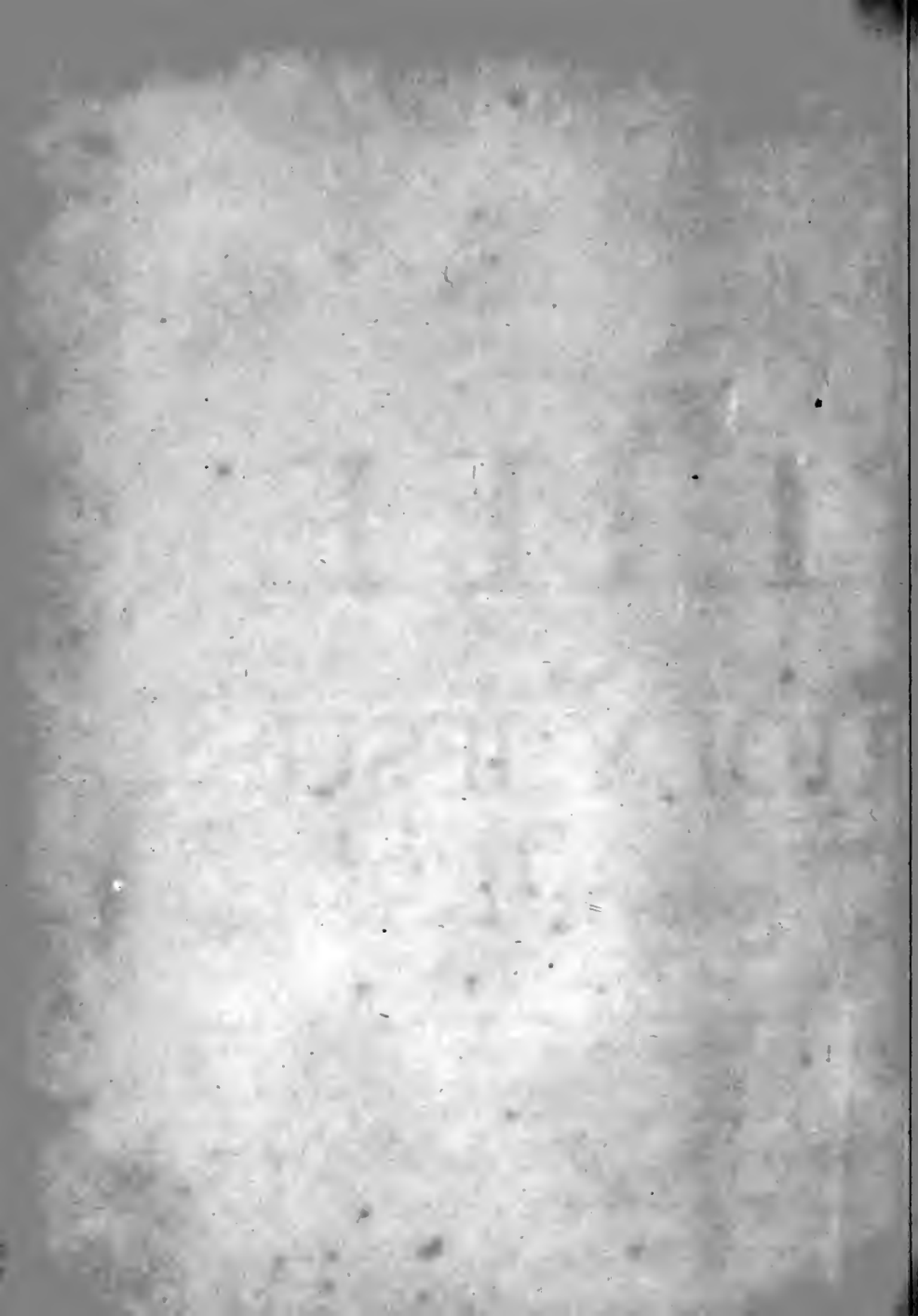
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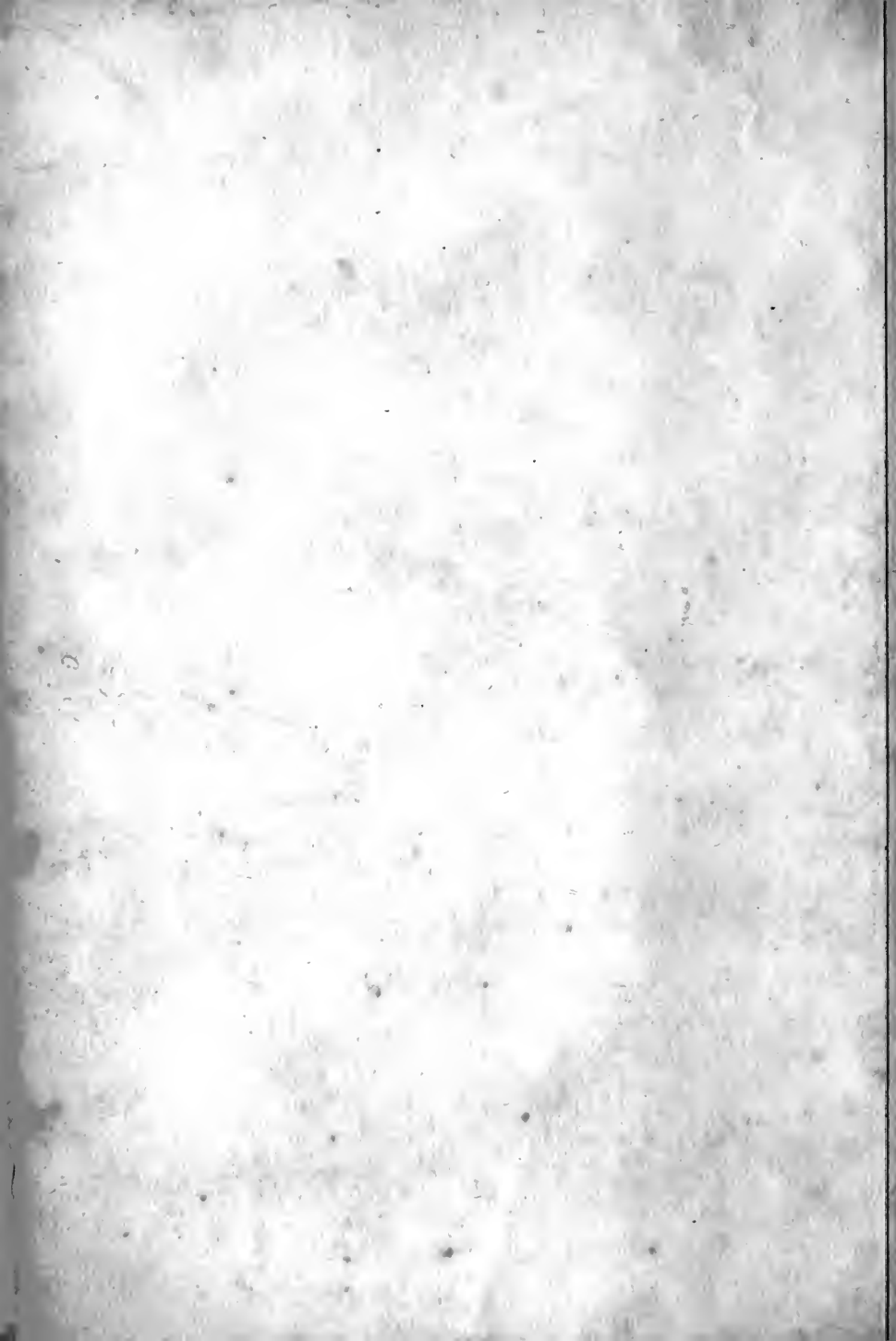
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Contemplations

UPON THE REMARKABLE PASSAGES

293

IN THE

LIFE

OF THE

HOLY JESUS.

By *✓* JOSEPH, Lord Bishop of
EXCESTER.

(Name)

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London 1680 }*

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Annotations

1880

THE

OF THE

HOLY GOSPEL

BY JOSEPH W. BISHOP OF
EXETER

AND

Printed at the Press of
1880

Contemplations

Upon the

NEW TESTAMENT.

I.

The Angel and Zacharie.

When things are at worst, then God begins a Change. The state of the *Jewish Church* was extremely corrupted immediately before the news of the Gospel; yet, as bad as it was, not onely the Priesthood, but the Courses of attendance continued, even from *David's* time till *Christ's*. It is a desperately-depraved condition of a Church, where no good Orders are left. *Judea* passed many Troubles, many Alterations, yet this orderly Combination endured about eleven hundred years. A settled Good will not easily be defeated, but in the change of persons will remain unchanged; and if it be forced to give way, leaves memorable footsteps behind it. If *David* foresaw the perpetuation of this holy Ordinance, how much did he rejoyce in the knowledge of it? Who would not be glad to doe good, on condition that it may so long outlive him?

The successive Turns of the Legall ministration held on in a Line never interrupted. Even in a forlorn and miserable Church there may be a personall Succession. How little were the *Jews* better for this, when they had lost the Urim and Thummim, Sincerity of Doctrine and Manners? This stayed with them even whilst they and their Sons crucified *Christ*. What is more ordinary, then wicked Sons of holy Parents? It is the Succession of Truth and Holiness that makes or institutes a Church, whatever becomes of the Persons. Never times were so barren, as not to yield some good: The greatest Dearth affords some few good Ears to the Gleaners. *Christ* would not have come into the World, but he would have some faithfull to entertain him: He, that had the disposing of all Times and Men, would cast some Holy ones into his own Times: There had been no equality, that all should either over-run, or follow him, and none attend him. *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* are just, both of *Aaron's* Bloud, and *John Baptist* of theirs. Whence should an holy Seed spring, if not of the Loins of *Levi*? It is not in the power of Parents to traduce Holiness to their Children: It is the blessing of God that feoffs them in the Vertues of their Parents, as they feoffe them in their Sins. There is no certainty, but there is likelihood, of an holy Generation, when the Parents are such. *Elizabeth* was just as well as *Zachary*, that the Fore-runner of a Saviour might be holy on both sides. If the Stock and the Grasse be not both good, there is much danger of the Fruit. It is an happy Match, when the Husband and the Wife are one, not onely in themselves, but in God; not more in flesh, then in the spirit. Grace makes no difference of Sexes: rather the weaker carries away the more honour, because it hath had less helps. It is easie to observe, that the New Testament affordeth more store of good Women then the Old. *Elizabeth* led the ring of this mercy, whose Barrenness ended in a miraculous

raculous Fruit both of her body and of her time.

This religious pair made no less progress in Vertue then in Age; and yet their Vertue could not make their best Age fruitfull. *Elizabeth was barren.* A just soul and a barren womb may well agree together. Amongst the *Jews* Barrenness was not a defect onely, but a reproach: yet while this good woman was fruitfull of holy Obedience, she was barren of Children. As *John*, who was miraculously conceived by man, was a fit Fore-runner of him that was conceived by the Holy Ghost; so a barren Matron was meet to make way for a Virgin.

None but a son of *Aaron* might offer Incense to God in the Temple: and not every son of *Aaron*; and not any one at all seasons. God is a God of Order, and hates Confusion no less then Irreligion. Albeit he hath not so streightned himself under the Gospell, as to tie his service to Persons or Places; yet his choice is now no less curious, because it is more large: He allows none but the authorized; he authorizeth none but the worthy. The Incense doth ever smell of the hand that offers it. I doubt not but that Perfume was sweeter which ascended up from the hand of a just *Zachary*. *The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to God.* There were Courses of ministrations in the Legall services. God never purposed to burthen any of his creatures with Devotion. How vain is the ambition of any soul, that would load it self with the universall charge of all men? How thankless is their labour, that do wilfully over-spend themselves in their ordinary vocations? As *Zachary* had a Course in God's House, so he carefully observed it: The favour of these respites doubled his diligence. The more high and sacred our Calling is, the more dangerous is Neglect. It is our honour, that we may be allowed to wait upon the God of heaven in these immediate services. Woe be to us, if we slacken those Duties wherein God honours us more then we can honour him.

Many sons of *Aaron*, yea of the same Family, served at once in the Temple, according to the variety of employments. To avoid all difference, they agreed by lot to assign themselves to the severall offices of each day. The lot of this day called *Zachary* to offer Incense in the outer Temple. I do not find any prescription they had from God of this particular manner of designment. Matters of good Order in holy affairs may be ruled by the wise institution of men according to reason & expediency.

It fell out well that *Zachary* was chosen by lot to this ministration, that God's immediate hand might be seen in all the passages that concerned his great Prophet; that as the Person, so the Occasion might be of God's own chusing. In Lots, and their seeming casual disposition, God can give a reason, though we can give none. Morning and Evening, twice a day, their Law called them to offer Incense to God, that both parts of the Day might be consecrate to the Maker of Time. The outer Temple was the figure of the whole Church upon earth, like as the Holy of holiest represented Heaven. Nothing can better resemble our faithfull Prayers, then sweet Perfume: These God looks that we should (all his Church over) send up unto him Morning and Evening. The Elevations of our Hearts should be perpetuall: but if twice in the day we do not present God with our solemn Invocations, we make the Gospell less officious then the Law.

That the resemblance of Prayers and Incense might be apparent; whilst the Priest sends up his Incense within the Temple, the people must send up their Prayers without. Their Breath and that Incense, though remote in the first rising, met e're they went up to Heaven. The people might no more go into the Holy place to offer up the incense of Prayers unto God, then *Zachary* might go into the Holy of holies. Whilst the partition-wall stood betwixt *Jews* and Gentiles, there were also partitions

tions betwixt the *Jews* themselves. Now every man is a Priest unto God ; every man (since the veil was rent) prays within the Temple. What are we the better for our greater freedome of access to God under the Gospell, if we do not make use of our privilege ?

Whilst they were praying to God, he sees an Angel of God. As *Gideon's* Angel went up in the smoak of the sacrifice, so did *Zachary's* Angel (as it were) come down in the fragrant smoak of his incense. It was ever great news to see an Angel of God ; but now more, because God had long withdrawn from them all the means of his supernaturall Revelations. As this wicked people were strangers to their God in their Conversation, so was God grown a stranger to them in his Apparitions: yet now that the season of the Gospell approached, he visited them with his Angels, before he visited them by his Son. He sends his Angel to men in the form of man, before he sends his Son to take humane form. The Presence of Angels is no novelty, but their Apparition : they are always with us, but rarely seen ; that we may awfully respect their messages when they are seen. In the mean time our faith may see them, though our senses do not. Their assumed shapes do not make them more present, but visible.

There is an Order in that heavenly Hierarchie, though we know it not. This Angel that appeared to *Zachary* was not with him in the ordinary course of his attendances, but was purposely sent from God with this message. Why was an Angel sent ? and why this Angel ? It had been easie for him to have raised up the propheticall spirit of some *Simeon* to this prediction : the same Holy Ghost which revealed to that just man that he should not see death, ere he had seen the *Messias* ; might have as easily revealed unto him the Birth of the Forerunner of *Christ*, and by him to *Zachary*. But God would have this Voice, which should goe before his Son ;

come with a noise: He would have it appear to the world, that the Harbinger of the *Messiah* should be conceived by the marvellous power of that God, whose coming he proclaimed. It was fit the first Herald of the Gospel should begin in wonder. The same Angel that came to the Blessed Virgin with the news of *Christ's* Conception, came to *Zachary* with the news of *John's*, for the honour of him that was the greatest of them which were born of women, and for his better resemblance to him which was the Seed of the woman. Both had the Gospel for their errand, one as the Messenger of it, the other as the Authour: Both are foretold by the same mouth.

When could it be more fit for the Angel to appear unto *Zachary*, then when Prayers and Incense were offered by him? Where could he more fitly appear then in the Temple? in what part of the Temple more fitly then at the Altar of Incense? and whereabouts rather then on the right side of the Altar? Those glorious spirits as they are always with us, so most in our Devotions; and as in all places, so most of all in God's House. They rejoyce to be with us, whilst we are with God; as contrarily, they turn their faces from us, when we goe about our Sins.

He that had wont to live and serve in the presence of the Master, was now astonished at the presence of the Servant. So much difference there is betwixt our Faith, and our Senses, that the apprehension of the presence of the God of Spirits by faith goes down sweetly with us, whereas the sensible apprehension of an Angel dismays us. Holy *Zachary*, that had wont to live by Faith, thought he should die when his Sense began to be set on work. It was the weakness of him, that served at the Altar without horror, to be daunted with the face of his Fellow-servant. In vain do we look for such Ministers of God as are without infirmities, when just *Zachary*

chary was troubled in his Devotions with that where-with he should have been comforted. It was partly the suddenness, and partly the glory of the Apparition that affrighted him. The good Angel was both apprehensive and compassionate of *Zachary's* weakness, and presently encourages him with a chearfull excitation; *Fear not, Zacharias.* The blessed Spirits, though they do not often vocally express it, do pity our humane frailties, and secretly suggest comfort unto us, when we perceive it not. Good and evil Angels, as they are contrary in estate, so also in disposition: The good desire to take away Fear, the evil to bring it. It is a fruit of that deadly enmity which is betwixt Satan and us, that he would, if he might, kill us with terrour: whereas the good Spirits, affecting our relief and happiness, take no pleasure in terrifying us, but labour altogether for our tranquillity and chearfulness.

There was not more Fear in the face, then Comfort in the speech; *Thy prayer is heard.* No Angel could have told him better news. Our desires are uttered in our Prayers: What can we wish but to have what we would? Many good suits had *Zachary* made, and amongst the rest for a Son. Doubtless it was now some space of years since he made that request; for he was now stricken in age, and had ceased to hope: yet had God laid it up all the while, and when he thinks not of it, brings it forth to effect. Thus doth the mercy of our God deal with his patient and faithfull Suppliants: In the fervour of their expectation he many times holds them off; and when they least think of it, and have forgotten their own suits, he graciously condescends. Delay of effect may not discourage our Faith: It may be God hath long granted, ere we shall know of his grant. Many a Father repents him of his fruitfulness, and hath such Sons as he wishes unborn: but to have so gracious and happy a Son as the Angel foretold, could not be less comfort then

honour to the age of *Zachary*. The proof of Children makes them either the Blessings or Crosses of their Parents. To hear what his Son should be before he was ; to hear that he should have such a Son, a Son whose birth should concern the joy of many, a Son that should be great in the sight of the Lord, a Son that should be sacred to God, filled with God, beneficiall to man, an Harbinger to him that was God and Man ; was news enough to prevent the Angel, and to take away that Tongue with Amazement, which was after lost with Incredulity.

The speech was so good, that it found not a sudden belief : This good news surprized *Zachary*. If the intelligence had taken leisure, that his thoughts might have had time to debate the matter, he had easily apprehended the infinite power of him that had promised ; the Pattern of *Abraham* and *Sara* ; and would soon have concluded the appearance of the Angel more miraculous than his prediction. Whereas now, like a man masked with the strangeness of that he saw and heard, he misdoubts the message, and asks, *How shall I know ?* Nature was on his side, and alledged the impossibility of the event, both from Age and Barrenness. Supernatural tidings at the first hearing astonish the heart, and are entertained with Doubts by those, who upon farther acquaintance give them the best Welcome.

The weak apprehensions of our imperfect Faith are not so much to be censured, as pitied. It is a sure way for the heart, to be prevented with the assurance of the omnipotent power of God, to whom nothing is impossible : so shall the hardest points of Faith goe down easily with us. If the Eye of our mind look upward, it shall meet wth nothing to avert or interrupt it ; but if right forward, or downward, or round about, every thing is a block in our way.

There is a difference betwixt Desire of assurance, and Unbelief.

The Angel and Zachary. 9

Unbelief. We cannot be too carefull to raise up our selves arguments to settle our Faith; although it should be no Faith, if it had no feet to stand upon but discursive. In matters of Faith, if reasons may be brought for the conviction of the gainayers, it is well; if they be helps, they cannot be grounds of our Belief. In the most faithfull heart there are some sparks of infidelity: So to believe, that we should have no doubt at all, is scarce incident unto flesh and blood. It is a great perfection, if we have attained to overcome our Doubts. What did mis-lead *Zachary*, but that which uses to guide others, Reason? *I am old, and my wife is of great age.* As if years and dry loins could be any lett to him, who is able of very stones to raise up children unto *Abraham*. Faith and Reason have their limits; where Reason ends, Faith begins: and if Reason will be encroaching upon the bounds of Faith, she is straight taken captive by Infidelity. We are not fit to follow *Christ*, if we have not denied our selves; and the chief piece of our selves is our Reason. We must yield God able to doe that which we cannot comprehend; and we must comprehend that by our Faith which is disclaimed by Reason. *Hagar* must be driven out of doors, that *Sara* may rule alone.

The authority of the Reporter makes way for belief in things which are otherwise hard to pass: although in the matters of God, we should not so much care who speaks, as what is spoken, and from whom. The Angel tells his name, place, office, unasked; that *Zachary* might not think any news impossible that was brought him by an Heavenly Messenger. Even where there is no use of language, the Spirits are distinguished by names, and each knows his own appellation, and others. He that gave leave unto Man, his Image, to give names unto all his visible and inferiour creatures, did himself put names unto the spirituall: and as their

name is, so are they mighty and glorious. But lest *Zachary* should no less doubt of the style of the Messenger, then of the Errand it self, he is at once both confirmed, and punished with Dumbness. That Tongue which moved the Doubt must be tied up : He shall ask no more questions for forty weeks, because he asked this one distrustfully.

Neither did *Zachary* lose onely his Tongue for the time, but his Ears also ; he was not onely mute, but deaf : For otherwise, when they came to ask his allowance for the name of his Son, they needed not to have demanded it by signs, but by words. God will not pass over slight offences, and those which may plead the most colourable pretences, in his best children, without a sensible check. It is not our holy entireness with God that can bear us out in the least sin ; yea rather, the more acquaintance we have with his Majesty, the more sure we are of correction when we offend. This may procure us more favour in our well-doing, not less justice in evill.

Zachary staid, and the people waited. Whether some longer discourse betwixt the Angel and him then needed to be recorded, or whether astonishment at the apparition and news withheld him, I inquire not. The multitude thought him long ; yet though they could but see afar off, they would not depart till he returned to bless them. Their patient attendence without shames us, that are hardly perswaded to attend within, whilst both our Senses are employed in our Divine services, and we are admitted to be Co-agents with our Ministers.

At last *Zachary* comes out speechless, and more amazes them with his presence then with his delay. The eyes of the multitude, that were not worthy to see his Vision, yet see the signs of his Vision ; that the world might be put into the expectation of some extraordinary sequell. God makes way for his Voice by Silence : His Speech could not have said so much as his Dumbness.

Zachary.

The Annunciation of Christ. I I

Zachary would fain have spoken, and could not: with us, too many are dumb, and need not. Negligence, Fear, Partiality stop the mouths of many, which shall once say, Woe to me, because I held my peace. His Hand speaks that which he cannot with his Tongue, and he makes them by signs to understand that which they might read in his Face. Those powers we have we must use. But though he have ceased to speak, yet he ceased not to minister. He takes not this Dumbness for a Dismission, but stays out the eight days of his Course, as one that knew the Eyes and Hands and Heart would be accepted of that God which had bereaved him of his Tongue. We may not straight take occasions of withdrawing our selves from the publick Services of our God, much less under the Gospell. The Law, which stood much upon Bodily perfection, dispensed with Age for attendance: The Gospell, which is all for the Soul, regards those inward powers, which whilst they are vigorous, exclude all excuses of our ministration.

I I.

The Annunciation of CHRIST.

THe Spirit of God was never so accurate in any description, as that which concerns the Incarnation of GOD. It was fit no circumstance should be omitted in that Story, whereon the Faith and Salvation of all the World dependeth. We cannot so much as doubt of this truth, and be saved. No, not the number of the Moneth, not the Name of the Angel is concealed. Every particle imports not more certainty, then excellence.

cellence. The time is the sixth moneth after *John's* Conception, the prime of the Spring. *Christ* was conceived in the Spring, born in the Solstice. He in whom the World received a new Life, receives Life in the same season wherein the World received its first Life from him; and he which stretches out the days of his Church, and lengthens them to Eternity, appears after all the short and dim light of the Law, and enlightens the World with his Glory. The Messenger is an Angel. A Man was too mean to carry the news of the Conception of God. Never any business was conceived in Heaven that did so much concern the Earth, as the Conception of the God of Heaven in the Womb of Earth. No less then an Arch-angel was worthy to bear these tidings: never any Angel received a greater honour, then of this Embassage.

It was fit our Reparation should answer our Fall. An evill Angel was the first Motioner of the one to *Eve*, a Virgin, then espoused to *Adam*, in the Garden of *Eden*: A good Angel is the first Reporter of the other to *Mary*, a Virgin, espoused to *Joseph*, in that place which (as the Garden of *Galilee*) had a name from Flourishing. No good Angel could be the Authour of our Restauration, as that evill Angel was of our Ruine. But that which those glorious Spirits could not doe themselves, they are glad to report as done by the God of Spirits. Good news rejoyses the bearer. With what joy did this holy Angel bring the news of that Saviour, in whom we are redeemed to Life, himself established in Life and Glory? The first Preacher of the Gospell was an Angel: that Office must needs be glorious that derives it self from such a Predecessour. God appointed his Angel to be the first Preacher, and hath since called his Preachers Angels. The Message is well suited. An Angel comes to a Virgin, *Gabriel* to *Mary*; he that was by signification the strength of God, to her that was by signification exalted by God, to the conceiving of him that was the God.

God of strength. To a Maid, but espoused : a Maid, for the honour of Virginitie ; espoused, for the honour of Marriage. The Marriage was in a sort made, not consummate, through the instinct of him that meant to make her not an Example, but a Miracle of women. In this whole work God would have nothing ordinary. It was fit that she should be a married Virgin, which should be a Virginitie-mother. He that meant to take Man's nature without man's corruption, would be the Son of man without man's seed, would be the Seed of the Woman without Man ; and amongst all Women, of a pure Virgin ; but amongst Virgins, of one espoused, that there might be at once a Witness and a Guardian of her fruitfull Virginitie. If the same God had not been the authour of Virginitie and Marriage, he had never countenanced Virginitie by Marriage.

Whither doth this glorious Angel come to find the Mother of him that was God, but to obscure *Galilee* ? A part which even the *Jews* themselves despised, as forsaken of their privileges : *Out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet*. Behold, an Angel comes to that *Galilee* out of which no Prophet comes ; and the God of Prophets and Angels descends to be conceived in that *Galilee* out of which no Prophet ariseth. He that filleth all places makes no difference of places. It is the Person which gives honour and privilege to the place, not the Place to the person : as the Presence of God makes the Heaven, the Heaven doth not make the Owner glorious. No blind corner of *Nazareth* can hide the Blessed Virgin from the Angel. The Favours of God will find out his Children wheresoever they are withdrawn.

It is the fashion of God to seek out the most despised, on whom to bestow his Honours. We cannot run away, as from the Judgments, so from the Mercies of our God. The Cottages of *Galilee* are preferred by God to the famous Palaces of *Jerusalem* : he cares not how homely he converses with his own. Why should we be transported

ported with the outward glory of Places, whilst our God regards it not? We are not of the Angel's diet, if we had not rather be with the Blessed Virgin at *Nazareth*, then with the proud Dames in the Court of *Jerusalem*. It is a great vanity to respect any thing above Goodness, and to disesteem Goodness for any want. The Angel salutes the Virgin, he prays not to her: He salutes her as a Saint, he prays not to her as a Goddess. For us to salute her as he did, were gross Presumption: For neither are we as he was, neither is she as she was. If he that was a Spirit saluted her that was Flesh and blood here on earth, it is not for us, that are Flesh and blood, to salute her, which is a glorious Spirit in Heaven. For us to pray to her in the Angel's Salutation, were to abuse the Virgin, the Angel, the Salutation.

But how gladly do we second the Angel in the praise of her, who was more ours than his? How justly do we bless her, whom the Angel pronounceth *blessed*? How worthily is she honoured of men, whom the Angel proclaimeth *beloved of God*? O Blessed *Mary*, he cannot bless thee, he cannot honour thee too much, that deifies thee not. That which the Angel said of thee, thou hast prophesied of thy self; we believe the Angel, and thee: *All Generations shall call thee blessed*, by the fruit of whose womb all Generations are blessed. If *Zachary* were amazed with the sight of this Angel, much more the Virgin. That very Sex had more disadvantage of Fear. If it had been but a Man that had come to her in that secrecy and suddenness, she could not but have been troubled; how much more when the shining Glory of the Person doubled the Astonishment?

The Troubles of Holy minds end ever in Comfort. Joy was the errand of the Angel, and not Terrour. Fear (as all Passions) disquiets the heart, and makes it for the time unfit to receive the messages of God. Soon hath the Angel cleared these troublesome mists of Passions,

sions, and sent out the beams of heavenly Consolation into the remotest corner of her Soul by the glad news of her Saviour. How can Joy but enter into her heart, out of whose womb shall come Salvation? What room can Fear find in that breast that is assured of Favour? *Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God.* Let those fear who know they are in displeasure, or know not they are gracious: Thine happy estate calls for Confidence, and that Confidence for Joy. What should, what can they fear, who are favoured of him at whom the Devils tremble? Not the Presence of the good Angels, but the Temptations of the evill strike many terrors into our weakness: we could not be dismayed with them; if we did not forget our condition. *We have not received the spirit of bondage to fear again, but the spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* If that Spirit (O God) witness with our spirits that we are thine, how can we fear any of those spirituall wickednesses? Give us assurance of thy Favour, and let the powers of Hell doe their worst.

It was no ordinary favour that the Virgin found in Heaven. No mortall Creature was ever thus graced, that he should take part of her nature that was the God of Nature; that he, who made all things, should make his humane Body of hers; that her Womb should yield that Flesh which was personally united to the Godhead; that she should bear him that upholds the World. *Loe, thou shalt conceive and bear a Son, and shalt call his name JESUS.* It is a question, whether there be more wonder in the Conception, or in the Fruit; the Conception of the Virgin, or *Jesus* conceived: Both are marvellous; but the former doth not more exceed all other Wonders, then the latter exceedeth it. For the child of a Virgin is the reimprovement of that power which created the world: but that God should be incarnate of a Virgin, was an abasement of his Majesty, and

and an exaltation of the Creature beyond all example. Well was that Child worthy to make the Mother blessed. Here was a double Conception; one in the womb of her Body, the other of the Soul. If that were more miraculous, this was more beneficiall: that was her Privilege, this was her Happiness. If that were singular to her, this is common to all his chosen: There is no renewed Heart wherein thou, O Saviour, art not formed again. Blessed be thou that hast herein made us blessed. For what womb can conceive thee, and not partake of thee? who can partake of thee, and not be happy?

Doubtless the Virgin understood the Angel as he meant, of a present Conception, which made her so much more inquisitive into the manner and means of this event: *How shall this be, since I know not a man?* That she should conceive a Son by the knowledge of Man after her Marriage consummate, could have been no wonder: But how then should that Son of hers be the Son of God? This demand was higher. How her present Virginitie should be instantly fruitfull, might be well worthy of admiration, of inquiry. Here was desire of information, not doubts of infidelity: yea rather, this question argues Faith; it takes for granted that which an unbelieving heart would have stuck at. She says not, Who and whence art thou? what Kingdome is this? where and when shall it be erected? but smoothly supposing all those strange things would be done, she insists onely in that which did necessarily require a farther intimation, and doth not distrust, but demand: neither doth she say, This cannot be, nor, How can this be? but, *How shall this be?* So doth the Angel answer, as one that knew he needed not to satisfy Curiosity, but to inform Judgment, and uphold Faith. He doth not therefore tell her of the manner, but of the Authour of this act; *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most high shall overshadow*

shadow thee. It is enough to know who is the Undertaker, and what he will doe. O God, what do we seek a clear Light, where thou wilt have a Shadow? No Mother knows the manner of her naturall Conception: what presumption shall it be for flesh and bloud, to search how the Son of God took flesh and bloud of his Creature? It is for none but the Almighty to know those works which he doeth immediately concerning himself: those that concern us he hath revealed. Secrets to God, things revealed to us.

The Answer was not so full, but that a thousand difficulties might arise out of the particularities of so strange a Message: yet after the Angel's Solution, we hear of no more Objections, no more Interrogations. The faithful Heart, when it once understands the good pleasure of God, argues no more, but sweetly rests it self in a quiet expectation. *Behold the Servant of the Lord, be it to me according to thy Word.* There is not a more noble proof of our Faith, then to captivate all the powers of our Understanding and Will to our Creatour, and without all sciscitations to goe blindfold whither he will lead us. All Disputations with God (after his will known) arise from Infidelity. Great is the Mystery of Godliness; and if we will give Nature leave to cavill, we cannot be Christians. O God, thou art faithfull, thou art powerfull: It is enough that thou hast said it; in the humility of our obedience we resign our selves over to thee. Behold the Servants of the Lord, be it unto us according to thy word.

How fit was her Womb to conceive the Flesh of the Son of God by the power of the Spirit of God, whose Breast had so soon by the power of the same Spirit conceived an assent to the will of God? And now of an Handmaid of God, she is advanced to the Mother of God. No sooner hath she said, *Be it done,* then it is done; the Holy Ghost overshadows her, and forms her Saviour in her

own Body. This very Angel, that talks with the Blessed Virgin, could scarce have been able to express the Joy of her heart in the sense of this Divine Burthen. Never any mortal creature had so much cause of Exultation. How could she, that was full of God, be other then full of Joy in that God? Grief grows greater by concealing, Joy by expression. The Holy Virgin had understood by the Angel, how her Cousin *Elizabeth* was no less of kin to her in condition; the fruitfulness of whose Age did somewhat suit the fruitfulness of her Virginity. Happiness communicated doubles it self. Here is no straining of courtesie: The Blessed Maid, whom vigour of Age had more fitted for the way, hastens her journey into the Hill-country, to visit that gracious Matron, whom God had made a sign of her miraculous Conception. Onely the meeting of Saints in Heaven can parallel the meeting of these two Cousins: the two Wonders of the World are met under one roof, and congratulate their mutuall Happiness. When we have *Christ* spiritually conceived in us, we cannot be quiet till we have imparted our Joy. *Elizabeth*, that holy Matron, did no sooner welcome her Blessed Cousin, then her Babe welcomes his Saviour: Both in the retired Closets of their Mother's Womb are sensible of each other's presence; the one by his Omniscience, the other by Instinct. He did not more forerun *Christ*, then over-run Nature. How should our hearts leap within us, when the Son of God vouchsafes to come in to the secret of our Souls, not to visit us, but to dwell with us, to dwell in us?

III.

The Birth of CHRIST.

AS all the actions of men, so especially the publick actions of publick men are ordered by God to other ends than their own. This Edict went not so much out from *Augustus*, as from the Court of Heaven. What did *Cæsar* know *Joseph* and *Mary*? His charge was universal, to a world of Subjects, through all the *Roman Empire*: God intended this Cension onely for the Blessed Virgin and her Son, that *Christ* might be born where he should. *Cæsar* meant to fill his Coffers, God meant to fulfill his Prophecies; and so to fulfill them, that those whom it concerned might not feel the Accomplishment. If God had directly commanded the Virgin to goe up to *Bethlehem*, she had seen the intention, and expected the issue: But that wise Moderatour of all things, that works his will in us, loves so to doe it, as may be least with our fore-sight and acquaintance, and would have us fall under his Decrees unawares, that we may so much the more adore the depths of his Providence. Every Creature walks blind-fold; onely He that dwells in light sees whither they goe.

Doubtless, Blessed *Mary* meant to have been delivered of her Divine burthen at home, and little thought of changing the place of Conception for another of her Birth. That house was honoured by the Angel, yea, by the over-shadowing of the Holy Ghost: none could equally satisfie her hopes or desires. It was fit that He, who made choice of the Womb wherein his Son should be conceived, should make choice of the place where his Son should be born. As the Work is all his, so will he alone contrive all the

Circumstances to his own ends. O the infinite Wisedome of God in casting all his designs! There needs no other proof of *Christ*, then *Cæsar* and *Bethlehem*; and of *Cæsars*, then *Augustus*: his Government, his Ediçt pleads the truth of the *Messias*. His Government: Now was the deep Peace of all the world under that quiet Scepter, which made way for him who was the Prince of Peace. If Wars be a sign of the time of his second Coming, Peace was a sign of his first. His Ediçt: Now was the Scepter departed from *Juda*; it was the time for *Shilo* to come: no power was left in the *Jews*, but to obey. *Augustus* is the Emperour of the World; under him *Herod* is the King of *Judæa*; *Cyrenius* is President of *Syria*: *Jewrie* hath nothing of her own. For *Herod*, if he were a King, yet he was no *Jew*; and if he had been a *Jew*, yet he was no otherwise a King then tributary and titular. The Ediçt came out from *Augustus*, was executed by *Cyrenius*; *Herod* is no actour in this service. Gain and glory are the ends of this Taxation: each man profess himself a Subject, and paid for the privilege of his Servitude. Now their very Heads were not their own, but must be payed for to the Head of a forrein State: They which before stood upon the terms of their Immunity, stoop at the last. The proud suggestions of *Judas the Galilean* might shed their blood, and swell their stomachs, but could not ease their yোক: neither was it the meaning of God, that Holiness (if they had been as they pretended) should shelter them from Subjection. A Tribute is imposed upon God's free people. This act of Bondage brings them Liberty: Now when they seemed most neglected of God; they are blessed with a Redeemer; when they are most pressed with forrein Sovereignty, God sends them a King of their own, to whom *Cæsar* himself must be a Subject. The goodness of our God picks out the most needfull times for our relief and comfort: Our extremities give him the most glory. Whither must *Joseph* and *Mary* come

to be taxed, but unto *Bethlehem*, *David's City*? The very Place proves their Descent. He that succeeded *David* in his Throne, must succeed him in the place of his Birth. So clearly was *Bethlehem* designed to this honour by the Prophets, that even the Priests and the Scribes could point *Herod* unto it, and assured him, the King of the *Jews* could be no-where else born. *Bethlehem* justly the *House of Bread*; the Bread that came down from Heaven is there given to the world. Whence should we have the Bread of life, but from the House of bread? O holy *David*, was this the Well of *Bethlehem* whereof thou didst so thirst to drink of old; when thou saidst, *Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the Well of Bethlehem?* Surely that other Water, when it was brought thee by thy Worthies, thou pouredst it on the ground, and wouldst not drink of it: This was that *living Water* for which thy soul longed, whereof thou saidst elsewhere, *As the Hart brayeth after the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.*

It was no less then four days journey from *Nazareth* to *Bethlehem*: How just an excuse might the Blessed Virgin have pleaded for her absence? What woman did ever undertake such a journey so near her delivery? And doubtless *Joseph*, who was now taught of God to love and honour her, was loth to draw forth a dear Wife, in so unwieldy a case, into so manifest hazard. But the Charge was peremptory, the Obedience exemplary: The desire of an inoffensive observance even of Heathenish authority digests all difficulties. We may not take easie occasions to withdraw our Obedience to supreme commands. Yea, how didst thou, (O Saviour) by whom *Augustus* reigned, in the womb of thy Mother yield this Homage to *Augustus*? The first Lesson that ever thy Example taught us was Obedience.

After many steps are *Joseph* and *Mary* come to *Bethlehem*:

The plight wherein she was would not allow any speed, and the forced leisure of the journey causeth disappointment: the end was worse then the way; there was no rest in the way, there was no room in the Inne. It could not be, but that there were many of the kindred of *Joseph* and *Mary* at that time in *Bethlehem*; for both there were their Ancestours born, if not themselves; and thither came up all the Cousins of their blood: yet there and then doth the Holy Virgin want room to lay either her head, or her burthen. If the House of *David* had not lost all mercy and good nature, a Daughter of *David* could not so near the time of her travail have been destitute of lodging in the City of *David*. Little did the *Bethlehemites* think what a Guest they refused; else they would gladly have opened their doors to him, who was able to open the gates of Heaven to them. Now their Inhospitality is punishment enough to it self: They have lost the honour and happiness of being Host to their God. Even still, O Blessed Saviour, thou standest at our doors and knockest; every motion of thy good Spirit tells us thou art there: Now thou comest in thine own name, and there thou standest, whilst thy *head is full of dew, and thy locks wet with the drops of the night*. If we suffer carnal desires and worldly thoughts to take up the lodging of our Heart, and revell within us, whilst thou waitest upon our admission, surely our judgement shall be so much the greater, by how much better we know whom we have excluded. What do we cry shame on the *Bethlehemites*, whilst we are wilfully more churlish, more unthankfull? There is no room in my heart for the wonder at this Humility. He, for whom Heaven is too streight, whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, lies in the streight cabbins of the womb, and when he would enlarge himself for the world, is not allowed the room of an Inne. The *many mansions* of Heaven were at his disposing; *the Earth* was his, *and the fulness of it*: yet he suffers himself

to be refused of a base Cottage, and complaineth not. What measure should discontent us wretched men, when thou (O God) farest thus from thy creatures? How should we learn both *to want and abound*, from thee, who, abounding with the glory and riches of Heaven, wouldst want a lodging in thy first welcome to the earth? Thou *camest to thine own, and thy own received thee not*. How can it trouble us to be rejected of the world, which is not ours? What wonder is it if thy servants *wandred abroad in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute and afflicted*, when their Lord is denied harbour? How should all the world blush at this indignity of *Bethlehem*? He that came to save Men, is sent for his first lodging to the Beasts: The Stable is become his Inne, the Cratch his Bed. O strange Cradle of that great King, which Heaven it self may envy! O Saviour, thou that wert both the Maker and Owner of Heaven, of Earth, couldst have made thee a Palace without hands, couldst have commanded thee an empty room in those houses which thy creatures had made. When thou didst but bid the Angels avoid their first place, they fell down from Heaven like lightning; and when in thy humbled estate thou didst but say, *I am he*, who was able to stand before thee? How easie had it been for thee, to have made place for thy self in the throngs of the stateliest Courts? Why wouldst thou be thus homely, but that, by contemning worldly Glories, thou mightest teach us to contemn them? that thou mightest sanctify Poverty to them whom thou calledst unto want? that since thou, who hadst the choice of all earthly conditions, wouldst be born poor and despised, those which must want out of necessity might not think their Poverty grievous. Here was neither friend to entertain, nor servant to attend, nor place wherein to be attended; onely the poor Beasts gave way to the God of all the world. It is the *great mystery of godliness*, that God was *manifested in the flesh*, and *seen of Angels*: but here, which was the top of all wonders,

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the very Beasts might see their Maker. For those Spirits to see God in the flesh, it was not so strange, as for the brute creatures to see him who was the God of spirits. He, that would be led into the wilderness amongst wild beasts to be tempted, would come into the house of beasts to be born, that from the height of his Divine Glory his Humiliation might be the greater. How can we be abased low enough for thee, (O Saviour) that hast thus neglected thy self for us? That the visitation might be answerable to the homeliness of the place, attendants, provision, who shall come to congratulate his birth but poor Shepherds? The Kings of the earth rest at home, and have no summons to attend him by whom they reign: God hath *chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.* In an obscure time (the night) unto obscure men (Shepherds) doth God manifest the light of his Son by glorious Angels. It is not our meanness (O God) that can exclude us from the best of thy mercies: yea, thus far dost thou respect persons, that thou hast *put down the mighty, and exalted them of low degree.* If these Shepherds had been snoring in their beds, they had no more seen Angels, nor heard news of their Saviour, then their neighbours: Their vigilancy is honoured with this heavenly Vision. Those who are industrious in any calling are capable of farther Blessings; whereas the Idle are fit for nothing but Temptation. No less then a whole Chore of Angels are worthy to sing the Hymn of *Glory to God*, for the Incarnation of his Son. What joy is enough for us, whose nature he took, and whom he came to restore by his Incarnation? If we had the tongues of Angels, we could not raise this note high enough to the praise of our glorious Redeemer. No sooner do the Shepherds hear the news of a Saviour, then they run to *Bethlehem* to seek him: Those that left their beds to tend their flocks, leave their flocks to enquire after their Saviour. No earthly thing is too dear to be forsaken for *Christ*. If we suffer any worldly occasion

sion to stay us from *Bethlehem*, we care more for our sheep than our souls. It is not possible that a faithfull heart should hear where *Christ* is, and not labour to the sight, to the fruition of him. Where art thou, O Saviour, but at home in thine own house, in the assembly of thy Saints? Where art thou to be found but in thy Word and Sacraments? Yea, there thou seekest for us: if there we haste not to seek for thee, we are worthy to want thee, worthy that our want of thee here should make us want the presence of thy face for ever.

I V.

The Sages and the Star.

THE Shepherds and the Cratch accorded well; yet even they saw nothing which they might not contemn: neither was there any of those Shepherds that seemed not more like a King, then that King whom they came to see. But O the Divine Majesty that shined in this Baseness! There lies the Babe in the Stable, crying in the Manger, whom the Angels came down from Heaven to proclaim, whom the Sages come from the East to adore, whom an heavenly Star notifies to the world; that now men might see, that Heaven and Earth serves him that neglected himself. Those Lights that hang low are not far seen, but those that are high placed are equally seen in the remotest distances. Thy light, O Saviour, was no lesse then heavenly. The East saw that which *Bethlehem* might have seen. Oft-times those which are nearest in place are farthest off in affection. Large objects, when they are too close to the eye, do so over-fill the sense, that they are not discerned. What a shame is this to *Bethlehem*? the Sages

came out of the East to worship him, whom that village refused. The *Bethlehemites* were *Jews*, the Wise men *Gentiles*. This first entertainment of *Christ* was a presage of the sequell: The *Gentiles* shall come from far to adore *Christ*, whilst the *Jews* reject him. Those *Easterlings* were great searchers of the depths of nature, professed Philosophers; them hath God singled out to the honour of the manifestation of *Christ*. Humane Learning well improved makes us capable of Divine. There is no Knowledge whereof God is not the Authour: he would never have bestowed any gift that should lead us away from himself. It is an ignorant conceit, that inquiry into Nature should make men *Atheous*. No man is so apt to see the Star of *Christ* as a diligent disciple of Philosophy. Doubtlesse this light was visible unto more; onely they followed it, who knew it had more then nature. He is truly wise, that is wise for his own Soul. If these Wise men had been acquainted with all the other stars of heaven, and had not seen the Star of *Christ*, they had had but light enough to lead them into utter darknesse. Philosophie without this Star is but the wisp of error. These Sages were in a mean between the Angels and the Shepherds. God would in all the ranks of intelligent Creatures have some to be witnesses of his Son. The Angels direct the Shepherds, the Star guides the Sages: the duller capacitie hath the more clear and powerful helps. The wisdom of our good God proportions the means unto the disposition of the persons. Their Astronomy had taught them, this Star was not ordinary, whether in sight, or in brightnesse, or in motion. The eyes of Nature might well see, that some strange news was portended to the world by it: but that this Star designed the Birth of the *Messias*, there needed yet another light. If the Star had not besides had the commentary of a revelation from God, it could have led the Wise men onely into a fruitlesse wonder. Give them to be the offspring of *Balaam*, yet the true Prediction of that false Prophet was not enough

warrant. If he told them, the *Messias* should arise as a Star out of *Jacob*, he did not tell them that a Star should arise far from the posterity of *Jacob* at the birth of the *Messias*. He that did put that Prophecy into the mouth of *Balaam*, did also put this Illumination into the heart of the Sages. The Spirit of God is free to breathe where he listeth. *Many shall come from the East and the West to seek Christ, when the Children of the Kingdom shall be shut out.* Even then God did not so confine his election to the pale of the Church, as that he did not sometimes look out for special instruments of his glory. Whither do these Sages come, but to *Jerusalem*? where should they hope to hear of the new King, but in the Mother-city of the Kingdome? The conduct of the Star was first onely generall to *Judæa*; the rest is for a time left to inquiry. They were not brought thither for their own sakes, but for *Jewrie's*, for the world's; that they might help to make the *Jews* inexcusable, and the world faithfull. That their tongues therefore might blazon the birth of *Christ*, they are brought to the Head-citie of *Judæa*, to report and inquire. Their wisdome could not teach them to imagine, that a King could be born to *Judæa* of that note and magnificence, that a Star from Heaven should publish him to the earth, and that his subjects should not know it: and therefore, as presupposing a common notice, they say, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews?* There is much deceit in probabilities, especially when we meddle with spirituall matters. For God uses still to go a way by himself.

If we judge according to reason and appearance, who is so likely to understand heavenly Truths as the profound Doctours of the world? These God passes over, and reveals his will to babes. Had these Sages met with the Shepherds of the villages near *Bethlehem*, they had received that intelligence of *Christ* which they did vainly seek from the learned Scribes of *Jerusalem*. The greatest Clerks are not alwaies the wisest in the affairs of God: these things goe not by discourse, but by revelation.

No sooner hath the Star brought them within the noise of *Jerusalem*, then it is vanished out of sight. God would have their eyes lead them so far, as till their tongues might be set on work to win the vocal attestation of the chief Priests and Scribes to the fore-appointed place of our Saviour's Nativity. If the Star had carried them directly to *Bethlehem*, the learned *Jews* had never searched the truth of those Prophecies wherewith they are since justly convinced. God never withdraws our helps, but for a farther advantage. However our hopes seem crossed, where his Name may gain, we cannot complain of loss.

Little did the Sages think this Question would have troubled *Herod*: they had (I fear) concealed their message, if they had suspected this event. Sure, they thought, it might be some Son or Grandchild of him which then held the Throne; so as this might win favour from *Herod*, rather than an unwelcome fear of rivalry. Doubtless they went first to the Court; where else should they ask for a King? The more pleasing this news had been if it had fallen upon *Herod's* own loins, the more grievous it was to light upon a Stranger. If *Herod* had not over-much affected Greatness, he had not upon those indirect terms aspired to the Crown of *Jewry*: so much the more therefore did it trouble him to hear the rumour of a Successour, and that not of his own. Settled Greatness cannot abide either change, or partnership. If any of his Subjects had moved this question, I fear his head had answered it. It is well that the name of forreiners could excuse these Sages. *Herod* could not be brought up among the *Jews*, and not have heard many and confident reports of a *Messias*, that should ere long arise out of *Israel*: and now when he hears the fame of a King born, whom a Star from Heaven signifies and attends, he is nettled with the news. Every thing affrights the guilty. Usurpation is full of jealousies and fear, no less full of projects and imaginations: it makes us think every bush a man, and every man a thief.

Why.

Why art thou troubled, O *Herod*? A King is born, but such a King, as whose Scepter may ever concur with lawfull Sovereignty; yea such a King, as by whom Kings do hold their Scepters, not lose them. If the Wise men tell thee of a King, the Star tells thee he his Heavenly. Here is good cause of security, none of fear. The most general enmities and oppositions to good arise from mistakings. If men could but know how much safety and sweetness there is in all Divine truth, it could receive nothing from them but welcomes and gratulations. Misconceits have been still guilty of all wrongs and persecutions. But if *Herod* were troubled, (as Tyranny is still suspicious,) why was all *Jerusalem* troubled with him? *Jerusalem*, which now might hope for a relaxation of her bonds, for a recovery of her liberty and right? *Jerusalem*, which now onely had cause to lift up her drooping head in the joy and happiness of a Redeemer? Yet not onely *Herod's* Court, but even *Jerusalem* was troubled. So had this miserable City been over-toiled with change, that now they were settled in a condition quietly evil, they are troubled with the news of better. They had now got a habit of Servility, and now they are so acquainted with the yoke, that the very noise of Liberty (which they supposed would not come with ease) began to be unwelcome.

To turn the causes of joy into sorrow, argues extreme dejectedness, and a distemper of judgment no less then desperate. Fear puts on a visour of Devotion. *Herod* calls his learned counsell, and, as not doubting whether the *Messiah* should be born, he asks where he shall be born. In the disparition of that other light, there is a perpetually-fixed Star shining in the writings of the Prophets, that guides the chief Priests and Scribes directly unto *Bethlehem*. As yet envy and prejudice had not blinded the eyes and perverted the hearts of the *Jewish* Teachers; so as now they clearly justify that *Christ*, whom they afterwards condemn, and by thus justifying him condemn themselves in

rejecting him. The water that is untroubled yields the visage perfectly. If God had no more witness but from his enemies, we have ground enough of our faith.

Herod feared, but dissembled his fear, as thinking it a shame that strangers should see there could any power arise under him worthy of his respect or awe. Out of an unwillingness therefore to discover the impotency of his passion, he makes little ado of the matter, but onely, after a privy inquisition into the time, imloys the informers in the search of the person; *Goe, and search diligently for the Babe, &c.* It was no great journey from *Jerusalem* to *Beth-lehem*; how easily might *Herod's* cruelty have secretly suborned some of his bloody Courtiers to this inquiry and execution? If God had not meant to mock him, before he found himself mocked of the Wise men, he had rather sent before their journey, then after their disappointment. But that God in whose hands all hearts are did purposely besot him, that he might not find the way to so horrible a mischief.

There is no Villany so great, but it will mask it self under a shew of Piety: *Herod* will also worship the Babe. The courtesie of a false Tyrant is death. A crafty Hypocrite never means so ill, as when he speaketh fairest. The Wise men are upon their way full of expectation, full of desire: I see no man either of the City or Court to accompany them. Whether distrust or fear hindred them, I inquire not: but of so many thousand *Jews*, no one stirs his foot to see that King of theirs, which Strangers came so far to visit. Yet were not these resolute Sages discouraged with this solitariness and small respect, nor drawn to repent of their journey, as thinking, What do we come so far to honour a King whom no man will acknowledge? what mean we to travel so many hundred miles to see that which the inhabitants will not look out to behold? but chearfully renew their journey to that place which the ancient light of Prophecy had designed.

And

And now behold, God encourages their holy forwardness from Heaven, by sending them their first Guide; as if he had said, What need ye care for the neglect of men, when ye see Heaven honours the King whom ye seek? What joy these Sages conceived when their eyes first beheld the re-appearance of that happy Star, they onely can tell, that, after a long and sad night of Temptation, have seen the loving countenance of God shining forth upon their Souls. If with obedience and courage we can follow the calling of God in difficult enterprises, we shall not want supplies of comfort. Let not us be wanting to God, we shall be sure he cannot be wanting to us.

He that led *Israel* by a Pillar of fire into the Land of Promise, leads the Wise men by a Star to the Promised seed. All his directions partake of that Light which is in him; for God is Light. This Star moves both slowly and low, as might be fittest for the pace, for the purpose of these Pilgrims. It is the goodness of God, that in those means wherein we cannot reach him, he descends unto us. Surely, when the Wise men saw the Star stand still, they looked about to see what Palace there might be near unto that station, fit for the birth of a King; neither could they think that sorry Shed was it which the Star meant to point out: but finding their guide settled over that base roof, they go in to see what guest it held. They enter, and, O God! what a King do they find? how poor? how contemptible? wrapt in clouts, laid in straw, cradled in the manger, attended with beasts? What a sight was this, after all the glorious promises of that Star, after the Predictions of Prophets, after the magnificence of their expectation?

All their way afforded nothing so despicable as that Babe whom they came to worship. But as those which could not have been wise men, unless they had known that the greatest glories have arisen from mean beginnings, they fall down, and worship that hidden Majesty. This Base-
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ness hath bred wonder in them, not contempt : they well knew the Star could not lie. They which saw his Star afar off in the East, when he lay swaddled in *Bethlehem*, do also see his Royalty farther off, in the despised estate of his infancy : a Royalty more then humane. They well knew that Stars did not use to attend earthly Kings ; and if their aim had not been higher, what was a *Jewish* King to *Persian* Strangers ? Answerable therefore hereunto was their adoration. Neither did they lift up empty hands to him whom they worshipt, but presented him with the most precious commodities of their Country, *Gold, Incense, Myrrh* ; not as thinking to enrich him with these, but by way of homage acknowledging him the Lord of these. If these Sages had been Kings, and had offered a Princely weight of Gold, the Blessed Virgin had not needed in her Purification to have offered two young Pigeons, as the sign of her penury. As God loves not empty hands, so he measures fulness by the affection. Let it be Gold, or Incense, or Myrrh, that we offer him, it cannot but please him, who doth not use to ask how much, but how good.

 V.

The Purification.

THere could be no impurity in the Son of God ; and if the best substance of a pure Virgin carried in it any taint of *Adam*, that was scoured away by sanctification in the womb ; and yet the Son would be circumcised, and the Mother purified. He that came to be sin for us, would in our persons be legally unclean, that, by satisfying the Law, he might take away our uncleanness. Though he were exempted

exempted from the common condition of our birth, yet he would not deliver himself from those ordinary rites that implied the weaknesse and blemishes of Humanity. He would fulfill one Law to abrogate it, another to satisfy it. He that was above the Law, would come under the Law, to free us from the Law. Not a day would be changed, either in the Circumcision of *Christ*, or the Purification of *Mary*. Here was neither convenience of place, nor of necessaries for so painfull a work, in the Stable of *Bethlehem*: yet he that made and gave the Law, will rather keep it with difficulty, then transgress it with ease.

Why wouldest thou, O Blessed Saviour, suffer that sacred Foreskin to be cut off, but that, by the power of thy Circumcision, the same might be done to our Souls that was done to thy Body? We cannot be therefore thine, if our hearts be uncircumcised. Doe thou that in us which was done to thee for us; cut off the superfluitie of our malicioufnesse, that we may be holy in and by thee, which for us wert content to be legally impure.

There was shame in thy Birth, there was pain in thy Circumcision. After a contemptible welcome into the world, that a sharp Rasour should passe through thy skin for our sakes, (which can hardly endure to bleed for our own,) it was the praise of thy wonderfull mercy, in so early Humiliation. What pain or contempt should we refuse for thee, that hast made no spare of thy self for us? Now is *Bethlehem* left with too much honour; there is *Christ* born, adored, circumcised. No sooner is the Blessed Virgin either able or allowed to walk then she travels to *Jerusalem*, to perform her holy Rites for her self, for her Son; to purifie her self, to present her Son. She goes not to her own house at *Nazareth*, she goes to God's House at *Jerusalem*. If Purifying were a shadow, yet Thanksgiving is a substance. Those whom God hath blessed with fruit of body, and safety of deliverance, if they make not their first journey to the Temple of God, they partake more of the Unthankfullnesse of *Eve*, then *Marie's* Devotion.

Her forty days therefore were no sooner out, then *Mary* comes up to the holy City. The rumour of a new King born at *Bethlehem* was yet fresh at *Jerusalem* since the report of the Wise men: and what good news had this been for any pick-thank to carry to the Court, Here is the Babe whom the Star signified, whom the Sages inquired for, whom the Angels proclaimed, whom the Shepherds talkt of, whom the Scribes and High priests notified, whom *Herod* seeks after? Yet unto that *Jerusalem*, which was troubled at the report of his Birth, is *Christ* come, and all tongues are so lockt up, that he which sent from *Jerusalem* to *Bethlehem* to seek him finds him not, who (as to countermine *Herod*) is come from *Bethlehem* to *Jerusalem*. Dangers that are aloof off, and but possible, may not hinder us from the duty of our Devotion. God saw it not yet time to let loose the fury of his adversaries, whom he holds up like some eager mastives, and then onely lets goe, when they shall most shame themselves, and glorifie him.

Well might the Blessed Virgin have wrangled with the Law, and challenged an immunity from all ceremonies of Purification. What should I need purging, which did not conceive in sin? This is for those mothers whose births are unclean; mine is from God, which is purity it self. The Law of *Moses* reaches onely to those women which have conceived seed; I conceived not this seed, but the Holy Ghost in me. The Law extends to the mothers of those sons which are under the Law; mine is above it. But, as one that cared more for her peace then her privilege, and more desired to be free from offence then from labour and charge, she dutifully fulfills the Law of that God whom she carried in her womb and in her arms: like the Mother of him, who, though he knew *the children of the Kingdome free*, yet would pay tribute unto *Cæsar*: like the Mother of him, whom it *beboved to fulfill all righteousnessse*. And if she were so officious in Ceremonies, as not to admit of any excuse in the very Circumstance of her Obedience, how much more

more strict was she in the main Duties of morality? That Soul is fit for the Spirituall conception of *Christ*, that is conscioanbly scrupulous in observing all God's Commandments; whereas he hates all alliance to a negligent or froward Heart.

The Law of Purification proclaims our Uncleannesse: The mother is not allowed after her child-birth to come unto the Sanctuary, or to touch any hallowed thing, till her set time be expired. What are we, whose very birth infects the mother that bears us? At last she comes to the Temple; but with Sacrifices, either a Lamb and a Pigeon or Turtle, or (in the meaner estate) two Turtle-doves or young Pigeons; whereof one is for a Burnt-offering, the other for a Sin-offering; the one for Thanksgiving, the other for Expiation; for expiation of a double sin, of the mother that conceived, of the child that was conceived. We are all born sinners, and it is a just question, whether we do more infect the world, or the world us. They are grosse flatterers of nature that tell her she is clean. If our lives had no sin, we bring enough with us: the very infant, that lives not to sin as *Adam*, yet sinned in *Adam*, and is sinfull in himself. But oh the unspeakable mercy of our God! we provide the Sin, he provides the Remedy. Behold an Expiation well-near as early as our Sin: the blood of a young Lamb or Dove, yea rather the blood of Him whose innocence was represented by both, cleanseth us presently from our filthinesse. First went Circumcision, then came the Sacrifice; that, by two holy acts, that which was naturally unholy might be hallowed unto God. Under the Gospell our Baptism hath the force of both: it does away our corruption by the Water of the Spirit; it applies to us the Sacrifice of *Christ's* Blood, whereby we are cleansed. Oh that we could magnifie this goodnesse of our God, which hath not left our very infancy without redresse, but hath provided helps whereby we may be delivered from the danger of our hereditary evils.

Such is the favourable respect of our wise God, that he

would not have us undoe our selves with Devotion: the service he requires of us is ruled by our abilities. Every poor mother was not able to bring a Lamb for her offering: there was none so poor but might procure a pair of Turtles or Pigeons. These doth God both prescribe, and accept from poorer hands, no lesse then the beasts of a thousand mountains: He looks for somewhat of every one, not of every one alike. Since it is he that makes differences of abilities, (to whom it were as easie to make all rich,) his mercy will make no difference in the acceptation. The truth and heartiness of Obedience is that which he will crown in his meanest servants. A Mite from the poor widow is more worth to him then the Talents of the wealthy.

After all the presents of those Eastern Worshippers, (who intended rather homage then ditation,) the Blessed Virgin comes in the form of poverty with her two Doves unto God. She could not without some charge lie all this while at *Bethlehem*, she could not without charge travell from *Bethlehem* to *Jerusalem*. Her offering confesseth her Penu-ry. The best are not ever the wealthiest. Who can despise any one for want, when the Mother of *Christ* was not rich enough to bring a Lamb for her purification? We may be as happy in russet, as in tissue.

While the Blessed Virgin brought her Son into the Temple with that pair of Doves, here were more Doves then a pair: They for whose sake that Offering was brought, were more Doves, then the Doves that were brought for that Offering. Her Son, for whom she brought that Dove to be sacrificed, was that Sacrifice which the Dove represented. There was nothing in him but perfection of innocence, and the oblation of him is that whereby all mothers and sons are fully purified. Since in our selves we cannot be innocent, happy are we, if we can have the spotless Dove sacrificed for us, to make us innocent in him.

The Blessed Virgin had more business in the Temple then her own; she came, as to purifie her self, so to present her Son.

Son. Every male that first opened the womb was holy unto the Lord. He that was the Son of God by eternal generation before times, and by miraculous conception in time, was also by common course of nature consecrate unto God: It is fit the Holy Mother should present God with his own: Her first-born was *the first-born of all creatures*. It was he, whose Temple it was that he was presented in, to whom all the first-born of all creatures were consecrated, by whom they were accepted; and now is he brought in his mother's arms to his own House, and as Man is presented to himself as God. If *Moses* had never written a Law of God's special propriety in the first-born, this Son of God's Essence and Love had taken possession of the Temple; his right had been a perfect Law to himself: Now his obedience to that Law, which himself had given, doth no less call him thither, then the challenge of his peculiar interest.

He that was the Lord of all creatures, ever since he struck the first-born of the *Egyptians*, requires the first male of all creatures, both man and beast, to be dedicated to him: wherein God caused a miraculous event to second nature, which seems to challenge the first and best for the Maker. By this rule, God should have had his service done onely by the Heirs of *Israel*: But since God, for the honour and remuneration of *Levi*, had chosen out that Tribe to minister unto him, now the first-born of all *Israel* must be presented to God as his due, but by allowance redeemed to their parents. As for Beasts, the first male of the clean beasts must be sacrificed, of unclean exchanged for a price. So much morality is there in this constitution of God, that the best of all kinds is fit to be consecrated to the Lord of all. Every thing we have is too good for us, if we think any thing we have too good for him.

How glorious did the Temple now seem, that the Owner was within the walls of it? Now was the hour and guest come, in regard whereof the second Temple should sur-

pass the first : this was his House built for him, dedicated to him ; there had he dwelt long in his spiritual Presence, in his typicall. There was nothing either placed or done within those walls whereby he was not resembled ; and now the Body of those Shadows is come, and presents himself where he had been ever represented. *Jerusalem* is now every-where : There is no Church ; no Christian heart, which is not a Temple of the living God : There is no Temple of God wherein *Christ* is not presented to his Father. Look upon him (O God) in whom thou art well pleased, and in him and for him be well pleased with us.

Under the Gospel we are all first-born, all heirs ; every Soul is to be holy unto the Lord ; we are *a Royal generation, an holy Priesthood*. Our Baptism, as it is our Circumcision, and our sacrifice of Purification, so is it also our Presentation unto God. Nothing can become us but Holiness. O God, to whom we are devoted, serve thy self of us, glorifie thy self by us, till we shall by thee be glorified with thee.

VI.

Herod and the Infants.

WELL might these Wise men have suspected *Herod's* Secrecy : If he had meant well, what needed that whispering ? That which they published in the streets, he asks in his privy-chamber : yet they, not misdoubting his intention, purpose to fulfill his charge. It could not in their apprehension but be much honour to them to make their success known, that now both King and people might see,

see, it was not Fancy that led them, but an assured Revelation. That God which brought them thither diverted them, and caused their eyes to shut, to guide them the best way home.

These Sages made a happy voiage, for now they grew into farther acquaintance with God : They are honoured with a second Messenger from Heaven : They saw the Star in the way, the Angel in their bed. The Star guided their journey unto *Christ*, the Angel directed their return. They saw the Star by day, a Vision by night. God spake to their eyes by the Star, he speaks to their heart by a Dream. No doubt, they had left much noise of *Christ* behind them : they that did so publish his Birth by their inquiry at *Jerusalem*, could not be silent when they found him at *Bethlehem*. If they had returned by *Herod*, I fear they had come short home. He that meant death to the Babe for the name of a King, could mean no other to those that honoured and proclaimed a new King, and erected a throne besides his. They had done what they came for ; and now that God whose business they came about takes order at once for his Son's safety, and for theirs. God, who is Perfection it self, never begins any business, but he makes an end, and ends happily. When our ways are his, there is no danger of miscarriage.

Well did these Wise men know the difference, as of Stars, so of Dreams ; they had learned to distinguish between the natural and divine : and once apprehending God in their sleep, they follow him waking, and *return another way*. They were no Subjects to *Herod*, his command pressed them so much the less : or if the being within his dominions had been no less bond then native subjection, yet where God did countermand *Herod*, there could be no question whom to obey. They say not, We are in a strange Country, *Herod* may meet with us, it can be no less then death to mock him in his own territories ; but chearfully put themselves upon the way, and trust God with the success.

cess. When men command with God, we must obey men for God, and God in men; when against him, the best obedience is to deny obedience, and to turn our backs upon *Herod*.

The Wise men are safely arrived in the East, and fill the world full of expectation, as themselves are full of wonder: *Joseph* and *Mary* are returned with the Babe to that *Jerusalem* where the Wise men had inquired for his Birth. The City was doubtless still full of that rumour, and little thinks, that he whom they talk of was so near them. From thence they are at least in their way to *Nazareth*, where they purpose their abode. God prevents them by his Angel, and sends them for safety into *Egypt*. *Joseph* was not wont to be so full of Visions: It was not long since the Angel appeared unto him to justify the innocency of the Mother, and the Deity of the Son; now he appears for the preservation of both, and a preservation by flight. Could *Joseph* now chuse but think, Is this the King that must save *Israel*, that needs to be saved by me? If he be the Son of God, how is he subject to the violence of men? How is he Almighty, that must save himself by flight? or how must he flie to save himself out of that land, which he comes to save? But faithful *Joseph* having been once tutoured by the Angel, and having heard what the Wise men said of the Star, what *Simeon* and *Anna* said in the Temple, labours not so much to reconcile his thoughts, as to subject them; and, as one that knew it safer to suppress doubts than to assail them, can believe what he understands not, and can wonder where he cannot comprehend.

Oh strange condition of the King of all the world! He could not be born in a baser estate, yet even this he cannot enjoy with safety. There was no room for him in *Bethlehem*, there will be no room for him in *Judæa*. He is no sooner come to his own, then he must flie from them; that he may save them, he must avoid them. Had it not been easie for thee (O Saviour) to have acquit thy self from

Herod

Herod a thousand ways? What could an arm of flesh have done against the God of spirits? What had it been for thee to have sent *Herod* five years sooner unto his place? what to have commanded fire from heaven on those that should have come to apprehend thee? or to have bidden the earth to receive them alive, whom she meant to swallow dead? We suffer misery, because we must; thou, because thou wouldest. The same will that brought thee from Heaven into earth, sends thee from *Jewry* to *Egypt*. As thou wouldst be born mean and miserable, so thou wouldst live subject to humane vexations; that thou, who hast taught us how good it is to bear the yoke even in our youth, mightst sanctifie to us early afflictions. Or whether, O Father, since it was the purpose of thy wisdom to manifest thy Son by degrees unto the world, was it thy will thus to hide him for a time under our infirmity? And what other is our condition? we are no sooner born thine, then we are persecuted. If the Church travail, and bring forth a male, she is in danger of the Dragons streams. What do the Members complain of the same measure which was offered to the Head? Both our Births are accompanied with Tears.

Even of those whose mature age is full of trouble, yet the infancy is commonly quiet: but here life and toil began together. O Blessed Virgin, even already did the sword begin to pierce thy Soul. Thou which wert forced to bear thy Son in thy womb from *Nazareth* to *Bethlehem*, must now bear him in thy arms from *Jewry* into *Egypt*. Yet couldst thou not complain of the way, whilest thy Saviour was with thee: His presence alone was able to make the Stable a Temple, *Egypt* a Paradise, the way more pleasing then rest. But whither then, O whither dost thou carry that blessed burthen, by which thy self and the world are upholden? To *Egypt*, the Slaughter-house of God's people, the Furnace of *Israel's* ancient affliction, the Sink of the world: *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, saith God. That
 G
 thou

thou calledst thy Son out of *Egypt*, O God, is no marvell. It is a marvell that thou calledst him into *Egypt*; but that we know, all earths are thine, and all places and men are like figures upon a table, such as thy disposition makes them. What a change is here? *Israel*, the first-born of God, flies out of *Egypt* into the promised Land of *Judea*. *Christ*, the first-born of all creatures, flies from *Judea* into *Egypt*. *Egypt* is become the Sanctuary, *Judea* the Inquisition-house of the Son of God. He, that is every where the same, makes all places alike to his: He makes the fiery Furnace a Gallery of pleasure, the Lions den an house of defence, the Whales belly a lodging-chamber, *Egypt* an harbour.

He flees, that was able to preserve himself from danger; to teach us, how lawfully we may flee from those dangers we cannot avoid otherwise. It is a thankless fortitude, to offer our throat unto the knife. He that came to die for us fled for his own preservation, and hath bid us follow him; *When they persecute you in one City, flee into another.* We have but the use of our lives, and we are bound to husband them to the best advantage of God and his Church. God hath made us, not as Butts to be perpetually shot at, but as the marks of Rovers movable, as the wind and sun may best serve.

It was warrant enough for *Joseph* and *Mary*, that God commands them to flee; yet so familiar is God grown with his approved servants, that he gives them the reason of his commanded flight: *For Herod will seek the young child, to destroy him.* What wicked men will do, what they would doe, is known unto God beforehand. He that is so infinitely wise to know the designs of his enemies before they are, could as easily prevent them, that they might not be: but he lets them run on in their own courses, that he may fetch glory to himself out of their wickedness.

Good *Joseph*, having this charge in the night, staies not
ill

till the morning : no sooner had God said, *Arise*, then he starts up and sets forward. It was not diffidence, but obedience, that did so hasten his departure. The charge was direct, the business important. He dares not linger for the light, but breaks his rest for the journey, and taking advantage of the dark, departs toward *Egypt*. How knew he this occasion would abide any delay? We cannot be too speedy in the execution of Gods commands, we may be too late. Here was no treasure to hide, no hangings to take down, no lands to secure : The poor Carpenter needs do no more but lock the doors, and away. He goes lightly that wants a load. If there be more pleasure in abundance, there is more security in a mean estate. The Bustard or the Ostridge, when he is pursued, can hardly get upon his wings ; whereas the Lark mounts with ease. The rich hath not so much advantage of the poor in enjoying, as the poor hath of the rich in leaving.

Now is *Joseph* come down into *Egypt*. *Egypt* was beholden to the Name, as that whereto it did owe no less then their universal preservation. Well might it repay this act of Hospitality to that Name and Blood. The going down into *Egypt* had not so much difficulty as the staying there. Their absence from their Country was little better then a Banishment. But what was this other, then to serve a Prentiship in the house of bondage? To be any-where save at home was irksome : but to be in *Egypt* so many years amongst idolatrous Pagans, must needs be painfull to religious hearts. The Command of their God, and the Presence of *Christ* makes amends for all. How long should they have thought it to see the Temple of God, if they had not had the God of the Temple with them? how long to present their Sacrifices at the Altar of God, if they had not had him with them who made all Sacrifices accepted, and who did accept the Sacrifice of their Hearts?

Herod was subtle in mocking the Wise men, whiles he promised to worship him whom he meant to kill. Now

God makes the Wise men to mock him, in disappointing his expectation. It is just with God, to punish those which would beguile others with illusion. Great spirits are so much more impatient of disgrace. How did *Herod* now rage and fret, and vainly wish to have met with those false spies, and tell with what torments he would revenge their treachery, and curse himself for trusting Strangers in so important a business?

The Tyrants suspicion would not let him rest long: Ere many days he sends to inquire of them, whom he sent to inquire of *Christ*. The notice of their secret departure increaseth his jealousy; and now his anger runs mad, and his fear proves desperate. All the Infants of *Bethlehem*, shall bleed for this one. And (that he may make sure work) he cuts out to himself large measures both of time and place. It was but very lately that the Star appeared, that the Wise men re-appeared not: They asked for him that was born, they did not name when he was born: *Herod*, for more security, over-reaches their time, and fetches into the slaughter all the Children of two years age. The Priests and Scribes had told him, the Town of *Bethlehem* must be the place of the *Messiah's* nativity: He fetches in all the Children of the coasts adjoining; yea, his own shall for the time be a *Bethlehemite*. A tyrannous guiltiness never thinks it self safe, but ever seeks to assure it self in the excess of cruelty. Doubtless he, who so privily inquired for *Christ*, did as secretly brew this Massacre. The Mothers were set with their Children on their laps, feeding them with the breast, or talking to them in the familiar language of their love, when suddenly the Executioner rushes in, and snatches them from their arms; and at once pulling forth his Commission and his Knife, without regard to shrieks or tears, murders the innocent Babe, and leaves the passionate Mother in a mean between madness and death. What cursing of *Herod*? what wringing of hands? what condoling? what exclaiming was now in the streets of *Bethlehem*?

O bloody

O bloody *Herod*, that couldst sacrifice so many harmless lives to thine Ambition! What could those Infants have done? If it were thy person whereof thou wert afraid, what likelihood was it thou couldst live till those Sucklings might endanger thee? This news might affect thy Successours, it could not concern thee, if the heat of an impotent and furious envy had not made thee thirsty of blood. It is not long that thou shalt enjoy this cruelty: After a few hatefull years thy soul shall feel the weight of so many Innocents, of so many just Curses. He, for whose sake thou killedst so many, shall strike thee with death; and then what wouldest thou have given to have been as one of those Infants whom thou murderedst? In the mean time, when thine Executioners returned, and told thee of their impartial dispatch, thou smiledst to think how thou hadst defeated thy Rival, and beguiled the Star, and eluded the Prophecies; whiles God in Heaven and his Son on earth laugh thee to scorn, and make thy rage an occasion of farther glory to him whom thou meantest to suppress.

He that could take away the lives of others cannot protract his own. *Herod* is now sent home. The coast is clear for the return of that Holy Family. Now God calls them from their Exile. *Christ* and his Mother had not stayed so long out of the confines of the reputed visible Church, but to teach us continuance under the Cross. Sometimes God sees it good for us, not to sip of the cup of Affliction, but to make a diet-drink of it, for constant and common use. If he allows us no other liquour for many years, we must take it off chearfully, and know that it is but the measure of our betters.

Joseph and *Mary* stir not without a Command; their Departure, Stay, Removal is ordered by the voice of God. If *Egypt* had been more tedious unto them, they durst not move their foot till they were bidden. It is good in our own business to follow Reason or Custome: but in God's

business, if we have any other guide but himself, we presume, and cannot expect a blessing.

O the wonderfull dispensation of God in concealing of himself from men! *Christ* was now some five years old: he bears himself as an Infant, and, knowing all things, neither takes nor gives notice of ought concerning his removall and disposing, but appoints that to be done by his Angel, which the Angel could not have done but by him. Since he would take our nature, he would be a perfect child, suppressing the manifestation and exercise of that Godhead whereto that Infant nature was conjoined. Even so, O Saviour, the Humility of thine Infancy was answerable to that of thy Birth. The more thou hidest and abasest thy self for us, the more should we magnifie thee, the more should we deject our selves for thee. Unto thee with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

VII.

Christ among the Doctors.

Even the Spring shews us what we may hope for of the tree in Summer. In his Nonage therefore would our Saviour give us a taste of his future proof, lest if his perfection should have shewed it self without warning to the world, it should have been entertained with more wonder then belief: now this act of his Childhood shall prepare the faith of men by fore-expectation. Notwithstanding all this early demonstration of his Divine graces, the incredulous *Jews* could afterwards say, *Whence hath this man his wisdom*

dome and great works? What would they have said, if he had suddenly leapt forth into the clear light of the world? The Sun would dazzle all eyes, if he should break forth at his first rising into his full strength: now he hath both the Day-star to goe before him, and to bid men look for that glorious body, and the lively colours of the Day, to publish his approach; the eye is comforted, not hurt by his appearance.

The Parents of *Christ* went up yearly to *Jerusalem* at the feast of the Pasover; the Law was onely for the males. I do not find the Blessed Virgin bound to this voiage; the weaker sex received indulgence from God: yet she, knowing the spirituall profit of that journey, takes pains voluntarily to measure that long way every year. Piety regards not any distinction of sexes or degrees, neither yet doth God's acceptation: rather doth it please the mercy of the Highest, more to reward that service which, though he like in all, yet out of favour he will not impose upon all. It could not be but that she whom the Holy Ghost overshadowed should be zealous of God's service. Those that will goe no farther then they are dragged in their religious exercises, are no whit of kin to her whom all generations shall call blessed.

The Child *Jesus* in the minority of his age went up with his Parents to the holy Solemnity, not this year onely, but in all likelihood others also. He in the power of whose Godhead, and by the motion of whose Spirit, all others ascended thither, would not himself stay at home. In all his Examples he meant our instruction: this pious act of his Nonage intended to lead our first years into timely Devotion. The first liquor seasons the vessell for a long time after. It is every way good for a man to bear God's yoke even from his infancy: it is the policie of the Devill to discourage early Holines. He that goes out betimes in the morning, is more like to dispatch his journey, then he that lingers till the day be spent. This blessed Family
came

came not to look at the feast and be gone; but they duly staid out all the appointed days of unleavened bread. They and the rest of *Israel* could not want household-busineses at home: those secular affairs could not either keep them from repairing to *Jerusalem*, or send them away immaturely. Worldly cares must give place to sacred. Except we will depart unblest, we must attend God's services till we may receive his dismissal.

It was the fashion of those times and places, that they went up, (and so returned,) by troupes to those set meetings of their holy Festivals. The whole Parish of *Nazareth* went and came together. Good fellowship doth no way so well as in the passage to Heaven: much comfort is added by society to that journey, which is of it self pleasant. It is an happy word, *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord*. Mutuall encouragement is none of the least benefits of our holy Assemblies. Many sticks laid together make a good fire, which if they lie single, lose both their light and heat.

The Feast ended, what should they doe but return to *Nazareth*? God's services may not be so attended, as that we should neglect our particular callings. Himself calls us from his own house to ours, and takes pleasure to see a painfull Client. They are foully mistaken, that think God cares for no other trade but Devotion. Piety and Diligence must keep meet changes with each other: neither doth God less accept of our return to *Nazareth*, then our going up to *Jerusalem*.

I cannot think that the Blessed Virgin, or good *Joseph*, could be so negligent of their Divine charge, as not to call the Child *Jesus* to their setting forth from *Jerusalem*. But their back was no sooner turned upon the Temple, then his face was towards it: He had business in that place, when theirs was ended: there he was both worshipped, and represented. He, *in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily*, could doe nothing without God: His true Father led him away from his supposed. Sometimes the affairs of our ordinary vocation may
not

not grudge to yield unto spiritual occasions. The Parents of *Christ* knew him well to be of a disposition, nor strange, nor sullen and Stoical, but sweet and sociable: and therefore they supposed he had spent the time and the way in company of their friends and neighbours. They do not suspect him wandered into the solitary fields: but when evening came, they go to seek him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. If he had not wanted to converse formerly with them, he had not now been sought amongst them. Neither as God, nor Man, doth he take pleasure in a stern froward austerity, and wild retiredness; but in a mild affableness, and amiable conversation.

But, O Blessed Virgin, who can express the sorrows of thy perplexed soul, when all that evening-search could afford thee no news of thy Son *Jesus*? Was not this one of those Swords of *Simeon*, which should pierce through thy tender breast? How didst thou chide thy credulous neglect, in not observing so precious a charge, and blame thine eyes, for once looking beside this object of thy love? How didst thou, with thy carefull Husband spend that restless night in mutual expostulations, and bemoanings of your loss? How many suspicious imaginations did that while rack thy grieved spirit? Perhaps thou migtest doubt, lest they which laid for him, by *Herod's* command, at his birth, had now by the secret instigation of *Archelaus* surpris'd him in his childhood. Or it may be thou thoughtest thy Divine Son had now withdrawn himself from the earth, and returned to his Heavenly Glory, without warning. Or peradventure thou studiedst with thy self, whether any carelessness on thy behalf had not given occasion to this absence.

O dear Saviour, who can miss, and not mourn for thee? Never any soul conceived thee by faith, that was less afflicted with the sense of thy desertion, then comforted with the joy of thy presence. Just is that sorrow, and those tears seasonable, that are bestowed upon thy loss. What

comfort are we capable of, whiles we want thee? What relish is there in these earthly delights without thee? What is there to mitigate our passionate discomforts, if not from thee? Let thy self loose, O my soul, to the fulness of sorrow, when thou findest thy self bereaved of him, *in whose presence is the fulness of joy*; and deny to receive comfort from any thing save from his return.

In vain is *Christ* sought among his kindred according to the flesh. So far are they still from giving us their aid to find the true *Messias*, that they lead us from him. Back again therefore are *Joseph* and *Mary* gone to seek him at *Jerusalem*. She goes about in the City, by the streets and by the open places, and seeks him whom her soul loveth: she sought him for the time, and found him not. Do we think she spared her search? The evening of her return she hastes to the Inn where she had left him; where missing him, she inquires of every one she met, *Have you not seen him whom my soul loveth?* At last, the third day, she finds him in the Temple. One day was spent in the journey towards *Galilee*, another in the return to *Jerusalem*; the third day recovers him. He, who would rise again the third day, and be found amongst the living, now also would the third day be found of his Parents, after the sorrow of his absence. But where wert thou, O Blessed *Jesu*, for the space of these three days? where didst thou bestow thy self, or who tended thee, whilst thou wert thus alone at *Jerusalem*? I know, if *Jerusalem* should have been as unkind to thee as *Bethlehem*, thou couldst have commanded the Heavens to harbour thee; and if men did not minister to thee, thou couldst have commanded the service of Angels. But since the form of a servant called thee to a voluntary homeliness, whether it pleased thee to exercise thy self thus early with the difficulties of a stranger, or to provide miraculously for thy self, I inquire not, since thou revealest not; onely this I know, that hereby thou intendedst to teach thy Parents, that thou couldst live without them; and that not
of

of any indigency, but out of a gracious dispensation, thou wouldst ordinarily depend upon their care.

In the mean time, thy Divine wisdom could not but fore-know all these corroding thoughts wherewith the heart of thy dear Mother must needs bleed, through this sudden dereliction; yet wouldst thou leave her for the time to her sorrow. Even so, O Saviour, thou thoughtest fit to visit her that bore thee with this early affliction. Never any loved thee, whom thou dost not sometimes exercise with the grief of missing thee; that both we may be more careful to hold thee, and more joyfull in recovering thee. Thou hast said, and canst not lie, *I am with you to the end of the world*: but even whiles thou art really present, thou thinkest good to be absent unto our apprehensions. Yet if thou leave us, thou wilt not forsake us; if thou leave us for our humiliation, thou wilt not forsake us to our finall discomfort: thou mayest for three days hide thy self, but then we shall find thee in the Temple. None ever sought thee with a sincere desire of whom thou wert not found. Thou wilt not be either so little absent, as not to whet our appetites, nor so long, as to fainten the heart. After three days we shall find thee: and where should we rather hope to find thee then in the Temple? There is the *habitation for the God of Israel*, there is thy *resting-place for ever*. Oh all ye that are grieved with the want of your Saviour, see where you must seek him. In vain shall ye hope to find him in the streets, in the Taverns, in the Theaters: seek him in his holy Temple. Seek him with piety, seek him with faith, there shall ye meet him, there shall ye recover him. Whilst Children of that age were playing in the streets, *Christ* was found sitting in the Temple; not to gaze on the outward glory of that House, or on the golden Candlesticks or Tables, but to hear and appose the Doctours. He who, as God, gave them all the wisdom they had, as the Son of man hearkensto the wisdom he had given them. He, who sate in their Hearts, as the Authour of all learning

and knowledge, fits in the midst of their School as an humble Disciple : that by learning of them, he might teach all the younger sort humility, and due attendance upon their Instructors. He could at the first have taught the great Rabbins of *Israel* the deep mysteries of God : but because he was not yet called by his Father to the publick function of a Teacher, he contents himself to hear with diligence, and to ask with modesty, and to teach onely by insinuation. Let those consider this, who will needs run as soon as they can go ; and when they find ability, think they need not stay for a farther vocation of God or men. Open your eyes, ye rathe-ripe invaders of God's Chair ; and see your Saviour in his younger years, not sitting in the eminent pulpits of the Doctours, but in the lowly floors of the Auditours. See him, that could have taught the Angels, listning in his minority to the voice of men. Who can think much to learn of the Ancients, when he looks upon the Son of God sitting at the feet of the Doctours of *Israel*? First he hears, then he asks. How much more doth it concern us to be Hearers ere we offer to be Teachers of others? He gathers that hears, he spends that teacheth. If we spend before we gather, we shall soon prove bankrupts.

When he hath heard, he asks, and after that he answers. Doubtless those very Questions were Instruction, and meant to teach more then to learn. Never had these great Rabbins heard the voice of such a Tutor ; in whom they might see the wisdom of God so concealing it self, that yet it would be known to be there. No marvel then if *they all wondred at his understanding and answers*. Their eyes saw nothing but humane weakness, their ears heard Divine sublimity of matter : betwixt what they saw and what they heard, they could not but be distracted with a doubting admiration. And why did ye not (O ye *Jewish Teachers*) remember, *That to us a Child is born, and unto us a Son is given, and the government is upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderfull, Counsellor, the mighty God, the*
ever-

everlasting Father, the Prince of peace? Why did ye not now bethink your selves what the Star, the Sages, the Angels, the Shepherds, *Zachary, Simeon, Anna*, had premonished you? Fruitless is the wonder that endeth not in faith. No Light is sufficient, where the eyes are held through unbelief or prejudice.

The Doctours were not more amazed to hear so profound a Childhood, then the Parents of *Christ* were to see him among the Doctours: the joy of finding him did strive with the astonishment of finding him thus. And now, not *Joseph*, (he knew how little right he had to that Divine Son) but *Mary* breaks forth into a loving expostulation, *Son, why hast thou dealt so with us?* That she might not seem to take upon her as an imperious Mother, it is like she reserved this question till she had him alone: wherein she meant rather to express grief then correction. Onely herein the Blessed Virgin offended; that her inconsideration did not suppose, (as it was,) that some higher respects then could be due to flesh and blood called away the Son of God from her that was the daughter of Man. She, that was but the mother of Humanity, should not have thought that the business of God must for her sake be neglected. We are all partial to our selves naturally, and prone to the regard of our own rights. Questionless this gracious Saint would not for all the world have willingly preferred her own attendance to that of her God: through heedlessness she doeth so. Her Son and Saviour is her monitour, out of his Divine love reforming her natural: *How is it that ye sought me? Know ye not that I must go about my Fathers business?* Immediately before the Blessed Virgin had said, *Thy Father & I sought thee with heavy hearts*: Wherein, both, according to the supposition of the world, she calleth *Joseph* the Father of *Christ*, and, according to the fashion of a dutifull wife, she names her *Joseph* before her self. She well knew that *Joseph* had nothing but a name in this business, she knew how God had dignified her beyond him; yet she

says, *Thy Father and I sought thee.* The Son of God stands not upon contradiction to his mother, but leading her thoughts from his supposed Father to his true, from earth to heaven, he answers; *Knew ye not that I must go about my Fathers business?* It was honour enough to her, that he had vouchsafed to take flesh of her. It was his eternall Honour, that he was *God of God*, the everlasting Son of the heavenly Father: Good reason therefore was it, that the respects to flesh should give place to the God of Spirits. How well contented was Holy *Mary* with so just an answer? how doth she now again in her heart renew her answer to the Angel, *Behold the servant of the Lord, be it according to thy word.*

We are all the Sons of God in another kind, Nature and the World think we should attend them. We are not worthy to say we have a Father in Heaven, if we cannot steal away from these earthly distractions, and imploy our selves in the services of our God.

VIII.

Christ's Baptism.

John did every way forerun *Christ*, not so much in the time of his Birth, as in his Office: neither was there more unlikeliness in their disposition and carriage, then similitude in their function. Both did preach and baptize: onely *John* baptized by himself, our Saviour by his Disciples. Our Saviour wrought miracles by himself, by his Disciples; *John* wrought none by either. Wherein *Christ* meant to shew himself a Lord, and *John* a Servant; and *John* meant to approve himself a true Servant to him
whose

whose Harbinger he was. He that leapt in the womb of his mother when his Saviour (then newly conceived) came in presence, bestir'd himself when he was brought forth into the light of the Church, to the honour and service of his Saviour. He did the same before *Christ*, which *Christ* charged his Disciples to doe after him, preach and baptize. The Gospel ran always in one tenour, and was never but like it self. So it became the Word of him, in whom *there is no shadow by turning*, and whose Word it is, *I am Jehova, I change not.*

It was fit that he which had the Prophets, the Star, the Angel to foretell his coming into the world, should have his Usher to go before him, when he would notifie himself to the world. *John was the Voice of a Cryer; Christ was the Word of his Father.* It was fit this Voice should make a noise to the world, ere the Word of the Father should speak to it. *John's note was still, Repentance, the Axe to the root, the Fan to the floor, the Chaffe to the fire:* as his Raiment was rough, so was his Tongue; and if his Food were wild Hony, his Speech was stinging Locusts. Thus must the way be made for *Christ* in every heart. Plausibility is no fit preface to Regeneration. If the heart of man had continued upright, God might have been entertained without contradiction: but now violence must be offered to our corruption, ere we can have room for Grace. If the great Way-maker do not cast down hills, and raise up valleys in the bosomes of men, there is no passage for *Christ*. Never will *Christ* come into that Soul, where the Herald of Repentance hath not been before him.

That Saviour of ours, who from eternity lay hid in the Counsel of God, who in the fulness of time so came, that he lay hid in the womb of his mother for the space of forty weeks, after he was come thought fit to lie hid in *Nazareth* for the space of thirty years, now at last begins to shew himself to the world, and comes from *Galilee* to *Jordan*. He that was God always, and might have been perfect Man

in an instant, would by degrees rise to the perfection both of his Manhood, and execution of his Mediatourship; to teach us the necessity of leisure in spiritual proceedings; that many Suns, and successions of seasons, and means must be stayed for, ere we can attain our maturity; and that when we are ripe for the employments of God, we should no less willingly leave our obscurity, then we took the benefit of it for our preparation. He that was formerly circumcised would now be baptized. What is Baptism but an Evangelical Circumcision? What was Circumcision but a legal Baptism? One both supplied and succeeded the other; yet the Authour of both will undergo both. He would be circumcised, to sanctifie his Church that was; and baptized, to sanctifie his Church that should be; that so in both Testaments he might open a way into Heaven. There was in him neither filthiness, nor foreskin of corruption, that should need either knife or water. He came not to be a Saviour for himself, but for us. We are all uncleanness and uncircumcision. He would therefore have that done to his most pure Body, which should be of force to clear our impure Souls: thus *making himself sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

His Baptism gives virtue to ours. His last action (or rather passion) was his Baptizing with blood; his first was his Baptization with water: both of them wash the world from their sins. Yea, this latter did not onely wash the souls of men, but washeth that very water by which we are washed: from hence is that made both clean and holy, and can both cleanse and hallow us. And if the very Handkerchief which touched his Apostles had power of cure, how much more that Water which the sacred body of *Christ* touched? *Christ* comes far to seek his Baptism; to teach us (for whose sake he was baptized) to wait upon the Ordinances of God, and to sue for the favour of spiritual blessings. They are worthless commodities that are not worth seeking for. It is rarely seen, that God is found of any

any man unsought for. That desire which onely makes us capable of good things, cannot stand with neglect.

John durst not baptize unbidden; his Master sent him to do this service; and behold, the Master comes to his Servant, to call for the participation of that priviledge which he himself had instituted and enjoyned. How willingly should we come to our spiritual Superiours, for our part in those mysteries which God hath left in their keeping? yea, how gladly should we come to that *Christ* who gives us these blessings, who is given to us in them?

This seemed too great an honour for the modesty of *John* to receive. If his mother could say, when her Blessed Cousin the Virgin *Mary* came to visit her, *Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* how much more might he say so, when the Divine Son of that mother came to call for a favour from him? *I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* O holy Baptist, if there were not a greater born of woman than thou, yet thou couldst not be born of a woman, and not need to be baptized of thy Saviour. He baptized with fire, thou with water. Little would thy water have availed thee without his fire. If he had not baptized thee, how wert thou sanctified from the womb? There can be no flesh without filthiness. Neither thy supernatural conception, nor thy austere life could exempt thee from the need of Baptism. Even those that have not lived to sin after the similitude of *Adam*, yet are they so tainted with *Adam*, that, unless the Second *Adam* cleanse them by his Baptism, they are hopeless. There is no less use of Baptism unto all, then there is certainty of the need of Baptism. *John* baptized without, *Christ* within. The more holy a man is, the more sensible he is of his unholiness. No carnal man could have said, *I have need to be baptized of thee*, neither can he find what he is the better for a little Font-water. The sense of our wretchedness, and the valuation of our spiritual helps, is the best trial of our Regeneration. Our Sa-

viour doth not deny, that either *John* hath need to be baptized of him, or that it is strange that he should come to be baptized of *John*; but he will needs thus far both honour *John*, and disparage himself, to be baptized of his Messenger. He that would take flesh of the Virgin, education from his Parents, sustenance from his creatures, will take Baptism from *John*. It is the praise of his mercy, that he will stoop so low as to be beholden to his creatures, which from him receive their being and power, both to take and give.

Yet not so much respect to *John*, as obedience to his Father, drew him to this point of Humiliation; *Thus it behoves us to fulfill all righteousness*. The Counsels and Appointments of God are Righteousness it self. There needs no other motive either to the Servant or the Son, then the knowledge of those righteous purposes. This was enough to lead a faithfull man through all difficulties and inconveniencies; neither will it admit of any reply, or any demur. *John* yieldeth to this honour which his Saviour puts upon him, in giving Baptism to the Authour of it. He *baptized others to the remission of their sins*: now he baptizes him by whom they are remitted, both to the Baptizer and to others.

No sooner is *Christ* baptized, then he comes forth of the water. The element is of force but during the use; it turns common, when that is past. Neither is the water sooner poured on his head, then the Heavens are opened, and the Holy Ghost descendeth upon that head which was baptized. The Heavens are never shut whiles either of the Sacraments is duly administred and received: Neither do the Heavens ever thus open, without the descent of the Holy Ghost. But now that the God of Heaven is baptized, they open unto him, which are opened to all the faithfull by him; and that Holy Ghost which proceeded from him, together with the Father, joyns with the Father in a sensible testimony of him: that now the world might see what interest

interest he had in the Heavens, in the Father, in the Holy Spirit, and might expect nothing but divine from the entrance of such a Mediator.

IX.

Christ *Tempted.*

NO sooner is *Christ* come out of the water of Baptism, then he enters into the fire of Temptation. No sooner is the Holy Spirit descended upon his head in the form of a Dove, then he is led by the Spirit to be tempted. No sooner doth God say, *This is my Son*, then Satan says, *If thou be the Son of God*. It is not in the power either of the gift or seals of Grace, to deliver us from the assaults of Satan. They may have the force to repell evil suggestions, they have none to prevent them. Yea, the more we are engaged unto God by our publick vows, and his pledges of favour, so much more busie and violent is the rage of that Evil one to encounter us. We are no sooner stept forth into the field of God, then he labours to wrest our weapons out of our hands, or to turn them against us.

The voice from Heaven acknowledged *Christ* to be the Son of God: this Divine Testimony did not allay the malice of Satan, but exasperate it. Now that venomous Serpent swells with inward poison, and hastes to assail him whom God hath honoured from Heaven. O God, how should I look to escape the suggestions of that Wicked one, when the Son of thy love cannot be free? when even Grace it self draws on enmity? That enmity that spared not to strike at the head, will it forbear the weakest and remotest limb? Arm thou me therefore with an expectation of that

evil I cannot avoid. Make thou me as strong as he is malicious. Say to my soul also, *Thou art my Son*, and let Satan doe his worst.

All the time of our Saviour's obscurity I do not find him set upon. Now that he looks forth to the publick execution of his Divine Office, Satan bends his forces against him. Our privacy, perhaps, may sit down in peace; but never man did endeavour a common good without opposition. It is a sign that both the Work is holy, and the Agent faithfull, when we meet with strong affronts.

We have reason to be comforted with nothing so much as with resistence. If we were not in a way to do good, we should find no rubs: Satan hath no cause to molest his own; and that whilst they go about his own service. He desires nothing more, then to make us smooth paths to sin: but when we would turn our feet to holiness, he blocks up the way with Temptations.

Who can wonder enough at the sauciness of that bold Spirit, that dares to set upon the Son of the everliving God? Who can wonder enough at thy meekness and patience, O Saviour, that wouldst be tempted? He wanted not malice and presumption to assault thee; thou wantedst not humility to endure those assaults. I should stand amazed at this voluntary dispensation of thine, but that I see the susception of our humane nature lays thee open to this condition. It is necessarily incident to manhood to be liable to Temptations. Thou wouldest not have put on Flesh, if thou hadst meant utterly to put off this consequence of our infirmity. If the state of innocence could have been any defence against evil motions, the First *Adam* had not been tempted, much less the Second. It is not the presenting of Temptations that can hurt us, but their entertainment. Ill counsel is the fault of the Giver, not of the Refuser. We cannot forbid lewd eyes to look in at our windows, we may shut our doors against their entrance. It is no less our praise to have resisted, then Satan's blame to suggest evil.

Yea,

Yea, O Blessed Saviour, how glorious was it for thee, how happy for us, that thou wert tempted? Had not Satan tempted thee, how shouldst thou have overcome? Without blows there can be no victory, no triumph. How had thy power been manifested, if no adversary had tried thee? The First *Adam* was tempted and vanquished; the Second *Adam*, to repay and repair that foil, doth vanquish in being tempted. Now *have we not a Saviour*, and *High Priest*, that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but such an one as was in all things tempted in like sort, yet without sin. How boldly therefore may we go unto the Throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace of help in time of need? Yea, this Duel was for us: Now we see by this conflict of our Almighty Champion, what manner of Adversary we have, how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. Now our very Temptation affords us comfort; in that we see, the dearer we are unto God, the more obnoxious we are to this trial. Neither can we be discouraged by the hainousness of those evils whereto we are moved, since we see the Son of God solicited to Infidelity; Covetousness, Idolatry. How glorious therefore was it for thee, O Saviour, how happy for us, that thou wert tempted?

Where then wast thou tempted, O Blessed *Jesu*? or whither wentest thou to meet with our great Adversary? I do not see thee led into the market-place, or any other part of the City; or thy home-stead of *Nazareth*; but into the vast wilderness, the habitation of beasts; a place that carrieth in it both horror and opportunity. Why wouldst thou thus retire thy self from men? But as confident Champions are wont to give advantage of ground or weapon to their Antagonist, that the glory of their victory may be the greater: so wouldst thou, O Saviour, in this conflict with our common Enemy, yield him his own terms for circumstances, that thine honour and his foil may be the more. Solitariness is no small help to the speed of a Temptation:

Woe to him that is alone : for if he fall, there is not a second to lift him up. Those that out of an affectation of Holiness seek for solitude in rocks and caves of the desarts, do no other then run into the mouth of the danger of Temptation, whilst they think to avoid it. It was enough for thee, to whose Divine power the gates of hell were weakness, thus to challenge the Prince of darkness. Our care must be always to eschew all occasions of spiritual danger, and (what we may) to get us out of the reach of Temptations.

But, O the depth of the Wisdom of God ! How camest thou, O Saviour, to be thus tempted ? That *Spirit* whereby thou wast conceived as Man, and which was one with thee and the Father as God, *led thee into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan.* Whilst thou taughtest us to pray to thy Father, *Lead us not into temptation,* thou meantest to instruct us, that if the same Spirit led us not into this perilous way, we goe not into it. We have still the same conduct : Let the path be what it will, how can we miscarry in the hand of a Father ? Now may we say to Satan, as thou didst unto *Pilate,* *Thou couldst have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* The Spirit led thee, it did not drive thee. Here was a sweet invitation, no compulsion of violence. So absolutely conformable was thy will to thy Deity, as if both thy Natures had but one Volition. In this first draught of thy bitter potion, thy soul said in a real subjection, *Not my will, but thy will be done.* We imitate thee, O Saviour, though we cannot reach to thee : All thine are led by thy Spirit. O teach us to forget that we have wills of our own. The Spirit led thee ; thine invincible strength did not animate thee into this combat uncalled. What do we weaklings so far presume upon our abilities or success, as that we dare thrust our selves upon Temptations unbidden, unwarranted ? Who can pity the shipwreck of those Mariners, who will needs put forth and hoise sails in a tempest ?

Forty days did our Saviour spend in the wilderness, fasting and solitary, all which time was worn out in Temptation; however the last brunt, because it was most violent, is onely expressed. Now could not the Adversary complain of disadvantage, whilst he had the full scope both of time and place to do his worst. And why did it please thee, O Saviour, to fast forty days and forty nights: unless, as *Moses* fasted forty days at the delivery of the Law, and *Elias* at the restitution of the Law; so thou thoughtest fit at the accomplishment of the Law, and the promulgation of the Gospel, to fulfill the time of both these Types of thine; wherein thou intendest our wonder, not our imitation; not our imitation of the time, though of the act. Here were no faulty desires of the flesh in thee, to be tamed, no possibility of a freer and more easie assent of the soul to God, that could be affected of thee, who wast perfectly united unto God: but, as for us thou wouldest suffer death, so for us thou wouldest suffer hunger; that we might learn by fasting to prepare our selves for Temptations. In fasting so long, thou intendedst the manifestation of thy Power; in fasting no longer, the truth of thy Manhood. *Moses* and *Elias*, through the miraculous sustentation of God, fasted so long, without any question made of the truth of their bodies. So long therefore thou thoughtest good to fast, as by the reason of these precedents might be without prejudice of thine Humanity; which if it should have pleased thee to support, as thou couldst, without means, thy very power might have opened the mouth of cavils against the verity of thine Humane nature. That thou mightest therefore well approve, that there was no difference betwixt thee and us but sin, thou that couldst have fasted without hunger, and lived without meat, wouldest both feed, and fast, and hunger.

Who can be discouraged with the scantiness of friends or bodily provisions, when he sees his Saviour thus long destitute of all earthly comforts, both of society and sustenance?

Oh

Oh the policy and malice of that old Serpent, When he sees *Christ* bewray some infirmity of nature in being hungry, then he lays forest at him by Temptations. His eye was never off from our Saviour all the time of his sequestration; and now that he thinks he espies any one part to lie open, he drives at it with all his might. We have to doe with an Adversary no less vigilant then malicious, who will be sure to watch all opportunities of our mischief, and where he sees any advantage of weakness, will not neglect it. How should we stand upon our guard for prevention, both that we may not give him occasions of our hurt, nor take hurt by those we have given?

When our Saviour was hungry, Satan tempts him in matter of Food; not then of Wealth or Glory. He well knows both what baits to fish withall, and when, and how to lay them. How safe and happy shall we be, if we shall bend our greatest care where we discern the most danger.

In every Temptation there is an appearance of good, whether of the body, mind, or estate. The first is the lust of the flesh, in any carnal desire; the second the pride of heart and life; the third the lust of the eyes. To all these the First *Adam* is tempted, and in all miscarried; the Second *Adam* is tempted to them all, and overcometh. The first man was tempted to carnal appetite, by the forbidden fruit; to pride, by the suggestion of being as God; to covetousness, in the ambitious desire of knowing good and evil. Satan having found all the motions so successful with the First *Adam* in his innocent estate, will now tread the same steps in his Temptations of the Second. The stones must be made bread, there is the motion to a carnal appetite. The guard and attendance of Angels must be presumed on, there is a motion to pride. The Kingdomes of the earth and the glory of them must be offered, there to covetousness and ambition.

Satan could not but have heard God say, *This is my beloved*

beloved Son; he had heard the Message and the Caroll of the Angels; he saw the Star, and the Journey and Offerings of the Sages; he could not but take notice of the gratulations of *Zachary, Simeon, Anna*; he well knew the Predictions of the Prophets: yet now that he saw *Christ* fainting with hunger, as not comprehending how infirmities could consist with a Godhead, he can say, *If thou be the Son of God*. Had not Satan known that the Son of God was to come into the World, he had never said, *If thou be the Son of God*. His very supposition convinces him: The ground of his temptation answers it self. If therefore *Christ* seemed to be a meer Man, because after forty days he was hungry, why was he not confessed more then a Man, in that for forty days he hungred not? The motive of the temptation is worse then the motion, *If thou be the Son of God*. Satan could not chuse another suggestion of so great importance. All the work of our Redemption, of our Salvation, depends upon this one Truth, *Christ is the Son of God*. How should he else have ransomed the World? how should he have done, how should he have suffered that which was satisfactory to his Father's wrath? How should his actions or passion have been valuable to the sins of all the World? What marvell is it if we, that are sons by Adoption, be assaulted with the doubts of our interest in God, when the naturall Son, the Son of his Essence, is thus tempted? Since all our comfort consists in this point, here must needs be laid the chief battery; and here must be placed our strongest defence.

To turn Stones into Bread, had been no more faulty in it self, then to turn Water into Wine: But to doe this in a distrust of his Father's Providence, to abuse his power and liberty in doing it, to work a miracle of Satan's choice, had been disagreeable to the Son of God. There is nothing more ordinary with our spirituall Enemy, then by occasion of want to move us to unwarrantable courses: Thou art poor, steal; Thou canst not rise by honest means,

use indirect. How easie had it been for our Saviour, to have confounded Satan by the power of his Godhead ? But he rather chuses to vanquish him by the Sword of the Spirit, that he might teach us how to resist and overcome the powers of-darkness. If he had subdued Satan by the Almighty power of the Deity, we might have had what to wonder at, not what to imitate: now he useth that weapon which may be familiar unto us, that he may teach our weakness how to be victorious. Nothing in heaven or earth can beat the forces of Hell, but the Word of God. How carefully should we furnish our selves with this powerfull munition? how should our hearts and mouths be full of it? *Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Statutes: O take not from me the words of Truth. Let them be my Songs in the house of my pilgrimage; so shall I make answer to my Blasphemers.* What needed Christ to have answered Satan at all, if it had not been to teach us, that Temptations must not have their way, but must be answered by resistance, and resisted by the Word?

I do not hear our Saviour averre himself to be a God, against the blasphemous insinuation of Satan; neither do I see him working this miraculous Conversion, to prove himself the Son of God: but most wisely he takes away the ground of the Temptation. Satan had taken it for granted, that man cannot be sustained without bread; and therefore infers the necessity of making bread of stones. Our Saviour shews him from an infallible Word, that he had mislayed his suggestion; That *man lives not by usual food onely, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.* He can either sustain without bread, as he did *Moses* and *Elias*; or with a miraculous bread, as the *Israelites* with *Manna*; or send ordinary means miraculously, as food to his Prophet by the *Ravens*; or miraculously multiply ordinary means, as the *Meal* and *Oil* to the *Sareptan* Widow. *All things are sustained by his Almighty Word.* Indeed we live by food, but not by any virtue that is without God; without the
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concurrence of whose Providence, bread would rather choak then nourish us. Let him withdraw his hand from his creatures, in their greatest abundance we perish. Why do we therefore bend our eyes on the means, and not look up to the hand that gives the blessing?

What so necessary dependence hath the blessing upon the creature, if our Prayers hold them not together? As we may not neglect the means, so we may not neglect the procurement of a blessing upon the means, nor be unthankfull to the hand that hath given the blessing.

In the first assault Satan moves *Christ* to doubt of his Father's Providence, and to use unlawfull means to help himself: in the next he moves him to presume upon his Father's protection, and the service of his blessed Angels. He grounds the first upon a conceit of want, the next of abundance. If he be in extremes, it is all to one end, to mislead unto evill. If we cannot be driven down to Despair, he labours to lift us up to Presumption. It is not one foil that can put this bold Spirit out of countenance. Temptations, like waves, break one in the neck of another. Whilst we are in this warfare, we must make account, that the repulse of one Temptation doth but invite to another.

That Blessed Saviour of ours that was content to be led from *Jordan* into the Wilderness, for the advantage of the first Temptation, yields to be led from the Wilderness to *Jerusalem*, for the advantage of the second. The Place doth not a little avail to the Act. The Wilderness was fit for a Temptation arising from want, it was not fit for a Temptation moving to vain-glory: The populous City was the fittest for such a motion. *Jerusalem* was the glory of the World, the Temple was the glory of *Jerusalem*, the Pinnacle the highest piece of the Pinnacle: there is *Christ* content to be set for the opportunity of Temptation. O Saviour of men, how can we wonder enough at this humility of thine, that thou wouldst so far abase thy self, as to suffer thy pure and sacred Body to be transported by the

presumptuous and malicious hand of that unclean Spirit ? It was not his power, it was thy patience that deserves our admiration. Neither can this seem over-strange to us, when we consider, that if Satan be the Head of wicked men, wicked men are the Members of Satan. What was *Pilate*, or the *Jews* that persecuted thine innocence, but limbs of this Devil ? And why are we then amazed, to see thee touched and locally transported by the Head, when we see thee yielding thy self over to be crucified by the Members ? If Satan did the worse and greater mediately by their hands, no marvel if he doe the less and easier immediately by his own ; yet neither of them without thy voluntary dispensation. He could not have looked at thee without thee. And if the Son of God did thus suffer his own holy and precious Body to be carried by Satan ; what wonder is it, if that Enemy have sometimes power given him over the sinfull bodies of the adopted sons of God ? It is not the strength of Faith that can secure us from the outward violences of that Evil one. This difference I find betwixt his spiritual and bodily assaults : those are beaten back by the shield of Faith, these admit not of such repulse. As the best man may be lame, blind, diseased ; so, through the permission of God, he may be bodily vexed by the old Man-slayer. Grace was never given us for a Target against external Afflictions.

Methinks I see *Christ* hoisted upon the highest Battlements of the Temple, whose very roof was an hundred and thirty cubits high ; and Satan standing by him, with this speech in his mouth : Well then, since in the matter of nourishment thou wilt needs depend upon thy Father's Providence, that he can without means sustain thee, take now farther trial of that Providence in thy miraculous preservation ; Cast thy self down from this height. Behold, thou art here in *Jerusalem*, the famous and holy City of the World ; here thou art on the top of the Pinnacle of that Temple which is dedicated to thy Father, and, if thou be God, to thy self ;

self; the eyes of all men are now fixt upon thee: there cannot be devised a more ready way to spread thy glory, and to proclaim thy Deity, then by casting thy self headlong to the Earth. All the World will say, there is more in thee then a Man; and for danger, there can be none: What can hurt him that is the Son of God? And wherefore serves that glorious Guard of Angels, which have by Divine Commission taken upon them the charge of thine Humanity? Since therefore in one act thou maist be both safe and celebrated, trust thy Father and those thy serviceable Spirits with thine assured preservation; *Cast thy self down.* And why didst thou not, O thou malignant Spirit, endeavour to cast down my Saviour by those same presumptuous hands that brought him up, since the descent is more easie then the raising up? Was it because it had not been so great an advantage to thee that he should fall by thy means, as by his own? Falling into sin was more then to fall from the pinnacle. Still thy care and suit is, to make us authours to our selves of evil. Thou gainest nothing by our bodily hurt, if the Soul be safe. Or was it rather for that thou couldst not? I doubt not but thy malice could as well have served to have offered this measure to himself, as to his holy Apostle soon after: but he that bounded thy power tethers thee shorter. Thou couldst not; thou canst not doe what thou wouldst. He that would permit thee to carry him up, binds thy hands from casting him down. And woe were it for us, if thou wert not ever stinted.

Why did Satan carry up *Christ* so high, but on purpose that his fall might be the more deadly? So deals he still with us, he exalts us, that we may be dangerously abased: He puffs men up with swelling thoughts of their own worthiness, that they may be vile in the eyes of God, and fall into condemnation. It is the manner of God, to cast down, that he may raise; to abase, that he may exalt: contrarily Satan raises up, that he may throw

down, and intends nothing but our dejection in our advancement.

Height of place gives opportunity of Temptation. Thus busie is that Wicked one in working against the members of *Christ*. If any of them be in eminence above others, those he labours most to rinate. They had need to stand fast, that stand high: Both there is more danger of their falling, and more hurt in their fall.

He that had presumed thus far to tempt the Lord of Life, would fain now dare him also to presume upon his Deity: *If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down.* There is not a more tried shaft in all his quiver then this, a persuasion to men to bear themselves too bold upon the favour of God. Thou art the Elect and Redeemed of God; sin, because Grace hath abounded; sin, that it may abound. Thou art safe enough though thou offend; be not too much an adversary to thy own liberty. False Spirit, it is no liberty to sin, but servitude rather; there is no liberty but in the freedome from sin. *Every one of us that hath the hope of Sons must purge himself, even as he is pure that hath redeemed us. We are bought with a price, therefore must we glorifie God in our body and spirits, for they are God's.* Our Sonship teaches us awe and obedience; and therefore, because we are Sons, we will not cast our selves down into sin.

How idly do Satan and wicked men measure God by the crooked line of their own misconceit? I wis *Christ* cannot be the Son of God, unless he cast himself down from the Pinnacle, unless he come down from the Cross. God is not mercifull, unless he humour them in all their desires; not just, unless he take speedy vengeance where they require it. But when they have spent their folly upon these vain imaginations, *Christ* is the Son of God, though he stay on the top of the Temple: God will be mercifull, though we miscarry, and just, though sinners seem lawless. Neither will he be any other then he is, or measured by any rule but himself.

But what is this I see? Satan himself with a Bible under his arm, with a Text in his mouth, *It is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee*? How still in that Wicked one doth Subtlety strive with Presumption? Who could not but over-wonder at this, if he did not consider, that since the Devil dares to touch the sacred Body of *Christ* with his hand, he may well touch the Scriptures of God with his tongue? Let no man henceforth marvel to hear Hereticks or Hypocrites quote Scriptures, when Satan himself hath not spared to cite them. What are they the worse for this, more then that holy Body which is transported? Some have been poisoned by their meats and drinks; yet either these nourish us, or nothing. It is not the Letter of the Scripture that can carry it, but the Sense: if we divide these two, we profane and abuse that Word we alledge. And wherefore doth this foul Spirit urge a Text, but for imitation, for prevention, and for success? *Christ* had alledged a Scripture unto him, he re-alleges Scripture unto *Christ*. At leastwise he will counterfeit an imitation of the Son of God. Neither is it in this alone; what one act ever passed the hand of God, which Satan did not apishly attempt to second? If we follow *Christ* in the outward action with contrary intentions, we follow Satan in following *Christ*. Or, perhaps, Satan meant to make *Christ* hereby weary of this weapon: As we see fashions, when they are taken up of the unworthy, are cast off by the Great. It was, doubtless, one cause why *Christ* afterward forbad the Devil even to confess the Truth, because his mouth was a Slander. But chiefly doeth he this for a better colour of his Temptation: He gilds over this false metal with Scripture, that it may pass current. Even now is Satan transformed into an Angel of light, and will seem godly for a mischief. If Hypocrites make a fair shew to deceive with a glorious lustre of holiness, we see whence they borrowed it. How many thousand souls are betrayed by the abuse of that Word, whose use is sovereign and saving?

ving. No Devil is so dangerous as the religious Devil. If good meat turn to the nourishment, not of nature, but of the disease, we may not forbear to feed, but endeavour to purge the body of those evil humours which cause the stomach to work against it self. O God, thou that hast given us light, give us clear and sound eyes, that we may take comfort of that light thou hast given us. Thy Word is holy ; make our Hearts so, and then shall they find that Word not more true then cordial. Let not this Divine Table of thine be made a snare to our souls.

What can be a better act then to speak Scripture ? It were a wonder if Satan should doe a good thing well. He cites Scripture then, but with mutilation and distortion : it comes not out of his mouth, but maimed and perverted : one piece is left, all misapplied. Those that wrest or mangle Scripture for their own turn, it is easie to see from what School they come. Let us take the Word from the Authour, not from the Usurper. *David* would not doubt to eat that sheep which he pulled out of the mouth of the Bear or Lion. *He shall give his Angels charge over thee.* O comfortable assurance of our protection ! God's Children never goe unattended : Like unto great Princes we walk ever in the midst of our Guard, though invisible, yet true, carefull, powerfull. What creatures are so glorious as the Angels of heaven ? yet their Maker hath set them to serve us. Our Adoption makes us at once great and safe. We may be contemptible and ignominious in the eyes of the world ; but the Angels of God observe us the while, and scorn not to wait upon us in our homeliest occasions. The Sun or the Light may we keep out of our houses, the Air we cannot ; much less these Spirits, that are more simple and immaterial. No walls, no bolts can sever them from our sides : they accompany us in dungeons, they go with us into our exile. How can we either fear danger, or complain of solitariness, whilst we have so unseparable, so glorious Companions ?

Is our Saviour distasted with Scripture because Satan mis-lays it in his dish? Doth he not rather snatch this sword out of that impure hand, and beat Satan with the weapon which he abuseth? *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* The Scripture is one, as that God whose it is. Where it carries an appearance of difficulty or inconvenience, it needs no light to clear it, but that which it hath in it self. All doubts that may arise from it are fully answered by collation. It is true that God hath taken this care, and given this charge of his own: He will have them kept, not in their sins: they may trust him, they may not tempt him: he meant to incourage their Faith, not their Presumption. To cast our selves upon any immediate Providence when means fail not, is to disobey, in stead of believing God. We may challenge God on his word, we may not strain him beyond it: We may make account of what he promised, we may not subject his promises to unjust examinations; and where no need is, make trial of his Power, Justice, Mercy, by devices of our own. All the Devils in Hell could not elude the force of this Divine answer: and now Satan sees how vainly he tempteth *Christ* to tempt God.

Yet again for all this do I see him setting upon the Son of God. Satan is not foiled, when he is resisted. Neither Diffidence nor Presumption can fasten upon *Christ*; he shall be tried with Honour. As some expert Fencer that challenges at all weapons, so doth his great Enemy. In vain shall we plead our skill in some, if we fail in any. It must be our wisdom to be prepared for all kind of Assaults. As those that hold Towns and Forts do not onely defend themselves from Incurfions, but from the Cannon and the Pioneer. Still doth that subtle Serpent traverse his ground for an advantage. The Temple is not high enough for his next Temptation; he therefore carries up *Christ* to the top of an exceeding high Mountain. All enemies in pitcht fields strive for the benefit of the Hill, or River, or Wind,

or Sun. That which his servant *Balak* did by his instigation, himself doth now immediately, change places in hope of prevailing. If the obscure Country will not move us, he tries what the Court can doe; if not our Home, the Tavern; if not the Field, our Closet. As no place is left free by his malice, so no place must be made prejudicial by our carelesnes: and as we should always watch over our selves, so then most when the opportunity carries cause of suspicion.

Wherefore is *Christ* carried up so high but for prospect? If the Kingdoms of the earth and their glory were onely to be presented to his Imagination, the Valley would have served; if to the outward Sense, no Hill could suffice. Circular bodies, though small, cannot be seen at once. This show was made to both: divers Kingdoms lying round about *Judæa* were represented to the Eye; the glory of them to the Imagination. Satan meant the Eye could tempt the Fancy, no less then the Fancy could tempt the Will. How many thousand souls have died of the wound of the Eye? If we do not let in sin at the window of the Eye, or the door of the Ear, it cannot enter into our Hearts.

If there be any pomp, majesty, pleasure, bravery in the world, where should it be but in the Courts of Princes, whom God hath made his Images, his Deputies on earth? There is soft raiment, sumptuous feasts, rich jewels, honourable attendence, glorious triumphs, royal state. These Satan lays out to the fairest show. But oh the craft of that old Serpent! Many a Care attends Greatness: No Crown is without Thorns: High seats are never but uneasy. All those infinite discontentments which are the shadow of earthly Sovereignty he hides out of the way; nothing may be seen but what may both please and allure. Satan is still and ever like himself. If Temptations might be but turn'd about and shewn on both sides, the Kingdom of darkness would not be so populous. Now whensoever the Tempter sets

sets upon any poor Soul, all sting of conscience, wrath, judgment, torment is concealed, as if they were not. Nothing may appear to the eye but pleasure, profit, and a seeming happiness in the enjoying our desires. Those other wofull objects are reserved for the farewell of sin; that our misery may be seen and felt at once. When we are once sure, Satan is a Tyrant; till then, he is a Parasite. There can be no safety, if we do not view as well the back as the face of Temptations.

But oh presumption and impudence that Hell it self may be ashamed of! The Devil dares say to *Christ*, *All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* That beggarly Spirit, that hath not an inch of Earth, can offer the whole World to the Maker, to the Owner of it. The Slave of God would be adored of his Creatour. How can we hope he should be sparing of false boasts, and of unreasonable promises unto us, when he dares offer Kingdoms to him by whom Kings reign?

Temptations on the right hand are most dangerous. How many that have been hardened with Fear, have melted with Honour? There is no doubt of that Soul that will not bite at the golden hook.

False Liars and vain-glorious Boasters see the top of their pedigree: if I may not rather say, that Satan doth borrow the use of their tongues for a time. Whereas *faithfull is he that hath promised, who will also doe it.* Fidelity and Truth is the issue of Heaven.

If Idolatry were not a dear sin to Satan, he would not be so importunate to compass it. It is miserable to see how he draws the world insensibly into this sin, which they profess to detest. Those that would rather hazard the furnace then worship Gold in a Statue, yet do adore it in the stamp, and find no fault with themselves. If our hearts be drawn to stoop unto an over-high respect of any creature, we are Idolaters. O God, it is no marvel if thy jealousy be kindled at the admission of any of thine own

works into a competition of honour with their Creatour.

Never did our Saviour say, *Avoid, Satan*, till now. It is a just indignation that is conceived at the motion of a rivalry with God. Neither yet did *Christ* exercise his Divine power in this command, but by the necessary force of Scripture drives away that impure Tempter; *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve.* The rest of our Saviour's answers were more full and direct then that they could admit of a reply; but this was so flat and absolute, that it utterly daunted the courage of Satan, and put him to a shamefull flight, and made him for the time weary of his trade.

The way to be rid of the troublesome sollicitations of that Wicked one is continued resistence. He that forcibly drove the Tempter from himself, takes him off from us, and will not abide his assaults perpetual. It is our exercise and trial that he intends, not our confusion.

X.

Simon called.

AS the Sun in his first rising draws all eyes to it; so did this Sun of righteousness, when he first shone forth into the world. His miraculous Cures drew Patients, his Divine Doctrine drew Auditours, both together drew the admiring multitude by troops after him. And why do we not still follow thee, O Saviour, through desarts and mountains, over land and seas, that we may be both healed and taught? It was thy word, that *when thou wert lift up; thou wouldst draw all men unto thee*: Behold, thou art lift up long since, both to the Tree of shame, and to the Throne
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of heavenly Glory, *Draw us, and we shall run after thee.* Thy Word is still the same, though proclaimed by men; thy Virtue is still the same, though exercised upon the spirits of men. Oh give us to hunger after both, that by both our souls may be satisfied.

I see the people not onely following *Christ*, but pressing upon him. Even very Unmannerliness finds here both excuse and acceptation. They did not keep their distances in an awe to the Majesty of the Speaker, whilst they were ravished with the power of the Speech: yet did not our Saviour check their unreverent thronging, but rather encourages their forwardness. We cannot offend thee, O God, with the importunity of our desires. It likes thee well, that *the Kingdom of heaven* should *suffer violence*. Our slackness doth ever displease thee, never our vehemency.

The throng of Auditours forced *Christ* to leave the shore, and to make *Peter's Ship* his Pulpit. Never were there such nets cast out of that fisher-boat before. Whilst he was upon the land; he healed the sick bodies by his touch: now that he was upon the Sea, he cured the sick souls by his doctrine; and is purposely severed from the multitude, that he may unite them to him. He that made both Sea and Land, causeth both of them to conspire to the opportunities of doing good.

Simon was busie washing his nets. Even those nets that caught nothing must be washed, no less then if they had sped well. The night's toil doth not excuse his day's work. Little did *Simon* think of leaving those nets which he so carefully washed; and now *Christ* interrupts him with the favour and blessing of his gracious presence. Labour in our calling (how homely soever) makes us capable of Divine benediction. The honest Fisher-man, when he saw the people flock after *Christ*, and heard him speak with such power, could not but conceive a general and confuse apprehension of some excellent worth in such a Teacher,

and therefore is glad to honour his Ship with such a Guest; and is first *Christ's* Host by Sea, ere he is his Disciple by land. An humble and serviceable entertainment of a Prophet of God was a good foundation of his future honour. He that would so easily lend *Christ* his hand and his Ship, was likely soon after to bestow himself upon his Saviour.

Simon hath no sooner done this service to *Christ*, then *Christ* is preparing for his reward: when the Sermon is ended, the Ship-room shall be paid for abundantly: neither shall the Host expect any other Pay-master then himself. *Lanch forth into the deep, and let down your Nets to make a draught.* That ship which lent *Christ* an opportunity of catching men upon the shore, shall be requited with a plentiful draught of fish in the deep. It had been as easie for our Saviour to have brought the fish to *Peter's* ship, close to the shore; yet, as chusing rather to have the ship carried to the shole of fish, he bids, *Lanch forth into the deep.* In his Miracles, he loves ever to meet Nature in her bounds; and when she hath done her best, to supply the rest by his over-ruling power. The same power therefore that could have caused the fishes to leap upon dry land, or to leave themselves forsaken of the waters upon the sands of the Lake, will rather find them in a place natural to their abiding. *Lanch out into the deep.*

Rather in a desire to gratifie and obey his Guest, then to pleasure himself, will *Simon* bestow one cast of his Net. Had *Christ* injoynd him an harder task, he had not refused. Yet not without an allegation of the unlikelihood of success; *Master, we have travailed all night, and caught nothing; yet at thy word I will let down the Net.* The night was the fittest time for the hopes of their trade; not unjustly might *Simon* mis-doubt his speed by day, when he had worn out the night in unprofitable labour. Sometimes God crosseth the fairest of our expectations; and gives a blessing to those times and means whereof we despair. That
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pains cannot be cast away, which we resolve to lose for *Christ*. O God, how many do I see casting out their Nets in the great Lake of the world, which in the whole night of their life have caught nothing? They *conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity: They hatch Cockatrices eggs, and weave the Spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is troden upon breaketh out into a Serpent. Their webs shall be no garment, neither shall they cover themselves with their labours.*

O ye sons of men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after lies? Yet if we have thus vainly mis-spent the time of our darkness, let us at the command of *Christ* cast out our new-washen nets; our humble and penitent obedience shall come home laden with blessings. *And when they had so done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their Net brake.* What a difference there is betwixt our own voluntary acts, and those that are done upon command; not more in the grounds of them, then in the issue? Those are oft-times fruitless, these ever successfull. Never man threw out his Net at the word of his Saviour, and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O *Christ*, since thou dost so bountifully requite our weakest services? It was not meer retribution that was intended in this event, but instruction also: This act was not without a mystery. He that should be made a *Fisher of men*, shall in this draught foresee his success. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like a draw-net cast into the Sea, which, when it is full, men draw to land.* The very first draught that *Peter* made after the complement of his Apostleship inclosed no less then three thousand souls. O powerfull Gospel, that can fetch sinfull men from out of the depths of natural corruption! O happy souls, that from the blind and muddy cells of our wicked nature are drawn forth to the glorious liberty of the Sons of God! *Simon's Net breaks with the store.* Abundance is sometimes no less troublesome then want. The Net should have held, if *Christ* had not meant to over-charge *Simon* both with

with blessing and admiration. How happily is that Net broken, whose rupture draws the Fisher to *Christ*? Though the Net brake, yet the fish escaped not. He that brought them thither to be taken, held them there till they were taken. *They beckened to their partners in the other skip, that they should come and help them.* There are other ships in partnership with *Peter*, he doth not fish all the Lake alone. There cannot be a better improvement of society, then to help us gain, to relieve us in our profitable labours, to draw up the spiritual draught into the vessel of *Christ* and his Church. Wherefore hath God given us partners, but that we should becken to them for their aid in our necessary occasions? Neither doth *Simon* slacken his hand, because he had assistents. What shall we say to those lazy Fishers, who can set others to the Drag, whilst themselves look on at ease; caring onely to feed themselves with the Fish, not willing to wet their hands with the Net? What shall we say to this excess of gain? The Nets break, the ships sink with their burthen. O happy complaint of too large a capture! O Saviour, if those Apostolical vessels of thy first rigging were thus over-laid, ours flote and totter with a balasted lightness. Thou, who art no less present in these bottoms of ours, lade them with an equal fraught of converted souls, and let us praise thee for thus sinking.

Simon was a skilfull Fisher, and knew well the depth of his trade; and now perceiving more then Art or Nature in this draught, he falls down at the knees of *Jesus*, saying, *Lord, goe from me, for I am a sinfull man.* Himself is caught in this Net. He doth not greedily fall upon so unexpected and profitable a booty, but he turns his eyes from the draught to himself, from the act to the Authour, acknowledging vileness in the one, in the other Majesty: *Goe from me, Lord, for I am a sinfull man.*

It had been pity the honest Fisher-man should have been taken at his word. O *Simon*, thy Saviour is come into thine own ship to call thee, to call others by thee unto
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Blessedness, and dost thou say, *Lord, goe from me?* As if the Patient should say to the Physician, Depart from me, for I am sick. It was the voice of Astonishment, not of Dislike; the voice of Humility, not of Discontentment. Yea, because thou art a sinfull man, therefore hath thy Saviour need to come to thee, to stay with thee; and because thou art humble in the acknowledgment of thy sinfulness, therefore *Christ* delights to abide with thee, and will call thee to abide with him. No man ever fared the worse for abasing himself to his God. *Christ* hath left many a soul for froward and unkind usage; never any for the disparagement of it self, and intreaties of humility. *Simon* could not devise how to hold *Christ* faster, then by thus suing to him to be gone, then by thus pleading his Unworthiness.

O my soul, be not weary of complaining of thine own wretchedness; disgrace thy self to him that knows thy vileness; be astonished at those mercies which have shamed thine ill deservings. Thy Saviour hath no power to go away from a prostrate heart. He that resists the proud, heartens the lowly. *Fear not, for I will make thee henceforth a Fisher of men.* Loe, this Humility is rewarded with an Apostleship. What had the Earth ever more glorious then a Legacy from Heaven? He that bade *Christ* go from him, shall have the honour to go first on this happy errand. This was a Trade that *Simon* had no skill of: it could not but be enough to him, that *Christ* said, *I will make thee:* the Miracle shewed him able to make good his word. He that hath power to command the Fishes to be taken, can easily inable the hands to take them.

What is this Divine Trade of ours then but a spiritual Piscation? The World is a Sea, Souls like Fishes swim at liberty in this Deep, the Nets of wholesome Doctrine draw up some to the shore of Grace and Glory. How much skill, and toil, and patience is requisite in this Art? *Who is sufficient for these things?* This Sea, these Nets, the

Fishers, the Fish, the Vessels, are all thine, O God; doe what thou wilt in us, and by us. Give us ability and grace to take; give men will and grace to be taken; and take thou Glory by that which thou hast given.

XI.

The Marriage in Cana.

WAS this then thy first Miracle, O Saviour, that thou wroughtest in *Cana of Galilee*? And could there be a greater Miracle then this, that having been thirty years upon earth, thou didst no Miracle till now? that thy Divinity did hide it self thus long in Flesh? that so long thou wouldst lie obscure in a corner of *Galilee*, unknown to that World thou camest to redeem? that so long thou wouldst strain the patient expectation of those who, ever since thy Star, waited upon the revelation of a *Messias*? We silly wretches, if we have but a dram of Vertue, are ready to set it out to the best show: Thou, who receivedst not the Spirit by measure, wouldst content thy self with a willing obscurity, and concealedst that Power that made the World, in the roof of an Humane breast, in a Cottage of *Nazareth*. O Saviour, none of thy Miracles is more worthy of astonishment, then thy not doing of Miracles. What thou didst in private, thy wisdom thought fit for secrecy: but if thy Blessed Mother had not been acquainted with some domestical Wonders, she had not now expected a Miracle abroad. The Stars are not seen by day; the Sun it self is not seen by night. As it is no small art to hide Art, so is it no small glory to conceal Glory. Thy first publick Miracle graceth a Marriage. It is an ancient
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and laudable institution, that the Rites of Matrimony should not want a solemn celebration. When are Feasts in season, if not at the recovery of our lost Rib? if not at this main change of our estate, wherein the joy of obtaining meets with the hope of farther comforts? The Son of the Virgin and the Mother of that Son are both at a Wedding. It was in all likelihood some of their Kindred to whose nuptiall feast they were invited so far: yet was it more the honour of the act, then of the person, that *Christ* intended. He that made the first Marriage in Paradise, bestows his first Miracle upon a *Galilean* Marriage. He that was the Authour of Matrimony and sanctified it, doth by his Holy presence honour the resemblance of his eternall union with his Church. How boldly may we spit in the faces of all the impure Adversaries of Wedlock, when the Son of God pleases to honour it?

The glorious Bridegroom of the Church knew well how ready men would be to place shame even in the most lawfull conjunctions; and therefore his first work shall be to countenance his own Ordinance. Happy is that Wedding where *Christ* is a Guest. O Saviour, those that marry in thee cannot marry without thee. There is no holy Marriage whereat thou art not (however invisible, yet) truly present, by thy Spirit, by thy gracious Benediction. Thou makest Marriages in Heaven, thou blestest them from Heaven. O thou that hast betrothed us to thy self in Truth and Righteousness, do thou consummate that happy Marriage of ours in the highest Heavens. It was no rich or sumptuous Bridal to which *Christ* with his Mother and Disciples vouchsafed to come from the farther parts of *Galilee*. I find him not at the magnificent feasts or triumphs of the Great: The proud pomp of the World did not agree with the state of a Servant. This poor needy Bridegroom wants drink for his guests. The Blessed Virgin, (though a stranger to the house,) out of a charitable compassion, and a friendly desire to maintain the decency of an hospitall entertainment,

inquires into the wants of her Host, pities them, bemoans them, where there was power of redress. *When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine.* How well doth it beseem the eyes of piety and Christian love, to look into the necessities of others? She that conceived the God of mercies both in her heart and in her womb, doth not fix her eyes upon her own Trencher, but searcheth into the penury of a poor *Israelite*, and feels those wants whereof he complains not. They are made for themselves, whose thoughts are onely taken up with their own store or indigence.

There was wine enough for a meal, though not for a feast; and if there were not wine enough, there was enough water: yet the Holy Virgin complains of the want of wine, and is troubled with the very lack of superfluity. The bounty of our God reaches not to our life onely, but to our contentment; neither hath he thought good to allow us onely the bread of sufficiency, but sometimes of pleasure. One while that is but necessary, which some other time were superfluous. It is a scrupulous injustice, to scant our selves, where God hath been liberal.

To whom should we complain of any want, but to the Maker and Giver of all things? The Blessed Virgin knew to whom she sued. She had good reason to know the Divine nature and power of her Son. Perhaps the Bridegroom was not so-needy, but, if not by his purse, yet by his credit he might have supplied that want, or, it were hard if some of the neighbour-guests (had they been duely solicited) might not have furnished him with so much wine as might suffice for the last service of a dinner: But Blessed *Mary* knew a nearer way; she did not think best to lade at the shallow Chanel, but runs rather to the Well-head, where she may dip and fill the Firkins at once with ease. It may be she saw that the Train of *Christ*: (which unbidden followed unto that Feast, and unexpectedly added to the number of the guests) might help forward:

ward that defect; and therefore she justly solicits her Son *Jesus* for a supply. Whether we want Bread, or Water, or Wine, Necessaries or Comforts, whither should we run, O Saviour, but to that infinite munificence of thine, which neither denieth, nor upbraideth any thing? We cannot want, we cannot abound, but from thee. Give us what thou wilt, so thou give us Contentment with what thou givest.

But what is this I hear? A sharp answer to the suit of a Mother: *O woman, what have I to doe with thee?* He whose sweet mildness and mercy never sent away any suppliant discontented, doth he onely frown upon her that bare him? He that commands us to honour Father and Mother, doth he disdain her whose flesh he took? God forbid: Love and Duty doth not exempt Parents from due admonition. She solicited *Christ* as a Mother, he answers her as a Woman. If she were the Mother of his Flesh, his Deity was eternal. She might not so remember her self to be a Mother, that she should forget she was a Woman; nor so look upon him as a Son, that she should not regard him as a God. He was so obedient to her as a Mother, that withall she must obey him as her God. That part which he took from her shall observe her: She must observe that nature which came from above, and made her both a Woman and a Mother. Matter of miracle concerned the Godhead onely; Supernatural things were above the sphere of fleshly relation. If now the Blessed Virgin will be prescribing either time or form unto Divine acts, *O woman, what have I to doe with thee, my hour is not come?* In all bodily actions his style was, *O Mother*: in spiritual and heavenly, *O Woman*. Neither is it for us in the holy affairs of God to know any faces; yea, *if we have known Christ heretofore according to the flesh; henceforth know we him so no more.*

O Blessed Virgin, if in that heavenly Glory wherein thou art thou canst take notice of these earthly things,

with what indignation dost thou look upon the presumptuous Superstition of vain men, whose suits make thee more then a Solicitour of Divine Favours? Thy Humanity is not lost in thy Motherhood, nor in thy Glory: The respects of Nature reach not so high as Heaven. It is far from thee to abide that Honour which is stolln from thy Redeemer.

There is a Marriage whereto we are invited, yea, where-in we are already interess'd, not as the Guests onely, but as the Bride; in which there shall be no want of the Wine of gladness. It is marvel, if in these earthly Banquets there be not some lack. *In thy presence, O Saviour, there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage-supper of the Lamb.*

Even in that rough Answer doth the Blessed Virgin descry cause of hope. If his hour were not yet come, it was therefore coming: When the expectation of the guests and the necessity of the occasion had made fit room for the Miracle, it shall come forth, and challenge their wonder. Faithfully therefore and observantly doth she turn her speech from her Son to the Waiters: *Whatsoever he saith unto you, doe it.* How well doth it beseem the Mother of *Christ* to agree with his Father in Heaven, whose voice from Heaven said, *This is my wel-beloved Son, hear him?* She that said of her self, *Be it unto me according to thy word,* says unto others, *Whatsoever he saith unto you, doe it.* This is the way to have Miracles wrought in us, Obedience to his Word. The power of *Christ* did not stand upon their Officioufness; he could have wrought wonders in spite of them: but their perverse refusal of his commands might have made them incapable of the favour of a miraculous action. He that can (when he will) convince the obstinate, will not grace the disobedient. He that could work without us, or against us, will not work for us, but by us.

This very poor House was furnished with many and large Vessels for outward purification. As if Sin had dwelt upon the skin, that superstitious people sought holiness in frequent Washings. Even this rinsing fouled them with the uncleanness of a traditional will-worship. It is the Soul which needs scouring; and nothing can wash that, but the Blood which they desperately wished upon themselves and their children, for guilt, not for expiation. *Purge thou us, O Lord, with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter then snow.*

The Waiters could not but think strange of so unseasonable a command, *Fill the water-pots.* It is Wine that we want, what do we go to fetch Water? Doth this Holy man mean thus to quench our thirst, and cool our stomachs? If there be no remedy, we could have sought this supply unbidden. Yet so far hath the charge of *Christ's* Mother prevailed, that, in stead of carrying flagons of Wine to the Table, they go to fetch pails-full of Water from the Cisterns. It is no pleading of unlikelihoods against the command of an Almighty power.

He that could have created Wine immediately in those vessels, will rather turn Water into Wine. In all the course of his Miracles, I do never find him making ought of nothing; all his great works are grounded upon former existences: He multiplied the Bread, he changed the Water, he restored the withered Lims, he raised the Dead, and still wrought upon that which was, and did not make that which was not. What doeth he in the ordinary way of nature, but turn the watery juice that arises up from the root into wine? He will onely doe this now suddenly and at once, which he doeth usually by sensible degrees. It is ever duly observed by the Son of God, not to doe more Miracles then he needs.

How liberal are the provisions of *Christ*? If he had turned but one of those vessels, it had been a just proof of his power; and perhaps that quantity had served the present necessity:

necessity : now he furnisheth them with so much wine as would have served an hundred and fifty guests for an intire feast. Even the measure magnifies at once both his power and mercy. The munificent hand of God regards not our need onely, but our honest affluence. It is our sin and our shame, if we turn his favour into wantonness. There must be first a filling ere there be a drawing out. Thus, in our vessels, the first care must be of our receipt ; the next, of our expence : God would have us Cisterns, not Chansels. Our Saviour would not be his own taster, but he sends the first draught to the Governour of the feast. He knew his own power, they did not. Neither would he bear witness of himself, but fetch it out of others mouths. They that knew not the original of that wine, yet praised the taste : *Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse ; but thou hast kept the good wine untill now.* The same bounty that expressed it self in the quantity of the wine, shews it self no less in the excellence. Nothing can fall from that Divine hand not exquisite. That liberality hated to provide Crab-wine for his guests. It was fit that the miraculous effects of *Christ* (which came from his immediate hand) should be more perfect then the natural. O Blessed Saviour, how delicate is that *new Wine* which we shall one day *drink with thee, in thy Father's Kingdom!* Thou shalt turn this Water of our earthly affliction into that Wine of gladness, wherewith our souls shall be satiate for ever. *Make haste, O my Beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountain of spices.*

XII.

The good Centurion.

Even the bloody trade of War yielded worthy Clients to *Christ*. This *Roman* Captain had learned to believe in that *Jesus* whom many *Jews* despised. No Nation, no Trade can shut out a good heart from God. If he were a forreiner for birth, yet he was a domestick in heart: He could not change his blood, he could over-rule his affections. He loved that Nation which was chosen of God; and if he were not of the Synagogue, yet he built a Synagogue: where he might not be a party, he would be a Benefactor. Next to being good, is a favouring of Goodness. We could not love Religion, if we utterly wanted it. How many true *Jews* were not so zealous? Either will or ability lacked in them, whom duty more obliged. Good affections do many times more then supply nature. Neither doth God regard whence, but what we are. I do not see this Centurion come to *Christ* as the *Israelitish* Captain came to *Elias* in *Carmel*, but with his cap in his hand, with much suit, much submission, by others, by himself. He sends first the Elders of the *Jews*, whom he might hope their Nation and Place might make gracious: then, lest the imployment of others might argue neglect, he seconds them in person. Cold and fruitless are the motions of friends, where we do wilfully shut up our own lips. Importunity cannot but speed well in both. Could we but speak for our selves, as this Captain did for his servant, what could we possibly want? What marvell is it if God be not forward to give, where we care not to ask, or ask as if we cared not to receive? Shall we yet call this a suit, or a complaint? I hear no one word of intreaty. The less is said, the more

is concealed: It is enough to lay open his want. He knew well, that he had to deal with so wise and mercifull a Physician, as that the opening of the maladie was a craving of cure. If our spirituall miseries be but confessed, they cannot fail of redress.

Great variety of Suitours resorted to *Christ*. One comes to him for a Son, another comes for a Daughter, a third for Himself: I see none come for his Servant, but this one Centurion. Neither was he a better man then a Master. His Servant is sick; he doth not drive him out of doors, but lays him at home: neither doth he stand gazing by his bed-side, but seeks forth. He seeks forth, not to Witches or Charmers, but to *Christ*: He seeks to *Christ*, not with a fashionable relation, but with a vehement aggravation of the disease. Had the Master been sick, the faithfullest Servant could have done no more. He is unworthy to be well served, that will not sometimes wait upon his followers. Conceits of inferiority may not breed in us a neglect of charitable offices. So must we look down upon our Servants here on earth, as that we must still look up to our Master which is in Heaven.

But why didst thou not, O Centurion, rather bring thy Servant to *Christ* for cure, then sue for him absent? There was a Paralytick whom Faith and Charity brought to our Saviour, and let down through the uncovered roof in his Bed: why was not thine so carried, so presented? Was it out of the strength of thy Faith, which assured thee thou neededst not shew thy Servant to him who saw all things? One and the same grace may yield contrary effects. They, because they believed, brought the Patient to *Christ*: thou broughtest not thine to him, because thou believedst. Their act argued no less desire, thine more confidence. Thy labour was less, because thy faith was more. Oh that I could come thus to my Saviour, and make such moan to him for my self, Lord, my Soul is sick of Unbelief, sick of Self-love, sick of inordinate Desires! I should not need to say

more. Thy mercy, O Saviour, would not then stay by for my suit, but would prevent me (as here) with a gracious ingagement, *I will come and heal thee.* I do not hear the Centurion say, *Either come, or heal him:* The one he meant, though he said it not; the other he neither said nor meant. *Christ* over-gives both his words and intentions. It is the manner of that Divine munificence, where he meets with a faithfull Suitour, to give more then is requested; to give when he is not requested. The very insinuations of our necessities are no less violent then successfull. We think the measure of humane bounty runs over, when we obtain but what we ask with importunity: that infinite Goodness keeps within bounds, when it overflows the desires of our hearts.

As he said, so he did. The word of *Christ* either is his act, or concurs with it. He did not stand still when he said, *I will come,* but he went as he spake. When the Ruler intrated him for his Son, *Come down ere he die,* our Saviour stirr'd not a foot: The Centurion did but complain of the sickness of his Servant, and *Christ* unasked says, *I will come and heal him.* That he might be far from so much as seeming to honour wealth, and despise meanness, he that came in the shape of a Servant, would goe down to the sick Servant's Pallet, would not goe to the Bed of the rich Ruler's Son. It is the basest motive of respect, that ariseth meerly from outward Greatness. Either more Grace, or more need, may justly challenge our favourable regards, no less then private Obligations.

Even so, O Saviour, that which thou offeredst to doe for the Centurion's Servant, hast thou done for us. We were sick unto death; so far had the dead palsie of Sin overtaken us, that there was no life of Grace left in us: when thou wert not content to sit still in Heaven, and say, *I will cure them;* but addedst also, *I will come and cure them.* Thy self camest down accordingly to this miserable World, and hast personally healed us; so as now *we shall not die,*

but live, and declare thy works, O Lord. And oh that we could enough praise that love and mercy which hath so graciously abased thee, and could be but so low dejected before thee, as thou hast stooped low unto us; that we could be but as lowly subjects of thy Goodness, as we are unworthy!

O admirable return of humility! *Christ* will goe down to visit the sick Servant: The Master of that Servant says, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.* The Jewish Elders, that went before to mediate for him, could say, *He is worthy that thou shouldst doe this for him:* but the Centurion, when he comes to speak for himself, *I am not worthy.* They said, he was worthy of *Christ's* Miracle: he says, he is unworthy of *Christ's* Presence. There is great difference betwixt others valuations, and our own. Sometimes the world under-rates him that finds reason to set an high price upon himself: Sometimes again it over-values a man that knows just cause of his own humiliation. If others mistake us, this can be no warrant for our error. We cannot be wise, unless we receive the knowledge of our selves by direct beams, not by reflexion, unless we have learned to contemn unjust applauses, and, scorning the flattery of the World, to frown upon our own vileness. *Lord, I am not worthy.*

Many a one, if he had been in the Centurion's coat, would have thought well of it. A Captain, a man of good ability and command, a founder of a Synagogue, a Patron of Religion; yet he overlooks all these, and when he casts his eye upon the Divine worth of *Christ*; and his own weakness, he says, *I am not worthy:* Alas! Lord, I am a Gentile, an Alien, a man of bloud; thou art Holy, thou art Omnipotent. True Humility will teach us to find out the best of another, and the worst piece of our selves. Pride contrarily shews us nothing but matter of admiration in our selves, in others of contempt. Whilst he confest himself unworthy of any favour, he approved himself worthy

thy of all. Had not *Christ* been before in his heart, he could not have thought himself unworthy to entertain that Guest within his house. Under the low roof of an humble breast doth God ever delight to dwell. The state of his Palace may not be measured by the height, but by the depth. Brags and bold faces do oftentimes carry it away with men; nothing prevails with God but our voluntary dejections.

It is fit the foundation should be laid deep, where the building is high. The Centurion's Humility was not more low then his Faith was lofty: That reaches up into Heaven, and in the face of humane weakness descries Omnipotence: *Onely say the word, and my Servant shall be whole.*

Had the Centurion's roof been Heaven it self, it could not have been worthy to be come under of him whose Word was Almighty, and who was the Almighty Word of his Father. Such is *Christ* confessed by him that says, *Onely say the word.* None but a Divine power is unlimited: neither hath Faith any other bounds then God himself. There needs no footing to remove Mountains, or Devils, but a word. Do but say the word, O Saviour, my Sin shall be remitted, my Soul shall be healed, my Body shall be raised from dust; both Soul and Body shall be glorious.

Whereupon then was the stiddy confidence of the good Centurion? He saw how powerfull his own word was with those that were under his command, (though himself were under the command of another,) the force whereof extended even to absent performances: well therefore might he argue, that a free and unbounded power might give infallible commands, and that the most obstinate Disease must therefore needs yield to the beck of the God of Nature. Weakness may shew us what is in strength: By one drop of water we may see what is in the main Ocean. I marvell not if the Centurion were kind to his Servants, for they were dutifull to him: he can but say, *Doe this,* and it is done. These mutuall respects draw on each other: Chearfull and dili-

gent service in the one, calls for a due and favourable care in the other. They that neglect to please, cannot complain to be neglected. Oh that I could be but such a Servant to mine heavenly Master! Alas! every of his Commands says, *Doe this*, and I doe it not: every of his Inhibitions says, *Doe it not*, and I doe it. He says, *Goe from the World*; I run to it: he says, *Come to me*; I run from him. Woe is me! this is not service, but enmity. How can I look for favour, whilst I return rebellion? It is a gracious Master whom we serve; there can be no Duty of ours that he sees not, that he acknowledges not, that he crowns not. We could not but be happy, if we could be officious.

What can be more marvellous then to see *Christ* marvell? All marvelling supposes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following some accident unexpected. Now who wrought this Faith in the Centurion, but he that wondred at it? He knew well what he wrought, because he wrought what he would; yet he wondred at what he both wrought and knew; to teach us, much more to admire that which he at once knows and holds admirable. He wrought this Faith as God, he wondred at it as Man: God wrought, and Man admired: he that was both did both, to teach us where to bestow our wonder. I never find *Christ* wondring at gold or silver, at the costly and curious works of humane skill or industry: yea, when the Disciples wondred at the magnificence of the Temple, he rebuked them rather. I find him not wondring at the frame of Heaven and Earth, nor at the orderly disposition of all creatures and events: the familiarity of these things intercepts the admiration. But when he sees the grace or acts of Faith, he so approves them, that he is ravished with wonder. He that rejoyced in the view of his Creation, to see that of nothing he had made all things good, rejoyces no less in the reformation of his Creature, to see that he had made good of evill. *Behold, thou art fair, my Love, behold, thou art*

art fair, and there is no spot in thee. My Sister, my Spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes.

Our Wealth, Beauty, Wit, Learning, Honour, may make us accepted of men, but it is our Faith onely that shall make God in love with us. And why are we of any other save God's diet, to be more affected with the least measure of Grace in any man, then with all the outward glories of the World? There are Great men whom we justly pity; we can admire none but the Gracious:

Neither was that plant more worthy of wonder in it self, then that it grew in such a soil, with so little help of rain and Sun. The weakness of means addes to the praise and acceptation of our proficiency. To doe good upon a little is the commendation of thrift: it is small thank to be full-handed in a large estate. As contrarily, the strength of means doubles the revenge of our neglect. It is not more the shame of *Israel*, then the glory of the Centurion, that our Saviour says, *I have not found so great faith in Israel.* Had *Israel* yielded any equall faith, it could not have been unespied of these All-seeing eyes: yet though their Helps were so much greater, their Faith was less: and God never gives more then he requires. Where we have laid our Tillage and Compost and Seed, who would not look for a Crop? but if the uncultured Fallow yield more, how justly is that unanswerable ground near to a curse?

Our Saviour did not mutter this censorious testimony to himself, not whisper it to his Disciples, but he turned him about to the people, and spake it in their ears, that he might at once work their shame and emulation. In all other things, except spirituall, our self-love makes us impatient of equalls; much less can we endure to be out-stripped by those who are our professed inferiours. It is well if any thing can kindle in us holy ambitions. Dull and base are the spirits of that man, that can abide to see another overtake him in the way, and out-run him to Heaven.

He that both wrought this Faith, and wondred at it, doth now reward it. *Go thy ways, and as thou hast believed, so be it unto thee.* Never was any Faith unseen of *Christ*, never was any seen without allowance, never was any allowed without remuneration. The measure of our receipts in the matter of favour is the proportion of our belief. The infinite Mercy of God (which is ever like it self) follows but one rule in his gift to us, the Faith that he gives us. Give us, O God, to believe, and be it to us as thou wilt, it shall be to us above that we will.

The Centurion sues for his Servant, and *Christ* says, *So be it unto thee.* The Servant's health is the benefit of the Master; and the Master's Faith is the health of the Servant. And if the Prayers of an earthly Master prevailed so much with the Son of God for the recovery of a Servant, how shall the intercession of the Son of God prevail with his Father in Heaven for us that are his impotent Children and Servants upon Earth? What can we want, O Saviour, whilst thou suest for us? He that hath given thee for us can deny thee nothing for us, can deny us nothing for thee. In thee we are happy, and shall be glorious. To thee, O thou mighty Redeemer of *Israel*, with thine Eternal Father, together with thy Blessed Spirit, one God infinite and incomprehensible, be given all Praise, Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XIII.

The Widow's Son raised.

THE favours of our beneficent Saviour were at the least contiguous: No sooner hath he raised the Centurion's Servant from his Bed, then he raises the Widow's Son from his Bier.

The fruitfull clouds are not ordained to fall all in one field: *Nain* must partake of the bounty of *Christ* as well as *Cana* or *Capernaum*. And if this Sun were fixed in one Orb, yet it diffuseth heat and light to all the world. It is not for any place to ingross the Messengers of the Gospel, whose errand is universal: This immortal Seed may not fall all in one furrow.

The little City of *Nain* stood under the hill of *Hermon*, near unto *Tabor*: but now it is watered with better dews from above, the Doctrine and Miracles of a Saviour.

Not for state, but for the more evidence of the work, is our Saviour attended with a large train; so entering into the gate of that walled City, as if he meant to besiege their Faith by his Power, and to take it. His providence hath so contrived his journey, that he meets with the sad pomp of a Funeral. A wofull Widow attended with her weeping neighbours is following her onely Son to the grave. There was nothing in this spectacle that did not command compassion.

A young man in the flower, in the strength of his age swallowed up by death. Our decrepit age both expects death, and solicits it; but vigorous youth looks strangely upon that grim Serjeant of God. Those mellow apples that fall alone from the tree we gather up with content-

ment ; we chide to have the unripe unseasonably beaten down with cudgels.

But more, a young man, the onely Son, the onely Child of his mother. No condition can make it other then grievous for a well-natur'd mother to part with her own bowels ; yet surely there is some mitigation of loss. Amongst many children one may be more easily missed ; for still we hope the surviving may supply the comforts of the dead. But when all our hopes and joys must either live or die in one, the loss of that one admits of no consolation.

When God would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can fall into the miserable, he can but say, *O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thy self in ashes, make lamentation and bitter mourning, as for thine onely Son.* Such was the loss, such was the sorrow of this disconsolate mother : neither words nor tears can suffice to discover it.

Yet more, had she been aided by the counsel and supportation of a loving Yoke-fellow, this burthen might have seem'd less intolerable. A good Husband may make amends for the loss of a Son. Had the Root been left to her intire, she might better have spared the Branch : now both are cut up, all the stay of her life is gone, and she seems abandoned to a perfect misery. And now when she gave her self up for a forlorn mourner, past all capacity of redress, the God of comfort meets her, pities her, relieves her. Here was no Solicitour but his own Compassion : In other occasions he was sought and sued to. The Centurion comes to him for a Servant, the Ruler for a Son, *Jairus* for a Daughter, the neighbours for the Paralytick : here he seeks the Patient, and offers the Cure unrequested. Whilst we have to doe with the Father of mercies, our Afflictions are the most powerfull suitours : No tears, no prayers can move him so much as his own commiseration. O God, none of our secret sorrows can be either hid from
thine

thine eyes, or kept from thine heart : and when we are past all our hopes, all possibilities of help, then art thou nearest to us for deliverance.

Here was a conspiracy of all parts to mercy. The Heart had compassion, the Mouth said, *Weep not*, the Feet went to the Bier, the Hand touched the Coffin, the power of the Deity raised the dead. What the Heart felt was secret to it self, the Tongue therefore expresses it in words of comfort, *Weep not*. Alas ! what are words to so strong and just passions ? To bid her not to weep that had lost her onely Son, was to perswade her to be miserable, and not feel it ; to feel, and not regard it ; to regard, and yet to smother it. Concealment doth not remedy, but aggravate sorrow. That with the counsel of not weeping therefore she might see cause of not weeping, his Hand seconds his Tongue : He arrests the Coffin, and frees the Prisoner ; *Young man , I say unto thee , Arise* : the Lord of life and death speaks with command. No finite power could have said so without presumption, or with success. That is the voice that shall one day call up our vanished bodies from those elements into which they are resolved, and raise them out of their dust. Neither sea, nor death, nor hell can offer to detain their dead, when he charges them to be delivered. Incredulous nature, what dost thou shrink at the possibility of a Resurrection, when the God of nature undertakes it ? It is no more hard for that Almighty Word which gave being unto all things, to say, *Let them be repaired*, then, *Let them be made*.

I do not see our Saviour stretching himself upon the dead corps, as *Elias* and *Elisha* upon the Sons of the *Sunamite* and *Sareptan* ; nor kneeling down, and praying by the Bier, as *Peter* did to *Dorcas* : but I hear him so speaking to the dead as if he were alive, and so speaking to the dead, that by the word he makes him alive ; *I say unto thee, Arise*. Death hath no power to bid that man lie still, whom the Son of God bids *Arise*. Immediatly *he*

that was dead sat up. So at the sound of the last Trumpet, by the power of the same voice, we shall arise out of the dust, and stand up glorious; *this mortal shall put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption.* This body shall not be buried; but sown; and at our day shall therefore spring up with a plentiful increase of glory. How comfortless, how desperate should be our lying down, if it were not for this assurance of rising? And now, behold, lest our weak faith should stagger at the assent to so great a difficulty, he hath already, by what he hath done, given us taste of what he will do. The power that can raise one man can raise a thousand, a million, a world. No power can raise one man but that which is infinite; and that which is infinite admits of no limitation. Under the Old Testament God raised one by *Elias*, another by *Elisha* living; a third by *Elisha* dead: By the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament he raised here the son of the Widow, the daughter of *Jairus*, *Lazarus*, and, in attendance of his own Resurrection, he made a Gaol-delivery of holy Prisoners at *Jerusalem*. He raises the daughter of *Jairus* from her Bed, this Widow's son from his Coffin, *Lazarus* from his Grave, the dead Saints of *Jerusalem* from their Rottenness; that it might appear, no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his over-ruling command. He that *keeps the keys of death* cannot onely make way for himself through the common Hall and outer rooms, but through the inwardest and most reserved closets of darkness.

Methinks I see this young man, who was thus miraculously awaked from his deadly sleep, wiping and rubbing those eyes that had been shut up in death, and descending from the Bier, wrapping his winding-sheet about his loins, cast himself down in a passionate thankfulness at the feet of his Almighty Restorer, adoring that Divine power which had commanded his soul back again to her forsaken lodging: and though I hear not what he said, yet I dare say they were words of praise and wonder which his returned soul

first uttered. It was the Mother whom our Saviour pitied in this act, not the Son, (who now forced from his quiet rest must twice pass through the gates of death.) As for her sake therefore he was raised, so to her hands was he delivered; that she might acknowledge that soul given to her, not to the possessor. Who cannot feel the amazement and ecstasie of joy that was in this revived mother, when her son now salutes her from out of another world, and both receives and gives gratulations of his new life? How suddenly were all the tears of that mournfull train dried up with a joyfull astonishment? How soon is that Funeral-banquet turned into a new Birth-day-feast? What striving was here to salute the late carcase of their returned neighbour? What awfull and admiring looks were cast upon that Lord of life, who seeming homely, was approved Omnipotent? How gladly did every tongue celebrate both the work and the authour? *A great Prophet is raised up amongst us, and, God hath visited his people.* A Prophet was the highest name they could find for him, whom they saw like themselves in shape, above themselves in power. They were not yet acquainted with *God manifested in the flesh.* This Miracle might well have assured them of more than a Prophet: but he that raised the dead man from the Bier would not suddenly raise these dead hearts from the grave of Infidelity. They shall see reason enough to know, that the Prophet who was raised up to them was the God that now visited them, and at last should doe as much for them as he had done for the young man, raise them from death to life, from dust to glory.

XIV.

The Ruler's Son cured.

THE Bounty of God so exceedeth man's, that there is a contrariety in the exercise of it. We shut our hands because we opened them; God therefore opens his because he hath opened them. God's mercies are as comfortable in their issue, as in themselves. Seldome ever do blessings go alone: Where our Saviour supplied the Bridegroom's Wine, there he heals the Ruler's Son. He had not in all these coasts of *Galilee* done any Miracle but here. *To him that hath shall be given.*

We do not find *Christ* oft attended with Nobility; here he is. It was some great Peer, or some noted Courtier, that was now a suitour to him for his dying Son. Earthly Greatness is no defence against Afflictions. We men forbear the mighty: Disease and Death know no faces of Lords or Monarchs. Could these be bribed, they would be too rich. Why should we grudge not to be privileged, when we see there is no spare of the Greatest?

This noble Ruler listens after *Christ*'s return into *Galilee*. The most eminent amongst men will be glad to hearken after *Christ* in their necessity. Happy was it for him that his Son was sick; he had not else been acquainted with his Saviour, his Soul had continued sick of ignorance and unbelief. Why else doth our good God send us pain, losses, opposition, but that he may be sought to? Are we afflicted, whither should we go but to *Cana*, to seek *Christ*? whither but to the *Cana* of Heaven, where our water of sorrow is turned to the wine of gladness, to that Omnipotent Physician who healeth all our infirmities? that we may once say, *It is good for me that I was afflicted.*

It was about a day's journey from *Capernaum* to *Cana*: Thence hither did this Courtier come for the cure of his Son's Fever. What pains even the greatest can be content to take for bodily health? No way is long, no labour tedious to the desirous. Our Souls are sick of a spiritual fever, labouring under the cold fit of Infidelity, and the hot fit of Self-love; and we sit still at home, and see them languish unto death.

This Ruler was neither faithless, nor faithfull. Had he been quite faithless, he had not taken such pains to come to *Christ*. Had he been faithfull, he had not made this suit to *Christ* when he was come, *Come down, and heal my son, ere he die.*

Come down; as if *Christ* could not have cured him absent: *Ere he die*; as if that power could not have raised him being dead. How much difference was here betwixt the Centurion and the Ruler? That came for his Servant, this for his Son. This Son was not more above the Servant, then the Faith which sued for the Servant surpassed that which sued for the Son. The one can say, *Master, come not under my roof, for I am not worthy; onely speak the word, and my servant shall be whole*: The other can say, *Master, either come under my roof, or my Son cannot be whole. Heal my son, had been a good suit; for Christ is the onely Physician for all diseases: but, Come down and heal him*; was to teach God how to work.

It is good reason that he should challenge the right of prescribing to us, who are every way his own: it is presumption in us to stint him unto our forms. An expert workman cannot abide to be taught by a novice: how much less shall the All-wise God endure to be directed by his creature? This is more then if the Patient should take upon him to give a Recipe to the Physician. That God would give us Grace, is a befeeming suit: but to say, Give it me by prosperity, is a sawcy motion.

As there is faithfulness in desiring the end, so modesty
and

and patience in referring the means to the authour. In spiritual things God hath acquainted us with the means whereby he will work, even his own Sacred Ordinances. Upon these, because they have his own promise, we may call absolutely for a blessing : In all others, there is no reason that beggars should be chusers. He who doeth whatsoever he will, must doe it how he will. It is for us to receive, not to appoint.

He who came to complain of his Son's sickness, hears of his own : *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.* This Nobleman was (as is like) of *Capernaum*. There had *Christ* often preached, there was one of his chief residencies. Either this man had heard our Saviour oft, or might have done : yet because *Christ's* Miracles came to him onely by hear-say, (for as yet we find none at all wrought where he preached most,) therefore the man believes not enough ; but so speaks to *Christ* as to some ordinary Physician, *Come down, and heal.* It was the common disease of the *Jews*, Incredulity, which no Receipt could heal but Wonders. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeks signs.* Had they not been wilfully graceless, there was already proof enough of the *Messias* ; the miraculous conception and life of the Fore-runner, *Zachary's* dumbness, the attestation of Angels, the apparition of the Star, the journey of the Sages, the vision of the Shepherds, the testimonies of *Anna* and *Simcon*, the Prophecies fulfilled, the Voice from Heaven at his Baptism, the Divine words that he spake : and yet they must have all made up with Miracles ; which though he be not unwilling to give at his own times, yet he thinks much to be tied unto at theirs. Not to believe without Signs, was a sign of stubborn hearts.

It was a foul fault, and a dangerous one : *Ye will not believe.* What is it that shall condemn the world but Unbelief ? what can condemn us without it ? No Sin can condemn the Repentant. Repentance is a fruit of Faith : where

where true Faith is then, there can be no condemnation ; as there can be nothing but condemnation without it. How much more foul in a noble *Capernaite*, that had heard the Sermons of so Divine a Teacher ? The greater light we have, the more shame it is for us to stumble.

Oh what shall become of us, that reel and fall in the clearest Sun-shine that ever looked forth upon any Church ? Be mercifull to our sins, O God, and say any thing of us, rather then, *Ye will not believe.*

Our Saviour tells him of his Unbelief ; he feels not himself sick of that disease : all his mind is on his dying Son. As easily do we complain of bodily griefs, as we are hardly affected with spiritual. O the meekness and mercy of this Lamb of God ! When we would have look'd that he should have punished this Suitour for not believing, he condescends to him that he may believe : *Goe thy way, thy son liveth.* If we should measure our hopes by our own worthiness, there were no expectation of blessings : but if we shall measure them by his bounty and compassion, there can be no doubt of prevailing. As some tender mother that gives the breast to her unquiet child in stead of the rod, so deals he with our perverseness.

How God differences men according to no other conditions then of their Faith ! The Centurion's Servant was sick, the Ruler's Son. The Centurion doth not sue unto *Christ* to come, onely says, *My servant is sick of a palse :* *Christ* answers him, *I will come and heal him.* The Ruler sues unto *Christ*, that he would come, and heal his Son : *Christ* will not goe, onely says, *Goe thy way, thy son liveth.* Outward things carry no respect with God. The image of that Divine Majesty shining inwardly in the Graces of the Soul is that which wins love from him in the meanest estate. The Centurion's Faith therefore could doe more then the Ruler's Greatness ; and that faithfull man's Servant hath more regard then this great man's Son.

The Ruler's request was, *Come and heal :* *Christ's* answer

was, *Goe thy way, thy son liveth*. Our mercifull Saviour meets those in the end, whom he crosses in the way. How sweetly doth he correct our prayers, and whilst he doth not give us what we ask, gives us better then we asked?

Justly doth he forbear to go down with this Ruler, lest he should confirm him in an opinion of measuring his power by conceits of locality and distance: but he doeth that in absence, for which his presence was required with a repulse, *Thy son liveth*; giving a greater demonstration of his Omnipotency then was craved. How oft doth he not hear to our will, that he may hear us to our advantage? The chosen vessel would be rid of Temptations, he hears of a supply of Grace. The sick man asks release, receives patience; life, and receives glory. Let us ask what we think best, let him give what he knows best.

With one word doth *Christ* heal two Patients, the Son, and the Father; the Son's Fever, the Father's Unbelief. That operative word of our Saviour was not without the intention of a trial. Had not the Ruler gone home satisfied with that intimation of his Son's life and recovery, neither of them had been blessed with success. Now the news of performance meets him one half of the way: and he that believed somewhat ere he came, and more when he went, grew to more Faith in the way; and when he came home, enlarged his Faith to all the skirts of his Family. A weak Faith may be true, but a true Faith is growing. He that boasts of a full stature in the first moment of his assent, may presume, but doth not believe.

Great men cannot want clients, their example sways some, their authority more; they cannot go to either of the other worlds alone. In vain do they pretend power over others, who labour not to draw their families unto God.

XV.

The Dumb Devil ejected.

THat the Prince of our Peace might approve his victories perfect, wheresoever he met with the Prince of darkness he foiled him, he ejected him. He found him in Heaven; thence did he throw him headlong, and verified his Prophet, *I have cast thee out of mine holy mountain.* And if the Devils *left their first habitation*, it was because (being Devils) they could not keep it. Their estate indeed they might have kept, and did not; their habitation they would have kept, and might not. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer?* He found him in the Heart of man, (for in that closet of God did the evil Spirit after his exile from Heaven throwd himself; Sin gave him possession, which he kept with a willing violence;) thence he casts him by his Word and Spirit. He found him tyrannizing in the Bodies of some possessed men, and with power commands the unclean Spirits to depart.

This act is for no hand but his. When a strong man keeps possession, none but a stronger can remove it. In voluntary things the strongest may yield to the weakest, *Sampson* to a *Dalilah*; but in violent, ever the mightiest carries it. A spirituall nature must needs be in rank above a bodily; neither can any power be above a Spirit, but the God of Spirits.

No otherwise is it in the mentall possession. Where ever Sin is, there Satan is: As on the contrary, *whosoever is born of God, the seed of God remains in him.* That Evil one not onely is, but *rules in the sons of disobedience*: in vain shall we try to eject him, but by the Divine power of the Redeemer. *For this cause the Son of God was mani-*

fested, that he might destroy the works of the Devill. Do we find our selves haunted with the familiar Devills of Pride, Self-love, Sensuall desires, Unbelief? None but thou, O Son of the ever-living God, can free our bosoms of these hellish guests. *O cleanse thou me from my secret sins, and keep me that presumptuous sins prevail not over me.* O Saviour, it is no Paradox to say that thou castest out more Devils now then thou didst whilst thou wert upon earth. It was thy word, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.* Satan weighs down at the feet, thou pullest at the head, yea at the heart. In every conversion which thou workest, there is a dispossession. Convert me, O Lord, and I shall be converted. I know thy means are now no other then ordinary: If we expect to be dispossessed by miracle, it would be a miracle if ever we were dispossessed. O let thy Gospell have the perfect work in me, so onely shall I be delivered from the powers of darkness.

Nothing can be said to be dumb but what naturally speaks; nothing can speak naturally but what hath the instruments of speech; which because spirits want, they can no otherwise speak vocally, then as they take voices to themselves in taking bodies. This Devill was not therefore dumb in his nature, but in his effect: The man was dumb by the operation of that Devill which possessed him; and now the action is attributed to the spirit, which was subjectively in the man. *It is not you that speak, saith our Saviour, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.*

As it is in bodily diseases, that they do not infect us alike, some seize upon the humours, others upon the spirits; some assault the brain, others the heart or lungs: so in bodily and spirituall possessions; in some the evill spirit takes away their senses, in some their lims, in some their inward faculties; like as spirituallly they affect to move us unto severall sins, one to Lust, another to Covetousness or Ambition, another to Cruelty: and their names have distinguished them according to these various effects. This was a dumb Devill, which

which yet had possessed not the tongue onely of this man, but his ear; nor that onely, but (as it seems) his eyes too.

O subtle and tyrannous spirit, that obstructs all ways to the Soul, that keeps out all means of grace both from the door and windows of the Heart; yea, that stops up all passages, whether of ingress, or egress; of ingress at the Eye, or Ear, of egress at the Mouth; that there might be no capacity of redress!

What holy use is there of our Tongue but to praise our Maker, to confess our sins, to inform our brethren? How rise is this dumb Devill every-where, whilst he stops the mouths of Christians from these usefull and necessary duties?

For what end hath man those two privileges above his fellow-creatures, Reason, and Speech, but that, as by the one he may conceive of the great works of his Maker, which the rest cannot, so by the other he may express what he conceives to the honour of the Creatour both of them and himself? And why are all other creatures said to praise God, and bidden to praise him, but because they doe it by the apprehension, by the expression of man? *If the heavens declare the glory of God; how doe they it but to the eyes and by the tongue of that man for whom they were made? It is no small honour whereof the envious Spirit shall rob his Maker, if he can close up the mouth of his onely rationally and vocally creature, and turn the best of his workmanship into a dumb Idol, that hath a mouth and speaks not. Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.*

Praise is not more necessary then complaint; praise of God, then complaint of our selves, whether to God or men. The onely amends we can make to God, when we have not had the grace to avoid sin, is to confess the sin we have not avoided: This is the sponge that wipes out all the blots and blurs of our lives. *If we confess our sins, he is faithfull and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

That cunning Man-slayer knows there is no way to purge the sick soul but upward, by casting out the vicious humour wherewith it is clogged; and therefore holds the lips close, that the heart may not dis-burthen it self by so wholesome evacuation. *When I kept silence, my bones consumed: For day and night thy hand, O Lord, was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* O let me confess against my self my wickedness unto thee, that thou maist forgive the punishment of my sin.

We have a Tongue for God, when we praise him; for our selves, when we pray and confess; for our brethren, when we speak the truth for their information; which if we hold back in unrighteousness, we yield unto that dumb Devil. Where do we not see that accursed Spirit? He is on the Bench, when the mute or partial Judge speaks not for truth and innocence: He is in the Pulpit, when the Prophets of God smother, or halve, or adulterate the message of their Master: He is at the Bar, when irreligious Jurours dare lend an oath to fear, to hope, to gain: He is in the Market, when godless Chapmen for their peny sell the truth and their soul: He is in the common conversation of men, when the tongue belies the heart, flatters the guilty, balketh reproofs even in the foulest crimes. O Thou who onely art stronger then that strong one, cast him out of the hearts and mouths of men. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have destroyed thy Law.*

That it might well appear this impediment was not natural, so soon as the man is freed from the spirit, his tongue is free to his speech. The effects of spirits as they are wrought, so they cease at once. If the Son of God do but remove our spiritual possession, we shall presently break forth into the praise of God, into the confession of our vileness, into the profession of truth.

But what strange variety do I see in the spectatours of his Miracle, some wondering, others censuring, a third sort tempting, a fourth applauding? There was never man

or action but was subject to variety of constructions. What man could be so holy as he that was God? what act could be more worthy then the dispossession of an evil spirit? Yet this man, this act passeth these differences of interpretation. What can we doe to undergoe but one opinion? If we give alms, and fast, some will magnifie our charity and devotion, others will tax our hypocrisie: if we give not, some will condemn our hard-heartedness, others will allow our care of justice. If we preach plainly, to some it will favour of a careless slubbering, to others of a mortified sincerity: elaborately, some will tax our affectation, others will applaud our diligence in dressing the delicate viands of God. What marvel is it if it be thus with our imperfection, when it fared not otherwise with him that was purity and righteousness it self? The austere Fore-runner of *Christ came neither eating nor drinking; they say, He hath a Devil: The Son of man came eating and drinking; they say, This man is a glutton, a friend of Publicans and sinners.* And here one of his holy acts carries away at once wonder, censure, doubt, celebration. There is no way safe for a man, but to square his actions by the right rule of justice, of charity; and then let the world have leave to spend their glosses at pleasure. It was an heroical resolution of the chosen Vessel, *I pass very little to be judged of you, or of man's day.*

I marvell not if the people marvelled, for here were four wonders in one; the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the Demoniack is delivered. Wonder was due to so rare and powerfull a work, and, if not this, nothing. We can cast away admiration upon the poor devices or activities of men; how much more upon the extraordinary works of Omnipotency? Whoso knows the frame of Heaven and Earth, shall not much be affected with the imperfect effects of frail humanity; but shall with no less ravishment of soul acknowledge the miraculous works of the same Almighty hand. Neither is the spiritual ejection

tion worthy of any meaner entertainment. Rarity and Difficulty are wont to cause wonder. There are many things which have wonder in their worth, and lose it in their frequency: there are some which have it in their strangeness, and lose it in their facility: Both meet in this. To see men haunted, yea possessed with a dumb Devil, is so frequent, that it is a just wonder to find a man free: but to find the dumb spirit cast out of a man, and to hear him praising God, confessing his sins, teaching others the sweet experiments of mercy, deserves just admiration. If the Cynick sought in the market for a Man amongst men, well may we seek amongst men for a Convert. Neither is the difficulty less than the rareness. The strong man hath the possession, all passages are block'd up, all helps barred, by the treachery of our nature. If any soul be rescued from these spiritual wickednesses, it is the praise of him that doeth wonders alone.

But whom do I see wondering? *The multitude.* The unlearned beholders follow that act with wonder, which the learned Scribes entertain with obloquy. God hath revealed those things to babes, which he hath hid from the wise and prudent. With what scorn did those great Rabbins speak of these sons of the earth, *This people that knows not the Law is accursed?* Yet the mercy of God makes an advantage of their simplicity; in that they are therefore less subject to cavillation and incredulity: As contrarily, his justice causes the proud knowledge of others to lie as a block in their way to the ready assent unto the Divine power of the *Messias*. Let the pride of glorious adversaries disdain the poverty of the clients of the Gospel; it shall not repent us to go to Heaven with the vulgar, whilst their great ones go in state to Perdition.

The multitude wondered. Who censured, but Scribes, great Doctours of the Law, of the divinity of the *Jews*? what Scribes, but those of *Jerusalem*, the most eminent Academy of *Judæa*? These were the men who, out of
their

their deep reputed judgment, cast these foul aspersions upon *Christ*. Great wits oft-times mis-lead both the owners and followers. How many shall once wish they had been born dullards, yea idiots, when they shall find their wit to have barred them out of Heaven? *Where is the Scribe? where is the disputer of this world?* Hath not God made the *wisdom of the world foolishness*? Say the world what it will, a dram of Holiness is worth a pound of Wit. Let others censure, with the Scribes; let me wonder, with the multitude.

What could malice say worse, *He casteth out Devils through Beelzebub the Prince of Devils?* The Jews well knew that the Gods of the heathen were no other then Devils; amongst whom, for that the *Lord of Flies* (so called, whether for the concourse of flies to the abundance of his sacrifices, or for his aid implored against the infestation of those swarms) was held the chief, therefore they style him, *The Prince of Devils*. There is a subordination of Spirits, some higher in degree, some inferiour to others. Our Saviour himself tells us of the Devil, and his Angels: Messengers are inferiour to those that send them. The seven Devils that entered into the swept and garnished house were worse then the former. Neither can *Principalities*, and *Powers*, and Governours, and *Princes of the darkness of this World*, design other then several ranks of evil Angels. There can be no being without some kind of order, there can be no order in parity. If we look up into Heaven, there is the King of Gods, *the Lord of Lords*, higher then the highest. If to the Earth, there are Monarchs, Kings, Princes, Peers, People. If we look down to Hell, there is *the Prince of Devils*. They labour for confusion that call for parity. What should the Church doe with such a form as is not exemplified in Heaven, in Earth, in Hell?

One Devil (according to their supposition) may be used to cast out another. How far the command of one

spirit over another may extend, it is a secret of infernal state, too deep for the inquiry of men. The thing it self is apparent; upon compact, and precontracted composition, one gives way to other for the common advantage. As we see in the Commonwealth of Cheaters and Cutpurfes, one doeth the fact, another is feed to bring it out, and to procure restitution: both are of the trade, both conspire to the fraud; the actour falls not out with the revealer, but divides with him that cunning spoil.

One malicious miscreant sets the Devil on work to the inflicting of disease or death; another upon agreement, for a farther spiritual gain, takes him off: There is a Devil in both: And if there seem more bodily favour, there is no less spiritual danger in the latter: In the one Satan wins the agent, the suitour in the other. It will be no cause of discord in Hell; that one Devil gives ease to the body which another tormented, that both may triumph in the gain of a soul. Oh God, that any creature which bears thine Image should not abhor to be beholden to the powers of hell for aid, for advice! *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that men go to inquire of the God of Ekron?* Can men be so sottish, to think that the vowed enemy of their souls can offer them a bait without an hook? *What evil is there in the City which the Lord hath not done?* what is there which he cannot as easily redress? He wounds, he heals again: And if he will not, *it is the Lord, let him doe what seems good in his eyes.* If he do not deliver us, he will crown our faithfulness in a patient perseverance. The wounds of God are better then are the salves of Satan.

Was it possible that the wit of Envy could devise so high a Slander? *Beelzebub* was a God of the heathen; therefore herein they accuse him for an Idolater: *Beelzebub* was a Devil to the Jews; therefore they accuse him for a Conjuror: *Beelzebub* was the chief of Devils; therefore they accuse him for an Arch-exorcist, for the worst kind of Magician.

gician. Some professors of this black Art, though their work be devillish, yet they pretend to doe it in the name of *Jesus*; and will presumptuously seem to doe that by command, which is secretly transacted by agreement. The Scribes accuse *Christ* of a direct compact with the Devil, and suppose both a league and familiarity, which by the Law of *Moses* (in the very hand of a *Saul*) was no other then deadly. Yea, so deep doth this wound reach, that our Saviour searching it to the bottom, finds no less in it then the sin against the Holy Ghost; inferring hereupon that dreadfull sentence of the irremissibleness of that *sin unto death*. And if this horrible crimination were cast upon thee, O Saviour, in whom the Prince of this world found nothing, what wonder is it if we thy sinfull Servants be branded on all sides with evil tongues?

Yea, (which is yet more) how plain is it that these men forced their tongue to speak this slander against their own heart? Else this Blasphemy had been onely against the Son of man, not against the Holy Ghost: but now that the Searcher of hearts finds it to be no less then against the Blessed Spirit of God, the spight must needs be obstinate; their malice doth wilfully cross their conscience. Envy never regards how true, but how mischievous: So it may gall or kill, it cares little whether with truth or falshood. For us; *Blessed are we when men revile us, and say all manner of evil of us, for the name of Christ*. For them; *What reward shall be given to thee, thou false tongue? Even sharp arrows with hot burning coals; yea those very coals of hell from which thou wert enkindled*.

There was yet a third sort that went a mid way betwixt wonder and censure. These were not so malicious as to impute the Miracle to a Satanical operation: they confess it good, but not enough, and therefore urge *Christ* to a farther proof. Though thou hast cast out this dumb Devil, yet this is no sufficient argument of thy Divine power: We have yet seen nothing from thee like those ancient Miracles

acles of the times of our forefathers. *Joshua* caused the Sun to stand still ; *Elias* brought fire down from heaven ; *Samuel* astonishd the people with thunder and rain in the midst of harvest : If thou wouldst command our belief, doe somewhat like to these. The casting out of a Devil shews thee to have some power over Hell ; shew us now that thou hast no less power over Heaven. There is a kind of unreasonableness of desire and insatiableness in Infidelity ; it never knows when it hath evidence enough. This which the *Jews* over-looked was a more irrefragable demonstration of Divinity, then that which they desired. A Devil was more then a Meteor, or a parcel of an element : to cast out a Devil by command, more then to command fire from heaven. Infidelity ever loves to be her own carver.

No son can be more like a father, then these *Jews* to their progenitors in the desert. That there might be no fear of degenerating into good, they also of old tempted God in the Wilderness. First, they are weary of the *Egyptian* bondage, and are ready to fall out with God and *Moses* for their stay in those furnaces. By ten miraculous Plagues they are freed ; and going out of those confines the *Egyptians* follow them, the Sea is before them : now they are more afflicted with their liberty then their servitude. The Sea yields way, the *Egyptians* are drowned : and now that they are safe on the other shore, they tempt the providence of God for water. The Rock yields it them ; then, no less for bread and meat. God sends them Manna and Quails : they cry out of the *food of Angels*. Their present enemies in the way are vanquishd ; they whine at the men of measures in the heart of *Canaan*. Nothing from God but mercy ; nothing from them but temptations.

Their true brood both in nature and in sin had abundant proofs of the *Messiah* ; if curing the blind, lame, diseased, deaf, dumb, ejecting Devils, over-ruling the elements, raising the dead, could have been sufficient : yet still they
must

must have a sign from Heaven, and shut up in the style of the Tempter, *If thou be the Christ*. The gracious heart is credulous: Even where it sees not, it believes; and where it sees but a little, it believes a great deal. Neither doth it presume to prescribe unto God what and how he shall work; but takes what it finds, and unmovably rests in what it takes. Any miracle; no miracle serves enough for their assent, who have built their faith upon the Gospel of the Lord *Jesus*.

XVI.

Matthew called.

THE number of the Apostles was not yet full; one room is left void for a future occupant: who can but expect that it is reserved for some eminent person? and behold, *Matthew* the Publican is the man. O the strange election of *Christ*! Those other Disciples, whose calling is recorded, were from the Fisher-boat, this from the Toll-booth: They were unlettered, this infamous. The condition was not in it self sinfull, but as the Taxes which the *Romans* imposed on God's free people were odious, so the Collectours, the Farmers of them abominable. Besides that it was hard to hold that seat without oppression, without exaction. One that best knew it, branded it with poling and sycophancy: and now, behold a griping Publican called to the Family, to the Apostleship, to the Secretaryship of God. Who can despair in the conscience of his unworthiness, when he sees this pattern of the free bounty of him that calleth us? Merits do not carry it in the gracious election of God, but his meer favour. There

late *Matthew* the Publican busie in his Counting-house, reckoning up the sums of his Rentals, taking up his Ar-rerages, and wrangling for denied Duties; and did so little think of a Saviour, that he did not so much as look at his passage; but, *Jesus, as he passed by, saw a man sitting at the receipt of custome, named Matthew.* As if this prospect had been sudden and casual, *Jesus saw him in passing by.* O Saviour, before the world was, thou sawest that man sitting there, thou sawest thine own passage, thou sawest his call in thy passage; and now thou goest purposely that way that thou mightest see and call. Nothing can be hid from that piercing eye, one glance whereof hath discerned a Disciple in the cloaths of a Publican: That habit, that shop of extortion cannot conceal from thee a vessel of election. In all forms thou knowest thine own; and in thine own time shalt fetch them out of the disguises of their foul sins, or unfit conditions. What sawest thou, O Saviour, in that Publican, that might either allure thine eye, or not offend it? what but an hatefull trade, an evil eye, a grip-ple hand, bloody tables, heaps of spoil? Yet now thou saidst, *Follow me.* Thou that saidst once to *Jerusalem,* *Thy birth and nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, thy mother an Hittite: Thy navel was not cut, neither wert thou washed in water, to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, thou wast not swaddled at all: None eye pitied thee, but thou wast cast out in the open fields, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born: And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blond, I said unto thee, Live, yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blond, Live:* now also, when thou passedst by, and sawest *Matthew sitting at the receipt of custome,* saidst to him, *Follow me.* The life of this Publican was so much worse then the birth of that forlorn *Amorite,* as, *Follow me,* was more then, *Live.* What canst thou see in us, O God, but ugly deformities, horrible sins, despicable miseries? yet doth it please thy mercy to say unto us both, *Live,* and, *Follow me.*

The

The just man is the first accuser of himself. Whom do we hear to blazon the shame of *Matthew*, but his own mouth? *Matthew* the Evangelist tells us of *Matthew* the Publican. His fellows call him *Levi*, as willing to lay their finger upon the spot of his displeasing profession: himself will not smother nor blanch it a whit, but publishes it to all the world, in a thankfull recognition of the mercy that called him; as liking well that his baseness should serve for a fit foil to set off the glorious lustre of his grace by whom he was elected. What matters it how vile we are, O God, so thy glory may arise in our abasement?

That word was enough, *Follow me*; spoken by the same tongue that said to the corps at *Nain*, *Young man, I say to thee, Arise*. He that said at first, *Let there be light*, says now, *Follow me*. That power sweetly inclines which could forcibly command: the force is not more irresistible then the inclination. When the Sun shines upon the Ice-icles, can they chuse but melt, and fall? when it looks into a dungeon, can the place chuse but be enlightned? Do we see the Jet drawing up straws to it, the Load-stone iron, and do we marvel if the Omnipotent Saviour, by the influence of his grace, attract the heart of a Publican? *He arose, and followed him*. We are all naturally averse from thee, O God: do thou but bid us *follow thee, draw us* by thy powerfull word, and we shall *run after thee*. Alas! thou speakest, and we sit still; thou speakest by thine outward Word to our ear, and we stir not: Speak thou by the secret and effectual Word of thy Spirit to our heart; the World cannot hold us down, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall arise, and follow thee.

It was not a more busie then gainfull trade that *Matthew* abandoned to follow *Christ* into poverty: and now he cast away his Counters, and struck his Tallies, and crossed his Books, and contemned his heaps of Cash in comparison of that better Treasure which he foresaw lie open in that
happy

happy attendance. If any commodity be valued of us too dear to be parted with for *Christ*, we are more fit to be Publicans than Disciples. Our Saviour invites *Matthew* to a Discipleship; *Matthew* invites him to a Feast. The joy of his Call makes him begin his abdication of the world in a Banquet.

Here was not a more chearfull thankfulness in the Inviter, than a gracious humility in the Guest. The new Servant bids his Master, the Publican his Saviour, and is honoured with so blessed a presence. I do not find where *Jesus* was ever bidden to any table, and refused: If a Pharisee, if a Publican invited him, he made not dainty to go: Not for the pleasure of the dishes, what was that to him, who began his work in a whole Lent of days? But (as it was his *meat and drink to doe the will of his Father*) for the benefit of so winning a conversation. If he sate with Sinners, he converted them; if with Converts, he confirmed and instructed them; if with the Poor, he fed them; if with the Rich in substance, he made them richer in grace. At whose board did he ever sit, and left not his host a gainer? The poor Bridegroom entertains him, and hath his water-pots filled with Wine: *Simon* the Pharisee entertains him, and hath his table honoured with the publick remission of a penitent sinner, with the heavenly doctrine of remission: *Zacchæus* entertains him, salvation came that day to his house with the Authour of it. That presence made the Publican a son of *Abraham*: *Matthew* is recompensed for his feast with an Apostleship: *Martha* and *Mary* entertain him, and besides Divine instruction receive their brother from the dead. O Saviour, whether thou feast us, or we feast thee, in both of them is blessedness.

Where a Publican is the Feast-master, it is no marvel if the guests be Publicans and Sinners. Whether they came alone, out of the hope of that mercy which they saw their fellow had found; or whether *Matthew* invited them, to be partners of that plentiful grace whereof he had tasted;

I inquire not. Publicans and Sinners will flock together ; the one hatefull for their trade, the other for their vicious life. Common contempt hath wrought them to an unanimity , and sends them to seek mutual comfort in that society, which all others held loathsome and contagious. Moderate correction humbleth and shameth the offender : whereas a cruel severity makes men desperate, and drives them to those courses whereby they are more dangerously infected. How many have gone into the prison faulty, and returned flagitious? If Publicans were not Sinners, they were no whit beholden to their neighbours.

What a table-full was here? The Son of God beset with Publicans and Sinners. O happy Publicans and Sinners, that had found out their Saviour ! O mercifull Saviour, that disdaind not Publicans and Sinners !

What sinner can fear to kneel before thee, when he sees Publicans and Sinners sit with thee? Who can fear to be despised of thy meekness and mercy, which didst not abhor to converse with the outcasts of men? Thou didst not despise the Thief confessing upon the Cross, nor the Sinner weeping upon thy feet, nor the *Canaanite* crying to thee in the way, nor the blushing Adulteress, nor the odious Publican, nor the forswearing Disciple, nor the persecutour of Disciples, nor thine own Executioners. How can we be unwelcome to thee, if we come with tears in our eyes, faith in our hearts, restitution in our hands? O Saviour, our breasts are too oft shut upon thee, thy bosome is ever open to us. We are as great sinners as the consorts of these Publicans, why should we despair of a room at thy Table?

The squint-eyed Pharisees look a-cross at all the actions of *Christ* : where they should have admired his mercy, they cavil at his holiness ; *They said to his Disciples, Why eateth your Master with Publicans and Sinners ?* They durst not say thus to the Master, whose answer (they knew) would soon have convinced them: This wind (they hoped) might

shake the weak faith of the Disciples: They speak where they may be most likely to hurt. All the crue of Satanical instruments have learnt this craft of their old Tutour in Paradise. We cannot reverence that man whom we think unholy. *Christ* had lost the hearts of his followers, if they had entertained the least suspicion of his impurity, which the murmur of these envious Pharisees would fain insinuate; He cannot be worthy to be followed that is unclean; He cannot but be unclean that eateth with Publicans and Sinners. Proud and foolish Pharisees! Ye fast whilst *Christ* eateth; ye fast in your houses, whilst *Christ* eateth in other mens; ye fast with your own, whilst *Christ* feasts with sinners: But if ye fast in pride, whilst *Christ* eats in humility; if ye fast at home for merit or popularity, whilst *Christ* feasts with sinners for compassion, for edification, for conversion; your fast is unclean, his feast is holy; ye shall have your portion with hypocrites, when those Publicans and Sinners shall be glorious.

When these censurers thought the Disciples had offended, they speak not to them, but to their Master, *Why doest thou Disciples that which is not lawfull?* now, when they thought *Christ* offended, they speak not to him, but to the Disciples. Thus, like true make-bates, they go about to make a breach in the family of *Christ*, by setting off the one from the other. The quick eye of our Saviour hath soon espied the pack of their fraud, and therefore he takes the words out of the mouths of his Disciples into his own. They had spoke of *Christ* to the Disciples; *Christ* answers for the Disciples concerning himself, *The whole need not the Physician, but the sick.* According to the two qualities of pride, scorn and over-weening, these insolent Pharisees over-rated their own holiness, contemned the noted unholiness of others: as if themselves were not tainted with secret sins, as if others could not be cleansed by repentance. The searcher of hearts meets with their arrogance, and finds those Justiciaries sinfull, those Sinners just.

The

The spiritual Physician finds the sickness of those Sinners wholesome, the health of those Pharisees desperate: that wholesome, because it calls for the help of the Physician; this desperate, because it needs not. Every soul is sick; those most that feel it not. Those that feel it complain; those that complain have cure: those that feel it not shall find themselves dying ere they can wish to recover. O blessed Physician, *by whose stripes we are healed*, by whose death we live, happy are they that are under thy hands, sick, as of sin, so of sorrow for sin. It is as impossible they should die, as it is impossible for thee to want either skill, or power, or mercy. Sin hath made us sick unto death: make thou us but as sick of our sins, we are as safe as thou art gracious.

XVII.

Christ among the Gergesens; or, Legion, and
the Gadarene Herd.

I Do not any-where find so furious a Demoniack as amongst the *Gergesens*. Satan is most tyrannous where he is obeyed most. *Christ* no sooner sailed over the lake, then he was met by two possessed *Gadarenes*. The extreme rage of the one hath drowned the mention of the other. Yet in the midst of all that cruelty of the evil Spirit, there was sometimes a remission, if not an intermission, of vexation. If *oft-times* Satan caught him, then sometimes, in the same violence, he caught him not. It was no thank to that malignant one, who, as he was indefatigable in his executions, so unmeasurable in his malice;

but to the mercifull over-ruling of God; who, in a gracious respect to the weaknes of his poor creatures, limits the spightfull attempts of that immortal Enemy, and takes off this Mastive whilst we may take breath. He, who in his justice gives way to some onsets of Satan, in his mercy restrains them: so regarding our deservings, that withall he regards our strength. If way should be given to that malicious spirit, we could not subsist; no violent thing can endure: and if Satan might have his will, we should no moment be free. He can be no more weary of doing evil to us, then God is of doing good. Are we therefore preserved from the malignity of these powers of darkness, *Blessed be our strong helper, that hath not given us over to be a prey unto their teeth.* Or if some scope have been given to that envious one to afflict us, hath it been with favourable limitations, it is thine onely mercy, O God, that hath chained and muzzled up this band-dog, so as that he may scratch us with his paws, but cannot pierce us with his fangs. Far, far is this from our deserts, who had too well merited a just abdication from thy favour and protection, and an interminable seisure by Satan, both in soul and body.

Neither do I here see more matter of thanks to our God, for our immunity from the external injuries of Satan, then occasion of serious inquiry into his power over us for the spiritual. I see some that think themselves safe from this ghostly tyranny, because they sometimes find themselves in good moods, free from the suggestions of gross sins, much more from the commission. Vain men, that feed themselves with so false and frivolous comforts! will they not see Satan, through the just permission of God, the same to the Soul in mental possessions that he is to the Body in corporal? The worst Demoniack hath his lightsome respites; not ever tortured, not ever furious: betwixt whiles he might look soberly, talk sensibly, move regularly. It is a wofull comfort that we sin not always. There is no Master

so barbarous as to require of his Slave a perpetual unintermitted toil : yet, though he sometimes eat, sleep, rest, he is a vassal still. If that Wicked one have drawn us to a customary perpetration of evil, and have wrought us to a frequent iteration of the same sin, this is gage enough for our servitude, matter enough for his tyranny and insultation. He that would be our Tormentour always, cares onely to be sometimes our Tempter.

The possessed is bound, as with the invisible fetters of Satan, so with the material chains of the inhabitants. What can bodily force prevail against a spirit ? Yet they endeavour this restraint of the man, whether out of charity, or justice: charity, that he might not hurt himself ; justice, that he might not hurt others. None do so much befriend the Demoniack as those that bind him. Neither may the spiritually possessed be otherwise handled : for though this act of the enemy be plausible, and to appearance pleasant ; yet there is more danger in this dear and smiling tyranny. Two sorts of chains are fit for outrageous sinners ; good Laws, impartial Executions ; that they may not hurt, that they may not be hurt to eternal death.

These iron chains are no sooner fast then broken. There was more then an humane power in this disruption. It is not hard to conceive the utmost of nature in this kind of actions. *Sampson* doth not break the cords and ropes like a thread of tow, but God by *Sampson* : The man doth not break these chains, but the Spirit. How strong is the arm of these evil angels ? how far transcending the ordinary course of nature ? They are not called *Powers* for nothing. What flesh and blood could but tremble at the palpable inequality of this match, if herein the mercifull protection of our God did not the rather magnifie it self, that so much strength met with so much malice hath not prevailed against us ? In spite of both we are in safe hands. He that so easily brake the iron fetters, can never break the adamantine chain of our Faith. In vain do the chafing

billows of Hell beat upon that Rock whereon we are built. And though these brittle chains of earthly metall be easily broken by him, yet the sure tempered chain of God's eternal Decree he can never break. That Almighty Arbitrer of Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, hath chained him up in the bottomless pit, and hath so restrained his malice, that (but for our good) we cannot be tempted; we cannot be foiled, but for a glorious victory.

Alas! it is no otherwise with the spiritually possessed. The chains of restraint are commonly broken by the fury of wickedness. What are the respects of civility, fear of God, fear of men, wholesome laws, careful executions, to the desperately licentious, but as cobwebs to an hornet? Let these wild Demoniacks know, that God hath provided chains for them that will hold, even *everlasting chains under darkness*. These are such as must hold the Devils themselves (their Masters) *unto the judgment of the great Day*; how much more those impotent Vassals? Oh that men would suffer themselves to be bound to their good behaviour by the sweet and easie recognizances of their duty to their God, and the care of their own souls, that so they might rather be bound up in the bundle of life.

It was not for rest that these chains were torn off, but for more motion. This prisoner runs away from his friends, he cannot run away from his Jaolour. He is now carried into the Wilderiness, not by meer external force, but by internal impulsion; carried by the same power that unbound him, for the opportunity of his tyranny, for the horreur of the place, for the affamishment of his body, for the avoidance of all means of resistance. Solitary Desarts are the delights of Satan. It is an unwise zeal that moves us to doe that to our selves, in an opinion of merit and holiness, which the Devil wishes to doe to us for a punishment, and conveniency of temptation. The evil Spirit is for solitariness, God is for society: He dwells in the assembly of his Saints, yea, there he hath a delight to dwell.

dwell. Why should not we account it our happiness, that we may have leave to dwell where the Authour of all happiness loves to dwell?

There cannot be any misery incident unto us whereof our gracious Redeemer is not both conscious and sensible. Without any intreaty therefore of the miserable Demoniack, or suit of any friend, the God of spirits takes pity of his distress; and from no motion but his own, commands the evil Spirit to come out of the man. O admirable precedent of mercy, preventing our requests, exceeding our thoughts, forcing favours upon our impotence, doing that for us which we should, and yet cannot desire! If men upon our instant solicitations would give us their best aid, it were a just praise of their bounty: but it well became thee, O God of mercy, to go without force, to give without suit. And do we think thy goodness is impaired by thy glory? If thou wert thus commiserative upon earth, art thou less in Heaven? How dost thou now take notice of all our complaints, of all our infirmities? how doth thine infinite pity take order to redress them? What evil can befall us which thou knowest not, seekest not, relievest not? How safe are we that have such a Guardian, such a Mediatour in Heaven?

Not long before had our Saviour commanded the winds and waters; and they could not but obey him: now he speaks in the same language to the evil Spirit; he intreats not, he perswades not, he commands. Command argues superiority. He onely is infinitely stronger then the strong one in possession. Else, where powers are matcht, though with some inequality, they tug for the victory, and without a resistance yield nothing. There are no fewer sorts of dealing with Satan then with men. Some have dealt with him by suit; as the old *Satanian* Hereticks; and the present *Indian* Savages, sacrificing to him; that he hurt not: others by covenant, conditioning their service upon his assistance, as Witches and Magicians: others by insinuation

of

of implicit compact, as Charmers and Figure-casters: others by adjuration, as the sons of *Scæva* and modern Exorcists, unwarrantably charging him by an higher name then their own. None ever offered to deal with Satan by a direct and primary command, but the God of Spirits. The great Archangel, when the strife was about the body of *Moses*, commanded not, but imprecated rather, *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan*. It is onely the God that made this Spirit an Angel of light that can command him, now that he hath made himself the Prince of darkness. If any created power dare to usurp a word of command, he laughs at their presumption, and knows them his Vassals, whom he dissembles to fear as his Lords. It is thou onely, O Saviour, at whose beck those stubborn Principalities of hell yield and tremble. No wicked man can be so much a slave to Satan, as Satan is to thee: the interposition of thy grace may defeat that dominion of Satan: thy rule is absolute, and capable of no lett. What need we to fear, whilst we are under so omnipotent a Commander? The waves of the deep rage horribly, yet the Lord is stronger then they. Let those Principalities and Powers doe their worst: Those mighty adversaries are under the command of him who loved us so well as to bleed for us. What can we now doubt of? his power, or his will? How can we profess him a God, and doubt of his power? How can we profess him a Saviour, and doubt of his will? He both can and will command those infernall powers. We are no less safe then they are malicious.

The Devill saw *Jesus* by the eyes of the Demoniack: For the same saw that spake; but it was the ill Spirit that said, *I beseech thee torment me not*. It was sore against his will that he saw so dreadfull an object. The over-ruling power of *Christ* dragged the foul Spirit into his presence. Guiltiness would fain keep out of sight. The Lims of so wofull an Head shall once call on the Hills and Rocks to hide them from the face of the Lamb; such Lion-like ter-
rour

rour is in that mild face when it looks upon wickedness. Neither shall it be one day the least part of the torment of the damned, to see the most lovely spectacle that Heaven can afford. He from whom they fled in his offers of grace shall be so much more terrible, as he was and is more gracious. I marvel not therefore that the Devill, when he saw *Jesus*, cried out: I could marvell that he fell down, that he worshipped him. That which the proud Spirit would have had *Christ* to have done to him in his great Duell, the same he now doeth unto *Christ*, fearfully, servilely, forcedly. Who shall henceforth brag of the externall homage he performs to the Son of God, when he sees Satan himself fall down and worship? What comfort can there be in that which is common to us with Devils, who, as they *believe and tremble*, so they tremble and worship? The outward bowing is the body of the action, the disposition of the Soul is the soul of it: therein lies the difference from the counterfeit stoopings of wicked men and spirits. The religious heart *serves the Lord in fear*, and *rejoyces in him with trembling*. What it doeth is in way of service: in service to his Lord, whose sovereignty is his comfort and protection; in the fear of a son, not of a slave; in fear tempered with joy; in a joy, but allayed with trembling. Whereas the prostration of wicked men and Devils is onely an act of form, or of force; as to their Judge, as to their Tormentour, not as to their Lord; in meer servility, not in reverence; in an uncomfortable dulness, without all delight; in a perfect horror, without capacity of joy. These worship without thanks, because they fall down without the true affections of worship.

Who so marvels to see the Devill upon his knees, would much more marvel to hear what came from his mouth, *Jesus, the Son of the Most high God*. A confession, which if we should hear without the name of the Authour, we should ask from what Saint it came. Behold the same name given to *Christ* by the Devil, which was formerly given him by

the Angel, *Thou shalt call his name JESUS*. That awfull Name, whereat every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, is called upon by this prostrate Devil. And lest that should not import enough, (since others have been honoured by this name in Type,) he adds for full distinction, *the Son of the Most high God*. The good Syrophœnician and blind *Bartimeus* could say, *the Son of David*: it was well to acknowledge the true descent of his pedigree according to the flesh: But this infernal Spirit looks aloft, and fetcheth his line out of the highest Heavens, *the Son of the Most high God*. The famous confession of the prime Apostle (which honoured him with a new name to immortality) was no other then, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*: and what other do I hear from the lips of a Fiend? No more Divine words could fall from the highest Saint. Nothing hinders but that the veriest miscreant on earth, yea the foulest Devil in Hell, may speak holily. It is no passing of judgment upon loose sentences. So *Peter* should have been cast for a Satan, in denying, forswearing, cursing; and the Devil should have been fet up for a Saint, in confessing, *Jesus, the Son of the Most high God*. Fond hypocrite, that pleasest thy self in talking well, hear this Devil; and when thou canst speak better then he, look to fare better: but in the mean time know, that a smooth tongue and a foul heart carrie away double judgments.

Let curious heads dispute whether the Devil knew *Christ* to be God: In this I dare believe himself, though in nothing else. He knew what he believed, what he believed that he confessed, *Jesus, the Son of the Most high God*. To the confusion of those Semi-Christians, that have either held doubtfully, or ignorantly mis-known, or blasphemously denied what the very Devils have professed. How little can a bare speculation avail us in these cases of Divinity? So far this Devil hath attained, to no ease, no comfort. Knowledge alone doth but *puffe up*: it is our
Love

Love that edifies. If there be not a sense of our sure interest in this *Jesus*, a power to apply his merits and obedience, we are no whit the safer, no whit the better; onely we are so much the wiser, to understand who shall condemn us.

This piece of the clause was spoken like a Saint, *Jesus, the Son of the Most high God*: the other piece like a Devil, *What have I to doe with thee?* If the disclamation were universal, the latter words would impugn the former: for whilst he confesses *Jesus* to be the Son of the Most high God, he withall confesses his own inevitable subjection. Wherefore would he beseech, if he were not obnoxious? He cannot, he dare not say, *What hast thou to doe with me?* but, *What have I to doe with thee?* Others indeed I have vexed, thee I fear: in respect then of any violence, of any personal provocation, *What have I to doe with thee?* And dost thou ask, O thou evil Spirit, what hast thou to doe with *Christ*, whilst thou vexest a Servant of *Christ*? Hast thou thy name from Knowledge, and yet so mistakest him whom thou confessest, as if nothing could be done to him but what immediately concerns his own person? Hear that great and just Judge sentencing upon his dreadful Tribunal; *Inasmuch as thou didst it unto one of these little ones, thou didst it unto me*: It is an idle misprision, to sever the sense of an injury done to any of the Members from the Head.

He that had humility enough to kneel to the Son of God, hath boldness enough to expostulate; *Art thou come to torment us before our time?* Whether it were that Satan, who useth to enjoy the torment of sinners, whose musick it is to hear our shrieks and gnashings, held it no small piece of his torment, to be restrained in the exercise of his tyranny: Or whether the very presence of *Christ* were his rack; For the guilty spirit projecteth terrible things, and cannot behold the Judge or the executioner without a renovation of horror: Or whether that (as himself pro-

felleth) he were now in a fearfull expectation of being commanded down into the deep, for a farther degree of actual torment, which he thus deprecates.

There are Tortures appointed to the very spiritual natures of evil Angels. Men, that are led by sense, have easily granted the Body subject to torment, who yet have not so readily conceived this incident to a Spiritual substance. The Holy Ghost hath not thought it fit to acquaint us with the particular manner of these invisible acts, rather willing that we should herein fear then enquire: but as all matters of faith, though they cannot be proved by reason, (for that they are in a higher sphere,) yet afford an answer able to stop the mouth of all reason that dares bark against them, (since truth cannot be opposite to it self;) so this of the sufferings of Spirits. There is therefore both an intentional torment incident to Spirits, and a real. For, as in Blessedness the good Spirits find themselves joyned unto the chief good, and hereupon feel a perfect love of God, and unspeakable joy in him, and rest in themselves: so contrarily, the evil Spirits perceive themselves eternally excluded from the presence of God, and see themselves settled in a wofull darkness; and from the sense of this separation arises an horreur not to be expressed, not to be conceived. How many men have we known to torment themselves with their own thoughts? There needs no other gibbet then that which their troubled spirit hath erected in their own heart. And if some pains begin at the Body, and from thence afflict the Soul in a copartnership of grief; yet others arise immediately from the Soul, and draw the Body into a participation of misery. Why may we not therefore conceive meer and separate Spirits capable of such an inward excruciation?

Besides which, I hear the Judge of men and Angels say; *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: I hear the Prophet say, Tophet is prepared of old. If with fear and without curiosity we may look upon*

upon those flames, why may we not attribute a spiritual nature to that more then natural fire? In the end of the world the elements shall be dissolved by fire: and if the pure quintessential matter of the sky, and the element of fire it self, shall be dissolved by fire, then that last fire shall be of another nature then that which it consumeth. What hinders then but that the Omnipotent God hath from eternity created a fire of another nature, proportionable even to spiritual essences? Or why may we not distinguish of fire, as it is it self a bodily creature, and as it is an instrument of God's justice, so working not by any material virtue or power of its own, but by a certain height of supernatural efficacy, to which it is exalted by the Omnipotence of that Supreme and Righteous Judge? Or, lastly, why may we not conceive that, though Spirits have nothing material in their nature which that fire should work upon, yet by the judgment of the Almighty Arbiter of the world, justly willing their torment, they may be made most sensible of pain, and, by the obedible submission of their created nature, wrought upon immediately by their appointed tortures; besides the very horreur which ariseth from the place whereto they are everlastingly confined? For if the incorporeal spirits of living men may be held in a loathed or painfull body, and conceive sorrow to be so imprisoned; why may we not as easily yield that the evil spirits of Angels, or men, may be held in those direfull flames, and much more abhor therein to continue for ever? Tremble rather, O my soul, at the thought of this wofull condition of the evil Angels, who, for one onely act of Apostasie from God, are thus perpetually tormented; whereas we sinfull wretches multiply many and presumptuous offences against the Majesty of our God: And withall admire and magnifie that infinite mercy to the miserable generation of man, which, after this holy severity of justice to the revolted Angels, so graciously forbears our hainous iniquities, and both suffers us to be free for the

time from these hellish torments, and gives us opportunity of a perfect freedom from them for ever. *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name, Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thine infirmities; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and compassions.*

There is no time wherein the evil Spirits are not tormented : there is a time wherein they expect to be tormented yet more. *Art thou come to torment us before our time?* They knew that the last Assises are the prefixed term of their full execution ; which they also understood to be not yet come. For though they knew not when the Day of Judgment should be, (a point concealed from the glorious Angels of heaven,) yet they knew when it should not be ; and therefore they say, *before the time.* Even the very evil spirits confess, and fearfully attend, a set day of universal Sessions. They believe less then Devils, that either doubt of, or deny that Day of final retribution.

O the wonderfull mercy of our God, that both to wicked men and Spirits respites the utmost of their torment ! He might upon the first instant of the fall of Angels have inflicted on them the highest extremity of his vengeance ; he might upon the first sins of our youth (yea of our nature) have swept us away, and given us our portion in that fiery lake : He stays a time for both ; though with this difference of mercy to us men, that here not onely is a delay, but may be an utter prevention of punishment ; which to the evil Spirits is altogether impossible. They do suffer, they must suffer : and though they have now deserved to suffer all they must, yet they must once suffer more then they do.

Yet so doth this evil Spirit expostulate, that he sues, *I beseech thee, torment me not.* The world is well changed since Satan's first onset upon *Christ*. Then he could say, *If thou be the Son of God ; now, Jesus, the Son of the Most high God: then, All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down*

down and worship me ; now, I beseech thee, torment me not. The same power, when he lists, can change the note of the Tempter to us. How happy are we that have such a Redeemer as can command the Devils to their chains ? O consider this, ye lawless sinners, that have said, *Let us break his bands, and cast his cords from us.* However the Almighty suffers you for a judgment to have free scope to evil, and ye can now impotently resist the revealed will of your Creatour ; yet the time shall come, when ye shall see the very masters whom ye have served (the powers of darkness) unable to avoid the revenges of God. How much less shall *man strive with his Maker ; Man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose house is clay, whose foundation is the dust ?*

Nature teaches every creature to wish a freedom from pain. The foulest Spirits cannot but love themselves ; and this love must needs produce a deprecation of evil. Yet what a thing is this, to hear the Devil at his prayers ? *I beseech thee, torment me not.* Devotion is not guilty of this, but fear. There is no grace in the suit of Devils, but nature ; no respect of glory to their Creatour, but their own ease ; they cannot pray against sin, but against torment for sin. What news is it now to hear the profaneest mouth, in extremity, imploring the Sacred Name of God, when the Devils do so ? The worst of all creatures hates punishment, and can say, *Lead me not into pain ;* onely the good heart can say, *Lead me not into temptation.* If we can as heartily pray against sin, for the avoiding of displeasure, as against punishment, when we have displeas'd, there is true Grace in the soul. Indeed, if we could fervently pray against sin, we should not need to pray against punishment, which is no other then the inseparable shadow of that body : but if we have not laboured against our sins, in vain do we pray against punishment. God must be just ; and *the wages of sin is death.*

It pleas'd our Holy Saviour, not onely to let fall words
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of command upon this Spirit, but to interchange some speeches with him. All *Christ's* actions are not for example. It was the error of our Grandmother to hold chat with Satan. That God who knows the craft of that old Serpent, and our weak simplicity, hath charged us not to enquire of an evil Spirit. Surely if the Disciples returning to *Jacob's Well* wondred to see *Christ* talk with a woman, well may we wonder to see him talking with an unclean Spirit. Let it be no presumption, O Saviour, to ask upon what grounds thou didst this wherein we may not follow thee. We know that sin was excepted in thy conformity of thy self to us; we know there was *no guile found in thy mouth*, no possibility of taint in thy nature, in thine actions. Neither is it hard to conceive how the same thing may be done by thee without sin, which we cannot but sin in doing. There is a vast difference in the Intention, in the Agent. For, as on the one side, thou didst not ask the name of the Spirit, as one that knew not, and would learn by enquiring; but that by the confession of that mischief which thou pleasedst to suffer the grace of the cure might be the more conspicuous, the more glorious: so, on the other, God and Man might doe that safely, which meer Man cannot doe without danger. Thou mightest touch the leprosie, and not be legally unclean, because thou touchedst it to heal it, didst not touch it with possibility of infection. So mightest thou, who, by reason of the perfection of thy Divine nature, wert uncapable of any stain by the interlocution with Satan, safely confer with him, whom corrupt Man, predisposed to the danger of such a parly, may not meddle with without sin, because not without peril. It is for none but God to hold discourse with Satan. Our surest way is, to have as little to doe with that Evil one as we may; and if he shall offer to maintain conference with us by his secret temptations, to turn our speech unto our God, with the Archangel, *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan.*

It was the presupposition of him that knew it, that not onely men but Spirits have names. This then he asks, not out of an ignorance, or curiosity; nothing could be hid from him who *calleth the Stars* and all the hoasts of Heaven *by their names*: but out of a just respect to the glory of the Miracle he was working, whereto the notice of the name would not a little avail. For if without inquiry, or confession, our Saviour had ejected this evil Spirit, it had passed for the single dispossession of one onely Devil: whereas now it appears there was a combination and hellish champarty in these powers of darkness, which were all forced to vail unto that almighty command.

Before the Devil had spoken singularly of himself, *What have I to doe with thee?* and, *I beseech thee, torment me not*: yet our Saviour, knowing that there was a multitude of Devils lurking in that breast, who dissembled their presence, wrests it out of the Spirit by this interrogation, *What is thy name?* Now can those wicked ones no longer hide themselves. He that asked the question, forced the answer: *My name is Legion*. The authour of discord hath borrowed a name of war: from that military order of discipline by which the *Jews* were subdued doth the Devil fetch his denomination. They were many, yet they say, *My name*, not, *Our name*: though many, they speak as one, they act as one, in this possession. There is a marvellous accordance even betwixt evil Spirits: That Kingdom is not divided, for then it could not stand. I wonder not that wicked men do so conspire in evil, that there is such unanimity in the broachers and abettors of errors, when I see those Devils which are many in substance are one in name, action, habitation. Who can too much brag of unity, when it is incident unto wicked Spirits? All the praise of concord is in the subject: if that be holy, the consent is Angelical; if sinfull, devillish.

What a fearfull advantage have our spiritual enemies against us? If armed troupes come against single stragglers,

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what hope is there of life, of victory? How much doth it concern us to band our hearts together in a communion of Saints? Our enemies come upon us like a torrent: O let us not run afunder like drops in the dust. All our united forces will be little enough to make head against this league of destruction.

Legion imports Order, Number, Conflict. Order, in that there is a distinction of regiment, a subordination of Officers. Though in Hell there be confusion of faces, yet not confusion of degrees.

Number: Those that have reckoned a Legion at the lowest, have counted it six thousand; others have more then doubled it: though here it is not strict, but figurative, yet the letter of it implies multitude. How fearfull is the consideration of the number of Apostate Angels? And if a Legion can attend one man, how many must we needs think are they who, all the world over, are at hand to the punishment of the wicked, the exercise of the good, the temptation of both? It cannot be hoped there can be any place or time wherein we may be secure from the onsets of these enemies. Be sure, ye lewd men, ye shall want no furtherance to evil, no torment for evil: Be sure, ye godly, ye shall not want combatants to try your strength and skill: Awaken your courages to resist, and stir up your hearts, make sure the means of your safety. There are more with us then against us. The God of heaven is with us, if we be with him; and our *Angels behold the face of God*. If every Devil were a Legion, we are safe: *Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil. Thou, O Lord, shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of our enemies, and thy right hand shall save us.*

Conflict: All this Number is not for sight, for rest; but for motion, for action: Neither was there ever hour since the first blow given to our first Parents, wherein there was so much as a truce betwixt these adversaries. As
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therefore strong Frontier-towns, when there is a Peace concluded on both parts, break up their garrison, open their gates, neglect their Bulwarks; but when they hear of the enemy mustering his forces in great and unequal numbers, then they double their guard, keep sentinel, repair their Sconces: so must we, upon the certain knowledge of our numerous and deadly enemies in continual array against us, address our selves always to a wary and strong resistance. I do not observe the most to think of this ghostly hostility. Either they do not find there are Temptations, or those Temptations hurtfull; they see no worse then themselves; and if they feel motions of evil arising in them, they impute it to fancy, or unreasonable appetite, to no power but Nature's; and those motions they follow, without sensible hurt; neither see they what harm it is to sin. Is it any marvel that carnal eyes cannot discern spiritual objects? that the World, who is the friend, the vassal of Satan, is in no war with him? *Elisba's* servant, when his eyes were opened, saw troupes of spiritual souldiers, which before he discerned not. If the eyes of our Souls be once enlightned by supernatural knowledge, and the clear beams of Faith, we shall as plainly descry the invisible powers of wickedness, as now our bodily eyes see Heaven and Earth. They are, though we see them not: we cannot be safe from them, if we do not acknowledge, not oppose them.

The Devils are now become great suitours to *Christ*; that he would not command them into the deep, that he would permit their entrance into the Swine. What is this deep but Hell, both for the utter separation from the face of God, and for the impossibility of passage to the region of rest and glory? The very evil Spirits then fear, and expect a farther degree of torment; they know themselves reserved in those chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day. There is the same wages due to their sins, and to ours; neither are the wages paid till the work be done.

They tempting men to sin must needs sin grievously in tempting, as with us men those that mislead into sin offend more then the actours : not till the upshot therefore of their wickedness shall they receive the full measure of their condemnation. This Day, this Deep they tremble at : what shall I say of those men that fear it not ? It is hard for men to believe their own Unbelief. If they were persuaded of this fiery dungeon, this bottomless deep, wherein every sin shall receive an horrible portion with the damned, durst they stretch forth their hands to wickedness ? No man will put his hand into a fiery crucible to fetch gold thence, because he knows it will burn him. Did we as truly believe the everlasting burning of that infernal fire, we durst not offer to fetch pleasures or profits out of the midst of those flames.

This degree of torment they grant in *Christ's* power to command. They knew his power unresistible : had he therefore but said, *Back to Hell whence ye came*, they could no more have staid upon earth, then they can now climb into heaven. O the wonderfull dispensation of the Almighty, who, though he could command all the evil Spirits down to their dungeons in an instant, so as they should have no more opportunity of temptation, yet thinks fit to retain them upon earth ! It is not out of weakness or improvidence of that Divine hand, that wicked Spirits tyrannize here upon earth, but out of the most wise and most holy ordination of God, who knows how to turn evil into good, how to fetch good out of evil, and by the worst instruments to bring about his most just decrees. Oh that we could adore that awfull and infinite power, and cheerfully cast our selves upon that Providence which keeps the Keys even of Hell it self, and either lets out, or returns the Devils to their places.

Their other suit hath some marvel in moving it, more in the grant ; that they might be *suffered to enter into the Herd of swine*. It was their ambition of some mischief that brought

brought forth this desire ; that since they might not vex the Body of man, they might yet afflict men in their Goods. The malice of these envious Spirits reacheth from us to ours. : It is fore against their wills, if we be not every way miserable. If the Swine were legally unclean for the use of the table, yet they were naturally good. Had not Satan known them usefull for man, he had never desired their ruine. But as Fencers will seem to fetch a blow at the leg, when they intend it at the head ; so doeth this Devil, whilst he drives at the Swine, he aims at the Souls of these *Gadarens*. By this means he hoped well (and his hope was not vain) to work in these *Gergesens* a discontentment at *Christ*, an unwillingness to entertain him, a desire of his absence : he meant to turn them into Swine, by the loss of their Swine. It was not the rafters or stones of the house of *Job's* children that he bore the grudge to, but to the owners ; nor to the lives of the Children so much as the Soul of their Father. There is no affliction wherein he doth not strike at the Heart ; which whilst it holds free, all other dammages are light : but a wounded spirit (whether with sin or sorrow) *who can bear?* Whatever becomes of goods or lims, happy are we if (like wise soldiers) we guard the vital parts. Whilst the Soul is kept sound from impatience, from distrust, our Enemy may afflict us, he cannot hurt us.

They sue for a sufferance ; not daring other then to grant, that, without the permission of *Christ*, they could not hurt a very Swine. If it be fearfull to think how great things evil Spirits can doe with permission ; it is comfortable to think how nothing they can doe without permission. We know they want not malice to destroy the whole frame of God's work ; but of all, Man ; of all men, Christians. But if without leave they cannot set upon an Hog, what can they doe to the living Images of their Creator ? They cannot offer us so much as a suggestion, without the permission of our Saviour : And can he, that

would give his own most precious blood for us, to save us from evil, wilfully give us over to evil?

It is no news, that wicked spirits wish to do mischief; it is news, that they are allowed it. If the Owner of all things should stand upon his absolute command, who can challenge him for what he thinks fit to do with his creature? The first Foe of the As is commanded, under the Law, to have his neck broken: what is that to us? The creatures do that they were made for, if they may serve any way to the glory of their Maker. But seldom ever doth God leave his actions unfurnished with such reasons as our weakness may reach unto. There were Sects amongst these *Jews* that denied Spirits; they could not be more evidently, more powerfully convinced then by this event. Now shall the *Gadarens* see from what a multitude of Devils they were delivered; and how easie it had been for the same power to have allowed these Spirits to seize upon their Persons, as well as on their Swine. Neither did God this without a just purpose of their castigation: His Judgments are righteous, where they are most secret. Though we cannot accuse these inhabitants of ought, yet he could, and thought good thus to mulct them. And if they had not wanted grace to acknowledge it, it was no small favour of God, that he would punish them in their Swine, for that which he might have avenged upon their Bodies and Souls. Our Goods are farthest off us: If but in these we smart, we must confess we find mercy.

Sometimes it pleaseth God to grant the suits of wicked men and spirits, in no favour to the suitours. He grants an ill suit, and withholds a good: He grants an ill suit in judgment, and holds back a good one in mercy. The *Israelites* ask meat; he gives Quails to their mouths, and *leanness to their souls*. The chosen Vessel wishes Satan taken off, and hears onely, *My grace is sufficient for thee*. We may not evermore measure favours by condescend. These Devils doubtless receive more punishment for that
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harmfull act wherein they are heard. If we ask what is either unfit to receive, or unlawfull to beg, it is a great favour of our God to be denied.

Those Spirits which would go into the Swine by permission, go out of the Man by command ; they had stayed long, and are ejected suddenly. The immediate works of God are perfect in an instant, and do not require the aid of time for their maturation.

No sooner are they cast out of the Man, then they are in the Swine : They will lose no time, but pass without intermission from one mischief to another. If they hold it a pain not to be doing evil, why is it not our delight to be ever doing good? The impetuoufness was no less then the speed. *The Herd was carried with violence from a steep-down place into the lake, and was choaked.* It is no small force that could doe this ; but if the Swine had been so many mountains, these Spirits, upon God's permission, had thus transported them. How easily can they carry those Souls which are under their power to destruction ? Unclean beasts that wallow in the mire of sensuality, brutish drunkards transforming themselves by excess, even they are the Swine whom the Legion carries headlong to the pit of perdition.

The wicked Spirits have their wish ; the Swine are choaked in the waves : What ease is this to them ? Good God, that there should be any creature that seeks contentment in destroying, in tormenting the good creatures of his Maker ! This is the diet of Hell : Those Fiends feed upon spight towards Man, so much more as he doth more resemble his Creatour ; towards all other living substances, so much more as they may be more usefull to man. The Swine ran down violently ; what marvell is it if their Keepers fled ? That miraculous work, which should have drawn them to *Christ*, drives them from him. They run with the news ; the country comes in with clamour : *The whole multitude of the country about besought him to depart.* The multitude

multitude is a beast of many heads ; every head hath a several mouth, and every mouth a several tongue, and every tongue a several accent : every head hath a several brain, and every brain thoughts of their own. So as it is hard to find a multitude without some division at least. Seldome ever hath a good motion found a perfect accordance : it is not so infrequent for a multitude to conspire in evil. Generality of assent is no warrant for any act. Common error carries away many, who inquire not into the reason of ought, but the practice. The way to Hell is a beaten road through the many feet that tread it. When Vice grows into fashion, Singularity is a Vertue.

There was not a *Gadaren* found that either dehorted their fellows, or opposed the motion. It is a sign of people given up to judgment, when no man makes head against projects of evil. Alas ! what can one strong man doe against a whole throng of wickedness ? Yet this good comes of an unprevailing resistence, that God forbears to plague where he finds but a sprinkling of Faith. Happy are they who (like unto the celestial bodies, which being carried about with the sway of the highest sphere, yet creep on their own ways) keep on the courses of their own holiness, against the swindge of common corruptions : They shall both deliver their own souls, and help to withhold judgment from others.

The *Gadarens* sue to *Christ* for his departure. It is too much favour to attribute this to their modesty, as if they held themselves unworthy of so Divine a guest. Why then did they fall upon this suit in a time of their loss ? Why did they not tax themselves, and intimate a secret desire of that which they durst not beg ? It is too much rigour to attribute it to the love of their Hogs, and an anger at their loss ; then, they had not intreated, but expelled him. It was their fear that moved this harsh suit ; a servile fear of danger to their persons, to their goods ; lest he, that could so absolutely command the Devils, should have set these

these tormentours upon them; lest their other Demoniacks should be dispossessed with like loss. I cannot blame these *Gadarens* that they feared: this power was worthy of trembling at. Their fear was unjust. They should have argued, *This man hath power over men, beasts, devils; it is good having him to our friend; his presence is our safety and protection*: Now they contrarily mis-inferre, *Thus powerfull is he, it is good he were farther off*. What miserable and pernicious misconstructions do men make of God, of Divine attributes and actions! God is omnipotent, able to take infinite vengeance of sin; Oh that he were not: He is provident; I may be careless: He is mercifull; I may sin: He is holy; let him depart from me, for I am a sinfull man. How witty sophisters are natural men to deceive their own souls, to rob themselves of a God? O Saviour, how worthy are they to want thee that wish to be rid of thee? Thou hast just cause to be weary of us, even whilst we sue to hold thee: but when once our wretched unthankfulness grows weary of thee, who can pity us to be punished with thy departure? Who can say it is other then righteous, that thou shouldst retort one day upon us, *Depart from me, ye wicked?*

XVIII.

The faithfull Canaanite.

IT was our Saviour's trade to doe good; therefore he came down from heaven to earth, therefore he changed one station of earth for another. Nothing more commends goodness then generality and diffusion; whereas reservedness and close-handed restraint blemish the glory of it. The

Sun stands not still in one point of heaven, but walks his daily round, that all the inferiour world may share of his influences both in heat and light. Thy bounty, O Saviour, did not affect the praise of fixedness, but motion. One while I find thee at *Jerusalem*, then at *Capernaum*, soon after in the utmost verge of *Galilee*; never but doing good.

But as the Sun, though he daily compass the world, yet never walks from under his line, never goes beyond the turning points of the longest and shortest day: so neither didst thou, O Saviour, pass the bounds of thine own peculiar people; thou wouldst move, but not wildly, not out of thine own sphere. Wherein thy glorified estate exceeds thine humbled, as far as Heaven is above Earth. Now thou art *lift up*, thou *drawest all men unto thee*: there are now no lists, no limits of thy gracious visitations; but as the whole Earth is equidistant from Heaven, so all the nations of the world lie equally open to thy bounty.

Neither yet didst thou want outward occasions of thy removall: Perhaps the very importunity of the Scribes and Pharisees, in obtruding their Traditions, drave thee thence; perhaps their unjust offence at thy Doctrine. There is no readier way to lose *Christ*, then to clog him with humane Ordinances, then to spurn at his heavenly Instructions. He doth not always subduce his Spirit with his visible presence; but his very outward withdrawing is worthy of our sighs, worthy of our tears. Many a one may say, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Soul had not died*. Thou art now with us, O Saviour, thou art with us in a free and plentiful fashion; how long, thou knowest; we know our deservings and fear. O teach us how happy we are in such a Guest, and give us grace to keep thee. Hadst thou walked within the *Phœnician* borders, we could have told how to have made glad constructions of thy mercy in turning to the Gentiles; thou that couldst touch the Lepers without uncleanness, couldst not be defiled with aliens: but we know

know the partition-wall was not yet broken down ; and thou that didst charge thy Disciples *not to walk into the way of the Gentiles* , wouldst not transgress thine own rule: Once, we are sure, thou camest to the utmost point of the bounds of *Galilee* ; as not ever confined to the heart of *Jewry*, thou wouldst sometimes bless the outer skirts with thy presence. No angle is too obscure for the Gospel : *The land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the Sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness saw great light.* The Sun is not scornfull, but looks with the same face upon every plot of earth : not onely the stately palaces and pleasant gardens are visited by his beams, but mean cottages, but neglected bogs and moors. God's Word is like himself, *no acceptor of persons* ; the wild Kern, the rude *Scythian*, the savage *Indian* are alike to it. The mercy of God will be sure to find out those that belong to his election in the most secret corners of the world, like as his judgments will fetch his enemies from under the hills and rocks. The good Shepherd walks the wilderness to seek one sheep strayed from many. If there be but one *Syrophœnician* Soul to be gained to the Church, *Christ* goes to the coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon* to fetch her. Why are we weary to doe good, when our Saviour underwent this perpetual toil in healing Bodies, and winning Souls ? There is no life happy but that which is spent in a continual drudging for edification.

It is long since we heard of the name or nation of *Canaanites* ; all the country was once so styled ; that people was now forgotten : yet because this woman was of the bloud of those *Phœnicians* which were anciently ejected out of *Canaan*, that title is revived to her. God keeps account of pedigrees after our oblivion ; that he may magnifie his mercies, by continuing them to thousands of the generations of the just, and by renewing favours upon the unjust. No nation carried such brands and scars of a Curse as *Canaan*. To the shame of those careless *Jews*, even a faithfull

Canaanite is a suppliant to *Christ*, whilst they neglect so great salvation. She doth not speak, but cry; need and desire have raised her voice to an importunate clamour. The God of mercy is light of hearing, yet he loves a loud and vehement solicitation; not to make himself inclinable to grant, but to make us capable to receive blessings. They are words, and not prayers, which fall from careless lips. If we felt our want, or wanted not desire, we could speak to God in no tune but cries. If we would prevail with God, we must wrastle; and if we would wrastle happily with God, we must wrastle first with our own dulness. Nothing but cries can pierce Heaven. Neither doth her vehemence so much argue her Faith, as doth her compellation, *O Lord, thou Son of David*. What Profelyte, what Disciple could have said more? O blessed *Syro-phœnician*, who taught thee this abstract of Divinity? What can we Christians confess more then the Deity, the Humanity, and the *Messiahship* of our glorious Saviour? his Deity, as *Lord*; his Humanity, as a *Son*; his *Messiahship*, as the *Son of David*? Of all the famous progenitours of *Christ*, two are singled out by an eminence, *David* and *Abraham*; a King, a Patriarch: And though the Patriarch were first in time, yet the King is first in place; not so much for the dignity of the person, as the excellence of the promise, which as it was both later and fresher in memory, so more honourable. To *Abraham* was promised multitude and blessing of seed: to *David* perpetuity of dominion. So as when God promiseth not to destroy his people, it is for *Abraham's* sake; when, not to extinguish the Kingdom, it is for *David's* sake. Had she said, the Son of *Abraham*, she had not come home to this acknowledgment. *Abraham* is the father of the faithfull, *David* of the Kings of *Juda* and *Israel*: There are many faithfull, there is but one King. So as in this title she doth proclaim him the perpetual King of his Church, the Rod or Flower which should come from the root of *Jesse*, the true and onely Saviour

Saviour of the world. Whoſo would come unto *Chriſt* to purpoſe, muſt come in the right ſtyle; apprehending a true God; a true Man, a true God and Man: any of theſe ſepered from other makes *Chriſt* an Idol, and our prayers ſin. Being thus acknowledged, what ſuit is ſo fit for him as mercy: *Have mercy on me.* It was her Daughter that was tormented, yet ſhe ſays, *Have mercy on me.* Perhaps her poſſeſſed child was ſenſeleſs of her miſery; the parent feels both her ſorrow, and her own. As ſhe was a good woman, ſo a good mother. Grace and good nature have taught her to appropriate the afflictions of this divided part of her own fleſh. It is not in the power of another ſkin, to ſever the intereſt of our own loins or womb. We find ſome Fowls that burn themſelves, whiſt they endeavour to blow out the fire from their young: And even Serpents can receive their brood into their mouth, to ſhield them from danger. No creature is ſo unnatural, as the reaſonable that hath put off affection.

On me, therefore, in mine: *for my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a Devil.* It was this that ſent her to *Chriſt*: It was this that muſt incline *Chriſt* to her. I doubt whether ſhe had inquired after *Chriſt*, if ſhe had not been vexed with her Daughter's ſpirit. Our afflictions are as *Benhadad's* beſt counſellours, that ſent him with a cord about his neck to the mercifull King of *Iſrael*. Theſe are the files and whetſtones that ſet an edge on our Devotions, without which they grow dull and ineffectual. Neither are they ſtronger motives to our ſuit, then to *Chriſt's* mercy. We cannot have a better ſpokeſman unto God then our own miſery; that alone ſues and pleads and importunes for us. This which ſets off men, whoſe compaſſion is finite, attracts God to us. Who can plead diſcouragements in his acceſs to the throne of grace, when our wants are our forcible advocates? All our worthineſs is in a capable miſery.

All *Iſrael* could not example the faith of this *Canaanite*;

yet she was thus tormented in her Daughter. It is not the truth or strength of our Faith that can secure us from the outward and bodily vexations of Satan : against the inward and spiritual that can and will prevail. It is no more antidote against the other, then against fevers and dropfies. How should it, whenas it may fall out that these sufferings may be profitable ? and why should we expect that the love of our God shall yield to fore-lay any benefit to the Soul ? He is an ill patient that cannot distinguish betwixt an affliction, and the evil of affliction. When the messenger of Satan buffets us, it is enough that God hath said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

Millions were in *Tyre* and *Sidon*, whose persons, whose children were untouched with that tormenting hand : I hear none but this faithfull Woman say, *My daughter is grievously vexed of the Devil.* The worst of bodily afflictions are an insufficient proof of Divine displeasure. She that hath most grace complains of most discomfort.

Who would now expect any other then a kind answer to so pious and faithfull a petition ? And behold, *he answered her not a word.* O Holy Saviour, we have oft found cause to wonder at thy words, never till now at thy silence. A miserable suppliant cries and sues, whilst the God of mercies is speechless. He that comforts the afflicted, adds affliction to the comfortless by a willing disrespect. What shall we say then ? is the fountain of mercy dried up ? O Saviour, couldst thou but hear ? She did not murmur, not whisper, but cry out : couldst thou but pity, but regard her that was as good as she was miserable ? If thy ears were open, could thy bowels be shut ? Certainly it was thou that didst put it into the heart, into the mouth of this woman to ask, and to ask thus of thy self : She could never have said, *O Lord, thou Son of David*, but from thee, but by thee : *None calleth Jesus the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* Much more therefore didst thou hear the words of thine own making ; and well wert thou pleased
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to hear what thou thoughtest good to forbear to answer. It was thine own grace that sealed up thy lips. Whether for the trial of her patience and perseverance : for silence carried a semblance of neglect ; and a willing neglect lays strong siege to the best fort of the Soul. Even calm tempers, when they have been stirred, have bewrayed impetuoufness of passion. If there be any dregs in the bottom of the glass, when the water is shaken, they will be soon seen. Or whether for the more sharpening of her desires, and raising of her zealous importunity. Our holy longings are increased with delays : It whets our appetite to be held fasting. Or whether for the more sweetning of the blessing by the difficulty or stay of obtaining. The benefit that comes with ease is easily contemned : Long and eager pursuit endears any favour. Or whether for the ingaging of his Disciples in so charitable a suit. Or whether for the wise avoidance of exception from the captious *Jews*. Or, lastly, for the drawing on of an holy and imitable pattern of faithfull perseverance ; and to teach us not to measure God's hearing of our suit by his present answer, or his present answer by our own sense. Whilst our weakness expects thy words, thy wisdom resolves upon thy silence. Never wert thou better pleased to hear the acclamation of Angels, then to hear this woman say, *O Lord, thou Son of David* : yet silence is thy answer. When we have made our prayers, it is an happy thing to hear the report of them back from Heaven : but if we always do not so, it is not for us to be dejected, and to accuse either our infidelity, or thy neglect ; since we find here a faithfull suitour met with a gracious Saviour, and yet *he answered her not a word*. If we be poor in spirit, God is rich in mercy ; he cannot send us away empty : yet he will not always let us feel his condescend ; crossing us in our will, that he may advance our benefit.

It was no small fruit of *Christ's* silence, that the Disciples were hereupon moved to pray for her. Not for a meer dismissal :

dismission : It had been no favour to have required this, but a punishment : for, if to be held in suspense be miserable, to be sent away with a repulse is more. But for a mercifull grant. They saw much passion in the woman, much cause of passion : they saw great discouragement on *Christ's* part, great constancy on hers. Upon all these they feel her misery, and become suitours for her, unrequested. It is our duty, in case of necessity, to intercede for each other ; and by how much more familiar we are with *Christ*, so much more to improve our interest for the relief of the distressed. We are bidden to say, *Our Father*, not, *mine*. Yea, being members of one body, we pray for our selves in others. If the Foot be prickt, the Back bends, the Head bows down, the Eyes look, the Hands stir, the Tongue calls for aid ; the whole man is in pain, and labours for redress. He cannot pray or be heard for himself, that is no man's friend but his own. No Prayer without Faith, no Faith without Charity, no Charity without mutual Intercession.

That which urged them to speak for her, is urged to *Christ* by them for her obtaining ; *She cries after us*. Prayer is as an Arrow : if it be drawn up but a little, it goes not far ; but if it be pull'd up to the head, it flies strongly, and pierces deep. If it be but dribbled forth of careless lips, it falls down at our foot : the strength of our ejaculation sends it up into Heaven, and fetches down a blessing. The child hath escaped many a stripe by his loud crying ; and the very unjust Judge cannot endure the widow's clamour. Heartless motions do but teach us to deny ; fervent suits offer violence both to earth and heaven.

Christ would not answer the Woman, but doth answer the Disciples. Those that have a familiarity with God shall receive answers, when strangers shall stand out. Yea even of domesticks some are more intire. He that lay in *Jesus* his bosome could receive that intelligence which was concealed from the rest. But who can tell whether that silence

lence or this answer be more grievous? *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* What is this answer but a defence of that silence and seeming neglect? Whilst he said nothing, his forbearance might have been supposed to proceed from the necessity of some greater thoughts: but now his answer professeth that silence to have proceeded from a willing resolution not to answer: and therefore he doth not vouchsafe so much as to give to her the answer, but to her solicitours; that they might return his denial from him to her, who had undertaken to derive her suit to him. *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Like a faithfull Embassadour, *Christ* hath an eye to his commission: that may not be violated, though to an apparent advantage: whither he is not sent, he may not go. As he, so all his have their fixed marks set; at these they aim, and think it not safe to shoot at rovers. In matter of morality it is not for us to stand onely upon inhibitions, avoiding what is forbidden, but upon commands, endeavouring onely what is enjoyned. We need no other rule of our life, then the intention of our several stations. And if he that was God would take no farther scope to himself then the limits of his commission, how much doth it concern us frail men to keep within compass? or what shall become of our lawfulness, that live in a direct contrariety to the will of him that sent us?

Israel was *Jacob's* name, from him derived to his posterity; till the division of the Tribes under *Jeroboam* all that nation was *Israel*: then the Father's name went to the most, which were ten Tribes; the name of the Son *Juda* to the best, which were two. *Christ* takes no notice of this unhappy division; he remembers the ancient name which he gave to that faithfull wrestler. It was this *Christ* with whom *Jacob* strove; it was he that wrenched his hip, and changed his name, and dismissed him with a blessing: and now he cannot forget his old mercy to the house of *Israel*; to that onely doth he profess himself sent. Their

first brood were Shepherds, now they are Sheep; and those not guarded, not empastured, but strayed and lost. O Saviour, we see thy charge; the house of *Israel*, not of *Esau*; sheep, not goats, not wolves; lost sheep, not securely impaled in the confidence of their safe condition. Woe were to us if thou wert not sent to us. *He is not a Jew which is one without.* Every *Israelite* is not a true one. We are not of thy fold, if we be not sheep: thou wilt not reduce us to thy fold, if we be not lost in our own apprehensions. O Lord, thou hast put a fleece upon our backs, we have lost our selves enough: make us so sensible of our own wandrings, that we may find thee sent unto us, and may be happily found of thee.

Hath not this poor woman yet done? Can neither the silence of *Christ* nor his denial silence her? Is it possible she should have any glimps of hope after so resolute repulses? Yet still, as if she saw no argument of discouragement, she comes, and worships, and cries, *Lord, help me.* She which could not in the house get a word of *Christ*, she that saw her solicitours (though *Christ's* own Disciples) repelled, yet she comes. Before she followed, now she overtakes him: before she sued aloof, now she comes close to him: no contempt can cast her off. Faith is an undaunted grace; it hath a strong heart, and a bold forehead. Even very denials cannot dismay it, much less delays. She came not to face, not to expostulate, but to prostrate her self at his feet. Her tongue worshipt him before, now her knee. The eye of her Faith saw that Divinity in *Christ* which bowed her to his earth. There cannot be a fitter gesture of man to God then Adoration.

Her first suit was for mercy, now for help. There is no use of mercy but in helpfulness. To be pitied without aid, is but an addition to misery. Who can blame us, if we care not for an unprofitable compassion?

The very suit was gracious. She saith not, *Lord, if thou canst, help me,* as the father of the Lunatick; but professes
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the power whilst she begs the act, and gives glory where she would have relief.

Who now can expect other then a fair and yielding answer to so humble, so faithfull, so patient a suppliant? What can speed well, if a prayer of faith from the knees of humility succeed not? And yet, behold, the farther she goes, the worse she fares: her discouragement is doubled with her suit. *It is not good to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to dogs.* First, his silence implied a contempt; then, his answer defended his silence; now, his speech expresses and defends his contempt. Lo, he hath turned her from a woman to a dog, and (as it were) spurns her from his feet with an harsh repulse. What shall we say? is the Lamb of God turned Lion? doth that clear fountain of mercy run blood? O Saviour, did ever so hard a word fall from those mild lips? Thou calledst *Herod Fox*, most worthily; he was crafty and wicked: the Scribes and Pharisees a *generation of vipers*; they were venomous and cruel: *Judas a Devil*; he was both covetous and treacherous. But here was a Woman in distress, and distress challenges mercy: a good woman, a faithfull suppliant, a *Canaanitish* disciple, a Christian *Canaanite*; yet rated, and whipt out for a dog, by thee who wert all goodness and mercy. How different are thy ways from ours? Even thy severity argues favour. The trial had not been so sharp, if thou hadst not found the faith so strong, if thou hadst not meant the issue so happy. Thou hadst not driven her away as a Dog, if thou hadst not intended to admit her for a Saint; and to advance her so much for a pattern of Faith, as thou depressedst her for a spectacle of contempt.

The time was when the *Jews* were Children, and the Gentiles Dogs: now the case is happily altered; the *Jews* are the Dogs, (so their dear and Divine countryman calls the Concision,) we Gentiles are the Children. What certainty is there in an external profession, that gives us only to seem, not to be? at least the being that it gives:

is doubtfull and temporary : we may be Children to day, and Dogs to morrow. The true assurance of our condition is in the Decree and Covenant of God, on his part ; in our Faith and Obedience, on ours. How they of Children became Dogs, it is not hard to say ; their presumption, their unbelief transformed them ; and (to perfect their brutishness) they set their fangs upon the Lord of life. How we of Dogs become Children, I know no reason but, *Oh the depth !* That which at the first singled them out from the nations of the world, hath at last singled us out from the world and them. *It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that hath mercy.* Lord, how should we bless thy goodness, that we of Dogs are Children ? how should we fear thy justice, since they of Children are Dogs ? O let *not us be high-minded, but tremble.* If they were cut off who crucified thee in thine humbled estate, what may we expect who crucifie thee daily in thy glory ?

Now what ordinary patience would not have been overstrained with so contemptuous a repulse ? How few but would have fallen into intemperate passions, into passionate expostulations ? Art thou the Prophet of God, that so disdainfully entertainest poor suppliants ? Is this the comfort that thou dealest to the distressed ? Is this the fruit of my humble adoration, of my faithfull profession ? Did I snarl or bark at thee, when I called thee the Son of *David* ? Did I fly upon thee otherwise then with my prayers and tears ? And if this term were fit for my vileness, yet doth it become thy lips ? Is it not sorrow enough to me that I am afflicted with my Daughter's misery, but that thou (of whom I hoped for relief) must adde to mine affliction in an unkind reproach ? But here is none of all this : Contrarily, her humility grants all, her patience overcomes all, and she meekly answers, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* The reply is not more witty then faithfull. O Lord, thou art Truth it self, thy

thy words can be no other then truth; thou hast call'd me a Dog, and a Dog I am: give me therefore the favour and privilege of a Dog, that I may gather up some crumbs of mercy from under that table whereat thy Children sit. This blessing (though great to me, yet) to the infiniteness of thy power and mercy is but as a crum to a feast. I presume not to press to the board, but to creep under it: deny me not those small offalls which else would be swept away in the dust. After this stripe, give me but a crum, and I shall fawn upon thee, and depart satisfied. O woman, (say I) great is thine humility, great is thy patience: but, *O woman*, (saith my Saviour) *great is thy faith*. He sees the root, we the stock. Nothing but Faith could thus temper the heart, thus strengthen the soul, thus charm the tongue. O precious Faith! O acceptable Perseverance! It is no marvell if that chiding end in favour: *Be it to thee even as thou wilt*. Never did such grace go away uncrowned. The beneficence had been streight, if thou hadst not carried away more then thou suedst for. Lo, thou that camest a Dog, goest away a Child: thou that wouldst but creep under the Childrens feet, art set at their elbow: thou that wouldst have taken up with a crum, art feasted with full dishes. The way to speed well at God's hand is, to be humbled in his eyes, and in our own. It is quite otherwise with God, and with men. With men, we are so accounted of as we account of our selves: he shall be sure to be vile in the sight of others, which is vile in his own. With God, nothing is got by vain ostentation, nothing is lost by abasement. O God, when we look down to our own weakness, and cast up our eyes to thine infiniteness, thine omnipotence, what poor things we are? but when we look down upon our sins and wickedness, how shall we express our shame? None of all thy creatures (except Devils) are capable of so foul a quality. As we have thus made our selves worse then beasts, so let us, in a sincere humbleness of mind acknowledge it to thee,

who canst pity, forgive, redress it. So setting our selves down at the lower end of the table of thy creatures, thou, the great Master of the Feast, maist be pleased to advance us to the height of glory.

XIX.

The Deaf and Dumb man cured.

OUR Saviour's entrance into the coasts of *Tyre* and *Sidon* was not without a Miracle, neither was his regress; as the Sun neither rises nor sets without light. In his entrance, he delivers the Daughter of the faithfull *Syrophœnician*: in his egress, he cures the Deaf and Dumb. He can no more want work, then that work can want success. Whether the Patient were naturally deaf, and perfectly dumb, or imperfectly dumb, and accidentally deaf, I labour not. Sure I am that he was so deaf that he could not hear of *Christ*, so dumb that he could not speak for himself: good neighbours supply his ears, his tongue; they bring him to *Christ*. Behold a Miracle led in by charity, acted by power, led out by modesty.

It was a true office of love, to speak thus in the cause of the dumb, to lend senses to him that wanted. Poor man! he had nothing to intreat for him but his impotence; here was neither ear to inform, nor tongue to crave: his friends are sensible of his infirmity, and unasked bring him to cure. This spiritual service we owe to each other. It is true, we should be quick of hearing to the things of God and of our peace, quick of tongue to call for our helps: but, alas! we are naturally deaf and dumb to good, we have ear and tongue enough for the world; if that do but whisper,
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we hear it ; if that do but draw back, we cry after it : we have neither for God. Ever since our ear was lent to the Serpent in Paradise, it hath been spiritually deaf ; ever since we set our tooth in the forbidden fruit, our tongue hath been speechless to God : and that which was faulty in the root, is worse in the branches. Every soul is more deafened and bedumbed by increasing corruptions, by actual sins. Some ears the infinite mercy of God hath bored, some tongues he hath untied by the power of regeneration : these are wanting to their holy faculties, if they do not improve themselves in bringing the deaf and dumb unto *Christ*.

There are some deaf and dumb upon necessity, some others upon affectation. Those, such as live either out of the pale of the Church, or under a spiritual tyranny within the Church : we have no help for them but our prayers, our pity can reach farther then our aid. These, such as may hear of a *Christ*, and sue to him, but will not ; a condition so much more fearfull, as it is more voluntary. This kind is full of wofull variety, whilst some are deaf by an outward obturation, whether by the prejudice of the teacher, or by secular occasions and distractions ; others, by the inwardly apostemating tumours of pride, by the ill vapours of carnal affections, of froward resolutions: all of them like the deaf adder have their ears shut to the Divine charmer. O miserable condition of foolish men, so peevishly averse from their own salvation ; so much more worthy of our commiseration, as it is more incapable of their own ! These are the men whose cure we must labour, whom we must bring to *Christ* by admonitions, by threats, by authority, and (if need be) by wholesome compulsions.

They do not onely lend their hand to the deaf and dumb, but their tongue also ; they say for him that which he could not with to say for himself. Doubtless they had made signs to him of what they intended, and finding him forward in his desires, now they speak to *Christ* for him.

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Every man lightly hath a tongue to speak for himself; happy is he that keeps a tongue for other men. We are charged not with supplications onely, but with intercessions. Herein is both the largest improvement of our love, and most effectual. No distance can hinder this fruit of our devotion; thus we may oblige those that we shall never see, those that can never thank us. This beneficence cannot impoverish us; the more we give, we have still the more; it is a safe and happy store that cannot be impaired by our bounty. What was their suit, but that *Christ* would put his hand upon the Patient? Not that they would prescribe the means, or imply a necessity of his touch; but for that they saw this was the ordinary course both of *Christ*, and his Disciples, by touching to heal. Our prayers must be directed to the usual proceedings of God: his actions must be the rule of our prayers, our prayers may not prescribe his actions.

That gracious Saviour, who is wont to exceed our desires, does more then they sue for. Not onely doth he touch the party, but takes him by the hand, and leads him from the multitude.

He that would be healed of his spiritual Infirmities must be sequestred from the throng of the world. There is a good use, in due times, of solitariness. That soul can never enjoy God that is not sometimes retired: the modest Bridegroom of the Church will not impart himself to his Spouse before company. Or perhaps this secession was for our example, of a willing and carefull avoidance of vain-glory in our actions: whence also it is that our Saviour gives an after-charge of secrecy. He that could say, *He that doeth evil hateth the light*, eschue the light even in good. To seek our own glory is not glory. Although besides this bashfull desire of obscurity, here is a meet regard of opportunity in the carriage of our actions. The envy of the Scribes and Pharisees might trouble the passage of his Divine ministry; their exasperation is wisely declined by this retiring.

tiring. He in whose hands time is, knows how to make his best choice of seasons. Neither was it our Saviour's meaning to have this Miracle buried, but hid. Wisdom hath no better improvement then in distinguishing times, and discreetly marshalling the circumstances of our actions; which whosoever neglects, shall be sure to shame his work, and marre his hopes.

Is there a spirituall Patient to be cured? aside with him: to undertake him before the face of the multitude, is to wound, not to heal him.

Reproof and good counsel must be like our Alms, in secret, so as (if possible) one ear or hand might not be conscious to the other. As in some cases Confession, so our Reprehension must be auricular. The discreet Chirurgeon that would cure a modest patient, whose secret complaint hath in it more shame then pain, shuts out all eyes save his own. It is enough for the God of Justice to say, *Thou didst it secretly, but I will doe it before all Israel, and before this Sun.* Our limited and imperfect wisdom must teach us to apply private redresses to private maladies. It is the best remedy that is least seen, and most felt.

What means this variety of Ceremony? O Saviour, how many parts of thee are here active? Thy finger is put into the ear, thy spittle toucheth the tongue, thine eyes look up, thy lungs sigh, thy lips move to an *Epphatha*. Thy word alone, thy beck alone, thy wish alone, yea the least act of velleity from thee might have wrought this cure: why wouldst thou imploy so much of thy self in this work? Was it to shew thy liberty in not always equally exercising the power of thy Deity? in that one while thine onely command shall raise the dead, and eject Devils; another while thou wouldst accommodate thy self to the mean and homely fashions of natural Agents, and, condescending to our senses and customs, take those ways which may carry some more near respect to the cure intended. Or was it to teach us how well thou likest that there should be

a ceremonious carriage of thy solemn actions, which thou pleatest to produce cloathed with such circumstantial forms?

It did not content thee to put one finger into one ear, but into either ear wouldst thou put a finger: both ears equally needed cure, thou wouldst apply the means of cure to both. The Spirit of God is the finger of God: then dost thou, O Saviour, put thy finger into our ear, when thy Spirit inables us to hear effectually. If we thrust our own fingers into our ears, using such humane perswasions to our selves as arise from worldly grounds, we labour in vain; yea, these stoppells must needs hinder our hearing the voice of God. Hence, the great Philosophers of the ancient world, the learned Rabbins of the Synagogue, the great Doctours of a false faith, are deaf to spiritual things. It is onely that finger of thy Spirit, O Blessed *Jesu*, that can open our ears, and make passage through our ears into our hearts. Let that finger of thine be put into our ears, so shall our deafness be removed, and we shall hear, not the loud thunders of the Law, but the gentle whisperings of thy gracious motions to our souls.

We hear for our selves, but we speak for others. Our Saviour was not content to open the ears onely, but to untie the tongue. With the ear we hear, with the mouth we confess. The same hand is applied to the tongue, not with a dry touch, but with spittle; in allusion doubtless to the removall of the naturall impediment of speech: moisture, we know, glibs the tongue, and makes it apt to motion; how much more from that sacred mouth?

There are those whose ears are open, but their mouths are still shut to God; they understand, but do not utter the wonderfull things of God: there is but half a cure wrought upon these men; their ear is but open to hear their own judgement, except their mouth be open to confess their Maker and Redeemer. O God, do thou so moisten my tongue with thy graces, that it may run smoothly (as
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the pen of a ready writer) to the praise of thy name. Whilst the finger of our Saviour was on the tongue, in the ear of the Patient, his eye was in Heaven. Never man had so much cause to look up to Heaven as he; there was his home, there was his throne; he onely was *from heaven, heavenly*. Each of us hath [a good mind homeward, though we meet with better sights abroad; how much more when our home is so glorious above the region of our peregrination? but thou, O Saviour, hadst not onely thy dwelling there, but thy seat of majesty; there the greatest Angels adored thee: it is a wonder that thine eye could be ever any-where but there. What doeth thine eye in this, but teach ours where to be fixed? Every good gift and every perfect giving come down from above: how can we look off from that place whence we receive all good? Thou didst not teach us to say, O infinite God, which art every-where; but, O *our Father, which art in heaven*: there let us look up to thee. O let not our eyes or hearts grovell upon this earth, but let us fasten them above the hills whence cometh our salvation; thence let us acknowledge all the good we receive; thence let us expect all the good we want.

Why our Saviour look'd up to Heaven (though he had Heaven in himself) we can see reason enough: but why did he sigh? Surely not for need; the least motion of a thought was in him impetratory. How could he chuse but be heard of his Father, who was one with the Father? Not for any fear of distrust. But partly for compassion, partly for example. For compassion of those manifold infirmities into which sin had plunged mankind; a pitifull instance whereof was here presented unto him. For example, to fetch sighs from us for the miseries of others; sighs of sorrow for them, sighs of desire for their redress. This is not the first time that our Saviour spent sighs, yea tears, upon humane distresses. We are not bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, if we so feel not the smart of our brethren, that the fire of our passion break forth into the smoke

of sighs. *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?*

Christ was not silent whilst he cured the Dumb; his *Eppatha* gave life to all these his other actions. His sighing, his spitting, his looking up to heaven, were the acts of a man: but his command of the ear and mouth to open was the act of God. He could not command that which he made not. His word is imperative, ours supplicatory. He doeth what he will with us, we doe by him what he thinks good to impart. In this mouth the word cannot be severed from the success: our Saviour's lips are no sooner opened in his *Eppatha*, then the mouth of the Dumb and the ears of the Deaf are opened at once. Behold here celerity and perfection. Naturall agents work by leisure, by degrees; nothing is done in an instant; by many steps is every thing carried from the entrance to the consummation: Omnipotency knows no rules; no imperfect work can proceed from a cause absolutely perfect. The man hears now more lightly then if he had never been deaf, and speaks more plainly then if he had never been tongue-ty'd. And can we blame him if he bestowed the handsel of his speech upon the power that restored it? if the first improvement of his tongue were the praise of the giver, of the maker of it? Or can we expect other then that our Saviour should say, Thy tongue is free, use it to the praise of him that made it so; thy ears are open, hear him that bids thee proclaim thy cure upon the house-top? But now behold, contrarily, he that opens this man's mouth by his powerfull word, by the same word shuts it again; charging silence by the same breath wherewith he gave speech: *Tell no man.*

Those tongues which interceded for his Cure, are charmed for the concealment of it. O Saviour, thou knowest the grounds of thine own commands; it is not for us to enquire, but to obey: we may not honour thee with a forbidden celebration. Good meanings have oft-times proved injurious. Those men whose charity im-
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ployed their tongues to speak for the dumb man, do now employ the same tongues to speak of his cure, when they should have been dumb. This charge (they imagine) proceeds from an humble modesty in *Christ*; which the respect to his honour bids them violate. I know not how we itch after those forbidden acts, which if left to our liberty we willingly neglect. This prohibition increaseth the rumour; every tongue is busied about this one. What can we make of this but a well-meant disobedience? O God, I should more gladly publish thy Name at thy command. I know thou canst not bid me to dishonour thee; there is no danger of such an injunction: but if thou shouldst bid me to hide the profession of thy Name and wondrous works, I should fulfill thy words; and not examine thine intentions. Thou knowest how to win more honour by our silence, than by our promulgation. A forbidden good differs little from evil. What makes our actions to be sin but thy prohibitions? our judgement avails nothing. If thou forbid us that which we think good, it becomes as faulty to thee-ward as that which is originally evil. Take thou charge of thy glory, give me grace to take charge of thy precepts.

X X.

Zacchæus.

NOW was our Saviour walking towards his Passion: his last journey had most wonders. *Fericho* was in his way from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*: he balks it not, though it were outwardly cursed; but, as the first *Josbua* saved a *Rahab* there, so there the second saves a *Zacchæus*; that an

Harlot, this a Publican. The traveller was wounded as he was going from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*: this man was taken from his *Jericho* to the true *Jerusalem*, and was healed. Not as a passenger did *Christ* walk this way, but as a visiter; not to punish, but to heal. With us, the sick man is glad to send far for the Physician; here the Physician comes to seek Patients, and calls at our door for work. Had not this good Shepherd left the ninety nine, and searched the desert, the lost sheep had never recovered the fold: had not his gracious frugality sought the lost groat, it had been swept up with the rushes, and thrown out in the dust. Still, O Saviour, dost thou walk through our *Jericho*: what would become of us, if thou shouldst stay till we seek thee alone? Even when thou hast found us, how hardly do we follow thee? The work must be all thine: we shall not seek thee, if thou find us not; we shall not follow thee, if thou draw us not.

Never didst thou, O Saviour, set one step in vain; wheresoever thou art walking, there is some *Zacchæus* to be wone: as in a drought, when we see some weighty cloud hovering over us, we say there is rain for some grounds, wheresoever it falls. The Ordinances of God bode good to some Souls, and happy are they on whom it lights.

How justly is *Zacchæus* brought in with a note of wonder? It is both great and good news to hear of a Convert. To see men perverted from God to the world, from truth to heresie, from piety to prophaneness, is as common, as lamentable; every night such stars fall: but to see a sinner come home to God, is both happy, and wondrous to men and Angels. I cannot blame that Philosopher who, undertaking to write of the hidden miracles of nature, spends most of his discourse upon the generation and formation of Man; surely we are *fearfully and wonderfully made*: but how much greater is the miracle of our spirituall generation; that a son of wrath, a child of Satan should be transformed into the son and heir of the ever-living God?

O God,

O God, thou workest both : but in the one our spirit animates us, in the other thine own.

Yet some things which have wonder in them for their worth, lose it for their frequency ; this hath no less rarity in it than excellence. How many painfull *Peter's* have complained to fish all night, and catch nothing ? Many Professours and few Converts hath been ever the lot of the Gospel. God's house, as the streets of *Jericho*, may be thronged, and yet but one *Zacchæus*. As therefore in the Lottery, when the great prize comes, the trumpet sounds before it ; so the news of a Convert is proclaimed with, *Behold Zacchæus*. Any Penitent had been worthy of a shout, but this man by an eminence ; a Publican, a chief of the Publicans, rich.

No name under heaven was so odious as this of a Publican, especially to this Nation, that stood so high upon their freedom, that every impeachment of it seemed no less than damnable : insomuch as they ask not, Is it fit, or needfull, but, *Is it lawfull, to pay tribute unto Cæsar ?* Any office of exaction must needs be hainous to a people so impatient of the yoke. And yet, not so much the trade, as the extortion drew hatred upon this profession ; out of both they are deeply infamous : one while they are matched with Heathens, another while with Harlots, always with Sinners. *And behold, Zacchæus a Publican*. We are all naturally strangers from God, the best is indisposed to grace : yet some there are whose very calling gives them better advantages. But this catch-poleship of *Zacchæus* carried extortion in the face, and in a sort bad defiance to his conversion : yet behold, from this Toll-booth is called both *Zacchæus* to be a Disciple, and *Matthew* to be an Apostle. We are in the hand of a cunning workman, that of the knottiest and crookedst timber can make rafts and cieling for his own house ; that can square the marble, or flint, as well as the freest stone. Who can now plead the disadvantage of his place, when he sees a Publican.

blican come to *Christ*? No calling can prejudice God's gracious election.

To excell in evil must needs be worse: if to be a Publican be ill, surely to be an Arch-publican is more. What talk we of the chief of Publicans, when he that professed himself the chief of sinners is now among the chief of Saints? Who can despair of mercy, when he sees one *Jericho* send both an Harlot and a Publican to Heaven?

The trade of *Zacchæus* was not a greater rub in his way, then his wealth. He that sent word to *John* for great news, that *the poor receive the Gospel*, said also, *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into heaven?* This bunch of the Camel keeps him from passing the needle's eye; although not by any malignity that is in the creature it self, (Riches are the gift of God,) but by reason of those three pernicious hang-byes, Cares, Pleasures, Pride, which too commonly attend upon wealth. Separate these, Riches are a blessing: If we can so possess them, that they possess not us, there can be no danger, much benefit in abundance. All the good or ill of wealth; or poverty, is in the mind, in the use. He that hath a free and lowly heart in riches, is poor; he that hath a proud heart under rags, is rich. If the rich man doe good and distribute, and the poor man steal, the rich hath put off his woe to the poor. *Zacchæus* had never been so famous a Convert, if he had been poor; nor so liberal a Convert, if he had not been rich. If more difficulty, yet more glory was in the conversion of rich *Zacchæus*.

It is well that wealthy *Zacchæus* was desirous to see *Christ*. Little do too many rich men care too see that sight: the face of *Cæsar* in their coin is more pleasing. This man leaves his bags, to bless his eyes with this prospect. Yet can I not praise him for this too much; it was not (I fear) out of Faith, but Curiosity. He that had heard great fame of the man, of his Miracles, would gladly see his face: even an *Herod* long'd for this, and was never the better.

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Onely this I find, that this curiosity of the eye, through the mercy of God, gave occasion to the belief of the heart. He that desires to see *Jesus* is in the way to enjoy him: there is not so much as a remote possibility in the man that cares not to behold him. The eye were ill bestowed, if it were onely to betray our Souls: there are no less beneficial glaunces of it. We are not worthy of this usefull casement of the heart, if we do not thence send forth beams of holy desires, and thereby re-convey profitable and saving objects.

I cannot marvell if *Zacchæus* were desirous to see *Jesus*: all the world was not worth this sight. Old *Simeon* thought it best to have his eyes closed up with this spectacle, as if he held it pity and disparagement to see ought after it. The father of the faithfull rejoiced to see him, though at nineteen hundred years distance: and the great Doctour of the Gentiles stands upon this as his highest stair, *Have I not seen the Lord Jesus?* And yet, O Saviour, many a one saw thee here, that shall never see thy face above; yea, that shall call to the hills to hide them from thy sight. And if we had once *known* thee according to the flesh, henceforth *know* we thee so no more. What an happiness shall it be, so to see thee glorious, that in seeing thee we shall partake of thy glory? O blessed vision, to which all others are but penal and despicable! Let me go into the Mint-house, and see heaps of gold, I am never the richer: let me go to the Picturers, I see goodly faces, and am never the fairer: let me go to the Court, I see state and magnificence, and am never the greater. But, O Saviour, I cannot see thee, and not be blessed. I can see thee here, though in a glass: If the eye of my Faith be dim, yet it is sure. O let me be unquiet till I do now see thee through the veil of Heaven, ere I shall see thee as I am seen.

Fain would *Zacchæus* see *Jesus*, but he could not. It were strange if a man should not find some lett in good
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desires ; somewhat will be still in the way betwixt us and *Christ*. Here are two hinderances met, the one internal, the other external ; the stature of the man, the press of the multitude ; the greatness of the press, the smallness of the stature. There was great thronging in the streets of *Jericho* to see *Jesus* ; the doors, the windows the bulks were all full : Here are many beholders, few disciples. If gazing, if profession were godliness, *Christ* could not want clients : now amongst all these wonderers there is but one *Zacchæus*. In vain should we boast of our forwardness to see and hear *Christ* in our streets, if we receive him not into our hearts.

This croud hides *Christ* from *Zacchæus*. Alas ! how common a thing is it, by the interposition of the throng of the world to be kept from the sight of our *Jesus* ? Here, a carnal Fashionist says, Away with this austere scrupulousness, let me doe as the most. The throng keeps this man from *Christ*. There, a superstitious Mis-believer says, What tell you me of an handfull of reformed. The whole world is ours. This man is kept from *Christ* by the throng. The covetous Mammonist says, Let them that have leisure be devout, my employments are many, my affairs great. This man cannot see *Christ* for the throng. There is no perfect view of *Christ*, but in an holy secession. The Spouse found not her Beloved till she was past the company, then she found him whom her soul loved. Whoso never seeks *Christ* but in the croud, shall never find comfort in finding him : the benefit of our publick view must be enjoyed in retiredness. If in a press we see a man's face, that is all ; when we have him alone, every lim may be viewed. O Saviour, I would be loth not to see thee in thine Assemblies, but I would be more loth not to see thee in my Closet. Yet had *Zacchæus* been but of the common pitch, he might perhaps have seen *Christ*'s face over his fellows shoulders : now, his stature adds to the disadvantage ; his body did not answer to his mind ; his desires were high,

whilst

whilst his body was low. The best is, however smalness of stature was disadvantageous in a level, yet it is not so at height. A little man, if his eye be clear, may look as high (though not as far) as the tallest. The least Pigmy may from the lowest valley see the Sun or Stars as fully as a Giant upon the highest mountain. O Saviour, thou art now in Heaven, the smalness of our person or of our condition cannot lett us from beholding thee. The Soul hath no stature, neither is Heaven to be had with reaching: Onely clear thou the eyes of my Faith, and I am high enough.

I regard not the Body, the Soul is the man: It is to small purpose that the Body is a Giant, if the Soul be a Dwarf. We have to doe with a God that measures us by our desires, and not by our statures. All the streets of *Jericho* (however he seemed to the eye) had not so tall a man as *Zacchæus*.

The witty Publican easily finds both his hinderances, and the ways of their redress. His remedy for the press, is to run before the multitude; his remedy for his stature, is to climb up into the Sycomore: he imployes his feet in the one, his hands and feet in the other. In vain shall he hope to see *Christ*, that doth not out-goe the common throng of the world. The multitude is clustred together, and moves too close to move fast: we must be nimbler then they, if ever we desire or expect to see *Christ*. It is the charge of God, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe evil*: we doe evil if we lag in good. It is held commonly both wit and state for a man to keep his pace: and that man escapes not censure, who would be forwarder then his fellows. Indeed for a man to run alone in ways of indifferency, or to set an hypocritical face of out-running all others in a zealous profession, when the heart lingers behind, both these are justly hatefull: but in an holy emulation to strive truly and really to out-strip others in degrees of Grace, and a conscionable care of obedience,

this is truly Christian, and worthy of him that would hope to be blessed with the sight of a Saviour.

Tell me, ye fashionable Christians, that stand upon terms of equality, and will not go a foot before your neighbours in holy zeal and aidfull charity, in conscionable sincerity; tell me, who hath made other mens progress a measure for yours? Which of you says, I will be no richer, no greater, no fairer, no wiser, no happier then my fellows? Why should you then say, I will be no holier? Our life is but a Race; every good End that a man proposes to himself is a several Goal. Did ever any man that ran for a prize say, I will keep up with the rest? Doth he not know that if he be not foremost, he loseth? We had as good to have fate still, as not *so* to run that we *may obtain*. We obtain not, if we out-run not the multitude.

So far did *Zacchæus* over-run the stream of the people, that he might have space to climb the Sycomore ere *Jesus* could pass by. I examine not the kind, the nature, the quality of this Plant: what Tree soever it had been, *Zacchæus* would have tried to scale it, for the advantage of this prospect. He hath found out this help for his stature, and takes pains to use it. It is the best improvement of our wit, to seek out the aptest furtherances for our Souls. Do you see a weak and studious Christian, that being unable to inform himself in the matters of God, goes to the cabinet of Heaven, *the Priests lips*, which *shall preserve knowledge*? there is *Zacchæus* in the Sycomore. It is the truest wisdom that helps forward our Salvation. How witty we are to supply all the deficiencies of Nature? If we be low, we can adde cubits to our stature; if ill-coloured, we can borrow complexion; if hairless, perukes; if dim-sighted, glasses; if lame, crutches: and shall we be conscious of our spiritual wants, and be wilfully regardless of the remedy? Surely, had *Zacchæus* stood still on the ground, he had never seen *Christ*; had he not climbed the Sycomore,

Sycamore, he had never climbed into Heaven. O Saviour, I have not height enough of my own to see thee: give me what Sycamore thou wilt; give me grace to use it, give me an happy use of that grace.

The more I look at the mercy of *Christ*, the more cause I see of astonishment. *Zacchæus* climbs up into the Sycamore to see *Jesus*: *Jesus* first sees him, preventing his eyes with a former view. Little did *Zacchæus* look that *Jesus* would have cast up his eyes to him. Well might he think the boys in the street would spy him out, and shout at his stature, trade, ambition: but that *Jesus* should throw up his eyes into the Sycamore, and take notice of that small despised morsell of flesh, ere *Zacchæus* could find space to distinguish His face from the rest, was utterly beyond his thought or expectation. All his hope is to see; and now he is seen. To be seen and acknowledged is much more than to see. Upon any solemn occasion many thousands see the Prince, whom he sees not; and if he please to single out any one, whether by his eye or by his tongue, amongst the press, it passes for an high favour. *Zacchæus* would have thought it too much boldness to have asked what was given him. As *Jonathan* did to *David*, so doeth God to us, he shoots beyond us. Did he not prevent us with mercy, we might climbe into the Sycamore in vain. If he give Grace to him that doeth his best, it is the praise of the giver, not the earning of the receiver. How can we do or will without him? If he sees us first, we live; and if we desire to see him, we shall be seen of him. Who ever took pains to climbe the Sycamore, and came down disappointed? O Lord, what was there in *Zacchæus*, that thou shouldst look up at him? a Publican, a Sinner, an Arch-extortioner; a Dwarf in stature, but a Giant in oppression; a little man, but a great Sycophant; if rich in coin, more rich in sins and treasures of wrath. Yet it is enough that he desires to see thee: all these disadvantages cannot hide him from thee. Be we never so sinfull, if our desires

desires towards thee be hearty and fervent, all the broad leaves of the Sycomore cannot keep off thine eye from us. If we look at thee with the eye of Faith, thou wilt look at us with the eye of mercy. *The eye of the Lord is upon the just*; and he is just that would be so; if not in himself, yet in thee. O Saviour, when *Zacchæus* was above, and thou wert below, thou didst look up at him: now thou art above, and we below, thou lookest down upon us: thy mercy turns thine eyes every way towards our necessities. Look down upon us, that are not worthy to look up unto thee; and find us out, that we may seek thee.

It was much to note *Zacchæus*, it was more to name him. Methinks I see how *Zacchæus* startled at this, to hear the sound of his own name from the mouth of *Christ*: neither can he but think, Doth *Jesus* know me? Is it his voice, or some other's in the throng? Lo, this is the first blink that ever I had of him. I have heard the fame of his wonderful works, and held it happiness enough for me to have seen his face; and doth he take notice of my person, of my name? Surely the more that *Zacchæus* knew himself, the more doth he wonder that *Christ* should know him. It was slander enough for a man to be a friend to a Publican; yet *Christ* gives this friendly compellation to the chief of Publicans, and honours him with this argument of a sudden intireness. The favour is great, but not singular: Every elect of God is thus graced. The Father knows the child's name: as he calls the stars of heaven by their names, so doth he his Saints, the stars on earth; and it is his own rule to his *Israel*, *I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine*. As God's children do not content themselves with a confused knowledge of him, but aspire to a particular apprehension and sensible application; so doeth God again to them: it is not enough that he knows them as in the croud, wherein we see many persons, none distinctly; but he takes single and severall knowledge of their qualities, conditions, mo-

tions, events. What care we that our names are obscure or contemned amongst men, whilst they are regarded by God? that they are raked up in the dust of Earth, whilst they are recorded in Heaven?

Had our Saviour said no more but, *Zacchæus, come down*, the poor man would have thought himself taxed for his boldness and curiosity: it were better to be unknown, then noted for miscarriage. But now the next words comfort him; *For I must this day abide at thine house*. What a sweet familiarity was here? as if *Christ* had been many years acquainted with *Zacchæus*, whom he now first saw. Besides our use, the Host is invited by the Guest, and called to an unexpected entertainment. Well did our Saviour hear *Zacchæus* his heart inviting him, though his mouth did not. Desires are the language of the Soul; those are heard by him that is the God of spirits.

We dare not doe thus to each other, save where we have eaten much salt; we scarce go where we are invited: though the face be friendly, and the entertainment great, yet the heart may be hollow. But here, he that saw the heart, and foreknew his welcome, can boldly say, *I must this day abide at thine house*. What a pleasant kind of entire familiarity there is betwixt *Christ* and a good heart? *If any man open, I will come in, and sup with him*. It is much for the King of Glory to come into a cottage, and sup there: yet thus he may doe, and take some state upon him in sitting alone. No, *I will so sup with him, that he shall sup with me*. Earthly state consists in strangeness, and affects a stern kind of majesty aloof. Betwixt God and us, though there be infinite more distance, yet there is a gracious affability and familiar intireness of conversation. O Saviour, what doest thou else every day but invite thy self to us in thy Word, in thy Sacraments? who are we that we should entertain thee, or thou us, dwarfs in grace, great in nothing but unworthiness? Thy praise is worthy to be so much the more, as our worth is less. Thou that biddest

thy.

thy self to us, bid us be fit to receive thee, and in receiving thee, happy.

How graciously doth *Jesus* still prevent the Publican, as in his sight, notice, compellation, so in his invitation too? That other Publican, *Levi*, bade *Christ* to his house, but it was after *Christ* had bidden him to his Discipleship: *Christ* had never been called to his feast, if *Levi* had not been called into his family. He loved us first, he must first call us; for he calls us out of love. As in the generall calling of Christianity, if he did not say, *Seek ye my face*, we could never say, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*: so in the specialties of our main benefits or employments, *Christ* must begin to us. If we invite our selves to him before he invite himself to us, the undertaking is presumptuous, the success unhappy.

If *Nathanael*, when *Christ* named him, and gave him the memorial-token of his being under the fig-tree, could say, *Thou art the Son of God*; how could *Zacchæus* do less in hearing himself upon this wild fig-tree named by the same lips? How must he needs think, If he knew not all things, he could not know me; and if he knew not the hearts of men, he could not have known my secret desires to entertain him: He is a God that knows me, and a mercifull God that invites himself to me? No marvel therefore, if upon this thought *Zacchæus* come down in haste. Our Saviour said not, Take thy leisure, *Zacchæus*; but, *I will abide at thine house to day*. Neither did *Zacchæus* upon this intimation sit still and say, When the press is over, when I have done some errands of my office; but he halts down to receive *Jesus*. The notice of such a Guest would have quickned his speed without a command. God loves not slack and lazy executions. The Angels of God are described with wings: and we pray to doe his will with their forwardness. Yea even to *Judas Christ* saith, *What thou doest, doe quickly*. O Saviour, there is no day wherein thou doest not call us by the voice of thy Gospel: what doe we still

still lingering in the Sycomore? How unkindly must thou needs take the delays of our Conversion? Certainly, had *Zacchæus* staid still in the Tree, thou hadst balked his house as unworthy of thee. What construction canst thou make of our wilfull dilations, but as a stubborn contempt? How canst thou but come to us in vengeance, if we come not down to entertain thee in a thankfull obedience?

Yet do I not hear thee say, *Zacchæus*, cast thy self down for haste; this was the counsell of the Tempter to thee; but, *Come down in haste*. And he did accordingly. There must be no more haste then good speed in our performances: we may offend as well in our heady acceleration, as in our delay. *Moses* ran so fast down the hill that he stumbled spiritually, and brake the Tables of God. We may so fast follow after Justice, that we out-run Charity. It is an unsafe obedience that is not discreetly and leisurely speedfull.

The speed of his descent was not more then the alacrity of his entertainment. *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully*. The life of hospitality is chearfulness. Let our chear be never so great, if we do not reade our welcome in our friend's face as well as in his dishes, we take no pleasure in it.

Can we marvell that *Zacchæus* received *Christ* joyfully? Who would not have been glad to have his house, yea himself, made happy with such a Guest? Had we been in the stead of this Publican, how would our hearts have leapt within us for joy of such a presence? How many thousand miles are measured by some devout Christians, onely to see the place where his feet stood? How much happier must he needs think himself that owns the roof that receives him? But O the incomparable happiness then of that man whose heart receives him, not for a day, not for years of days, not for millions of years, but for eternity! This may be our condition, if we be not streightned in our own bowels.

O Saviour, do thou welcome thy self to these houses of clay, that we may receive a joyfull welcome to thee in those everlasting habitations.

Zacchæus was not more glad of *Christ* then the *Jews* were discontented. Four vices met here at once, Envy, Scrupulousness, Ignorance, Pride. Their eye was evil because *Christ's* was good. I do not hear any of them invite *Christ* to his home; yet they snarl at the honour of this unworthy Host: they thought it too much happiness for a Sinner, which themselves willingly neglected to sue for. Wretched men! they cannot see the Mercy of *Christ*, for being bleared with the Happiness of *Zacchæus*: yea, that very Mercy which they see, torments them. If that viper be the deadliest which feeds the sweetest, how poisonous must this disposition needs be that feeds upon Grace?

What a contrariety there is betwixt good Angels and evil Men? The Angels rejoyce at that whereat men pout and stomach: Men are ready to cry and burst for anger at that which makes musick in Heaven. O wicked and foolish elder brother, that feeds on hunger and his own heart without doors, because his younger brother is feasting on the fat calf within!

Besides Envy they stand scrupulously upon the terms of Traditions. These sons of the earth might not be converted with; their threshold was unclean; *Touch me not, for I am holier then thou.* That he therefore, who went for a Prophet, should go to the house of a Publican and Sinner, must needs be a great eye-fore. They that might not go in to a Sinner, cared not what sins entred into themselves: the true cousins of those Hypocrites, who held it a pollution to go into the Judgment-hall, no pollution to murder the Lord of life. There cannot be a greater argument of a false heart, then to stumble at these straws, and to leap over the blocks of gross impiety. Well did our Saviour know how hainously offensive it would be to turn

in to this Publican : he knows, and regards it not. A Soul is to be wone, what cares he for idle misconstruction ? Morally good actions must not be suspended upon danger of causeless scandal. In things indifferent and arbitrary, it is fit to be over-ruled by fear of offence : but if men will stumble in the plain ground of good, let them fall without our regard, not without their own peril. I know not if it were not *David's* weakness to *abstain from good words, whilst the wicked were in place.* Let Justice be done in spite of the world ; and in spite of Hell, Mercy.

Ignorance was in part guilty of these scruples : they thought *Christ* either too holy to go to a Sinner, or in going made unholy. Foolish men ! to whom came he ? to you righteous ? Let himself speak : *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Whither should the Physician go but to the sick ? *the whole need him not.* Love is the best attractive of us ; and *he to whom much is forgiven, loves much.*

O Saviour, the glittering palaces of proud Justiciaries are not for thee ; thou lovest the lowly and ragged cottage of a contrite heart. Neither could here be any danger of thy pollution. Thy Sun could cast his beams upon the impurest dunghill, and not be tainted. It was free and safe for the Leper and Bloudy-fluxed to touch thee ; thou couldst heal them, they could not infect thee. Neither is it otherwise in this moral contagion. We who are obnoxious to evil, may be insensibly defiled : thy Purity was enough to remedy that which might marre a world. Thou canst help us ; we cannot hurt thee. O let thy presence ever bless us ; and let us ever bless thee for thy presence.

Pride was an attendant of this Ignorance : so did they note *Zacchæus* for a Sinner, as if themselves had been none. His sins were written in his forehead, theirs in their breast. The presumption of their secrecy makes them insult upon his notorioufness. The smoke of pride flies still upward,

and in the mounting vanisheth ; Contrition beats it down, and fetcheth tears from the tender eyes. There are stage-sins, and there are closet sins. These may not upbraid the other : they may be more hainous, though less manifest. It is a dangerous vanity to look outward at other mens sins with scorn, when we have more need to cast our eyes inward to see our own with humiliation.

Thus they stumbled and fell ; but *Zacchæus stood*. All their malicious murmur could not dishearten his Piety and joy in the entertaining of *Christ*. Before *Zacchæus* lay down as a Sinner, now he stands up as a Convert : sinning is falling, continuance in sin is lying down, Repentance is rising and standing up. Yet perhaps this standing was not so much the site of his constancy or of his Conversion, as of his reverence. *Christ's* affability hath not made him unmannerly : *Zacchæus stood*. And what if the desire of more audibleness raised him to his feet ? In that smalness of stature it was not fit he should lose ought of his height. It was meet so noble a proclamation should want no advantage of hearing. Never was our Saviour better welcomed. The penitent Publican makes his Will, and makes *Christ* his supervisor. His Will consists of Legacies given, of Debts paid : gifts to the poor, payments to the injured. There is Liberality in the former, in the latter Justice ; in both the proportions are large : *Half to the poor ; fourfold to the wronged*.

This hand sowed not sparingly. Here must needs be much of his own that was well gotten, whether left by patrimony, or saved by parsimony, or gained by honest improvement. For when he had restored fourfold to every one whom he had oppressed, yet there remained a whole half for pious uses : and this he so distributes, that every word commends his bounty. *I give* ; and what is more free then gift ? In Alms we may neither sell, nor return, nor cast away. We sell, if we part with them for importunity, for vain-glory, for retribution : we return them, if we give

give with respect to former offices ; this is to pay, not to bestow : we cast away, if in our beneficence we neither regard order nor discretion. *Zacchæus* did neither cast away, nor return, nor sell, but give. *I do give* ; not, *I will*. The prorogation of good makes it thankless. The alms that smell of the hand lose the praise. It is twice given that is given quickly. Those that defer their gifts till their death-bed doe as good as say, Lord, I will give thee something when I can keep it no longer. Happy is the man that is his own executor. *I give my goods* ; not another's. It is a thankless vanity to be liberal of another man's purse. Who so gives of that which he hath taken away from the owner, doeth more wrong in giving then in stealing. God expects our gifts, not our spoils. I fear there is too many a School and Hospital, every stone whereof may be challenged. Had *Zacchæus* meant to give of his extortions, he had not been so carefull of his restitution : now he restores to others, that he may give of his own ; *I give half my goods*. The Publican's heart was as large as his estate ; he was not more rich in goods then in bounty. Were this example binding, who should be rich to give ? who should be poor to receive ? In the streight beginnings of the Church those beneficences were requisite, which afterwards in the larger elbow-room thereof would have caused much confusion. If the first Christians laid down all at the Apostles feet, yet ere long it was enough for the believing *Corinthians*, every first day of the week to lay aside some pittance for charitable purposes. We are no Disciples, if we do not imitate *Zacchæus* so far as to give liberally, according to the proportion of our estate.

Giving is sowing : the larger seeding, the greater crop. Giving to the poor is sœneration to God : the greater bank, the more interest. Who can fear to be too wealthy ? Time was when men faulted in excess : Proclamations were saine to restrain the *Jews* ; Statutes were saine to restrain our Ancestours. Now there needs none of this : Men

know how to shut their hands alone. Charity is in more danger of freezing than of burning. How happy were it for the Church, if men were onely close-handed to hold, and not lime-fingered to take.

To the poor ; not to rich heirs. God gives to him that hath ; we to him that wants. Some want because they would, whether out of prodigality or idleness ; some want because they must : these are the fit Subjects of our beneficence, not those other. A poverty of our own making deserves no pity. He that sustains the lewd, feeds not his belly, but his vice. So then this living Legacy of *Zacchæus* is free, *I give* ; present, *I do give* ; just, *my goods* ; large, *half my goods* ; fit, *to the poor*.

Neither is he more bountifull in his gift, then just in his restitution : *If I have taken ought from any man by false accusation, I restore it four-fold.*

It was proper for a Publican to pill and pole the subject, by devising complaints, and raising causeless vexations, that his mouth might be stopt with fees, either for silence or composition. This had *Zacchæus* often done. Neither is this [*If*] a note of doubt, but of assertion. He is sure of the fact, he is not sure of the persons : their challenge must help to further his justice. The true penitence of this holy Convert expresses it self in Confession, in Satisfaction. His Confession is free, full, open. What cares he to shame himself, that he may give glory to God ? Woe be to that bashfulness that ends in confusion of face. O God, let me blush before men, rather then be confounded before Thee, thy Saints and Angels.

His Satisfaction is no less liberal then his gift. Had not *Zacchæus* been carefull to pay the debts of his fraud, all had gone to the poor. He would have done that voluntarily, which the Young man in the Gospel was bidden to doe, and refusing went away sorrowfull. Now he knew that his misgotten gain was not for God's Corban ; therefore he spares half, not to keep, but to restore. This was
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the best dish in *Zacchæus* his good cheer. In vain had he feasted *Christ*, given to the poor, confessed his extortions, if he had not made restitution. Woe is me for the paucity of true Converts. There is much stoln goods; little brought home. Mens hands are like the fisher's Flue, yea like Hell it self, which admits of no return. O God, we can never satisfie thee; our score is too great, our abilities too little: but if we make not even with men, in vain shall we look for mercy from thee. To each his own had been well; but four for one was munificent. In our transactions of commerce, we doe well to beat the bargain to the lowest; but in cases of moral or spiritual payments to God or men, now there must be a measure, pressed, shaken, running over. In good offices and due retributions we may not be pinching and niggardly. It argues an earthly and ignoble mind, where we have apparently wronged, to higgle and dodge in the amends.

O mercy and justice well repaid! *This day is salvation come to thine house.* Lo, *Zacchæus*, that which thou givest to the poor, is nothing to that which thy Saviour gives to thee. If thou restorest four for one, here is more then thousands of millions for nothing: were every of thy pence a world, they could hold no comparison with this bounty. It is but dross that thou givest, it is Salvation that thou receivest. Thou gavest in present, thou dost not receive in hope; but, *This day is Salvation come to thine house.* Thine ill-gotten metalls were a strong bar to bolt Heaven-gates against thee: now that they are dissolved by a seasonable beneficence and restitution, those gates of glory fly open to thy Soul. Where is that man that can challenge God to be in his debt? Who can ever say, Lord, this favour I did to the least of thine unrequited? Thrice happy Publican, that hast climbed from thy Sycomore to Heaven; and by a few worthless bags of unrighteous Mammon, hast purchased to thy self a *Kingdom uncorruptible, undefied, and that fideth not away.*

XXI.

John Baptist beheaded.

THREE of the Evangelists have (with one pen) recorded the death of the great Harbinger of *Christ*; as most remarkable and usefull. He was the Fore-runner of *Christ*, as into the world, so out of it: yea, he that made way for *Christ* into the world, made way for the name of *Christ* into the Court of *Herod*. This *Herod Antipas* was son to that *Herod* who was, and is ever infamous for the massacre at *Bethlehem*. Cruelty runs in a blood. The murderer of *John*, the fore-runner of *Christ*, is well descended of him who would have murdered *Christ*, and, for his sake, murdered the Infants. It was late ere this *Herod* heard the fame of *Jesus*; not till he had taken off the head of *John Baptist*. The father of this *Herod* inquired for *Christ* too soon; this too late. Great men should have the best intelligence. If they improve it to all other uses of either frivolous or civil affairs, with neglect of spiritual, their judgment shall be so much more as their helps and means were greater. Whether this *Herod* were taken up with his *Arabian* wars against *Arethas* his father in law, or whether he were employed in his journey to *Rome*, I inquire not: but if he were at home, I must wonder how he could be so long without the noise of *Christ*. Certainly, it was a sign he had a very irreligious Court, that none of his Followers did so much as report to him the Miracles of our Saviour; who doubtless told him many a vain tale the while. One tells him of his brother *Philip's* discontentment; another relates the news of the *Roman* Court; another, the angry threats of *Arethas*; another flatters him with the admiration of his new Mistress, and disparagement of

of the old : no man so much as says, Sir, there is a Prophet in your Kingdom that doeth wonders. There was not a man in his countrey that had not been astonished with the fame of *Jesus*; yea all *Syria* and the adjoining regions rung of it : onely *Herod's Court* hears nothing. Miserable is that Greatness which keeps men from the notice of *Christ*. How plain is it from hence, that our Saviour kept aloof from the Court? The austere and eremiticall Harbinger of *Christ*, it seems, preach't there oft, and was heard gladly; though, at last, to his cost : whilst our Saviour, who was more sociable, came not there. He sent a message to that Fox, whose den he would not approach. Whether it were that he purposely forbore, lest he should give that Tyrant occasion to revive and pursue his father's suspicion; or whether for that he would not so much honour a place so infamously graceless and disorder'd; or whether by his example to teach us the avoidance of outward pomp and glory. Surely *Herod* saw him not till his death; heard not of him till the death of *John Baptist*. And now his un-intelligence was not more strange then his misconstruction; *This is John Baptist, whom I beheaded.* First, he doubted, then he resolved : he doubted upon others suggestions; upon his own apprehensions he resolved thus. And though he thought good to set a face on it to strangers, unto whom it was not safe to bewray his fear; yet to his domesticks he freely discovered his thoughts; *This is John Baptist.* The troubled Conscience will many a time open that to familiars, which it hides from the eyes of others. Shame and fear meet together in guiltiness. How could he imagine this to be *John*? That common conceit of Transanimation could have no place here; there could be no transmigration of Souls into a grown and well-statur'd body. That received fancy of the *Jews* held onely in the case of conception and birth, not of full age. What need we scan this point, when *Herod* himself professes, *He is risen from the dead?* He that was a

Jew by profession, and knew the story of *Elisba's* bones, of the *Sareptan's* and *Shunamite's* sons, and in all likelihood had now heard of our Saviour's miraculous resuscitation of others, might think this power reflected upon himself. Even *Herod*, as bad as he was, believed a Resurrection. Lewdness of life and practice may stand with orthodoxy in some main points of Religion. Who can doubt of this, when *the Devils believe and tremble*? Where shall those men appear, whose faces are Christian, but their hearts Sadducees?

Oh the terrors and tortures of a guilty heart! *Herod's* Conscience told him he had offered an unjust and cruel violence to an innocent; and now he thinks that *John's* ghost haunts him. Had it not been for this guilt of his bosom, why might he not as well have thought that the same God, whose hand is not shortned, had conferred this power of Miracles upon some other? Now, it could be no body but *John* that doeth these wonders: and how can it be (thinks he) but that this revived Prophet, who doeth these strange things, will be revenged on me for his head? He that could give himself life, can more easily take mine: how can I escape the hands of a now-immortal and impassible avenger?

A wicked man needs no other tormentour (especially for the sins of blood) then his own heart. Revell, O *Herod*, and feast, and frolick; and please thy self with dances, and triumphs, and pastimes: thy sin shall be as some Fury that shall invisibly follow thee, and scourge thy guilty heart with secret lashes, and upon all occasions shall begin thine Hell within thee. He wanted not other sins, that yet cried, *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.*

What an honour was done to *John* in this misprision? While that man lived, the world was apt to think that *John* was the *Christ*: now that *John* is dead, *Herod* thinks *Christ* to be *John*. God gives to his poor conscientious servants a kind of reverence and high respect, even

even from those men that malign them most ; so as they cannot but venerate whom they hate. Contrarily, no wit or power can shield a leud man from contempt.

John did no Miracle in his life, yet now *Herod* thinks he did miracles in his Resurrection ; as supposing that a new supernatural life brought with it a supernatural power. Who can but wonder at the stupid partiality of *Herod* and these *Jews* ? They can imagine and yield *John* risen from the dead, that never did miracle, and arose not ; whereas *Christ*, who did infinite miracles, and arose from the dead by his almighty power, is not yielded by them to have risen. Their over-bountifull misconceit of the Servant, is not so injurious as their niggardly infidelity to the Master. Both of them shall convince and confound them before the face of God. But, O yet more blockish *Herod* ! Thy Conscience affrights thee with *John's* resurrection, and flies in thy face for the cruel murder of so great a Saint ; yet where is thy repentance for so foul a fact ? Who would not have expected that thou shouldst hereupon have humbled thy self for thy sin, and have laboured to make thy peace with God and him ? The greater the fame and power was of him whom thou supposedst recovered from thy slaughter, the more should have been thy penitence. Impiety is wont to besot men, and turn them senseless of their own safety and welfare. One would have thought that our first Grand-sire *Adam*, when he found his heart to strike him for his disobedience, should have run to meet God upon his knees, and have sued for pardon of his offence : In stead of that, he runs to hide his head among the bushes. The case is still ours ; we inherit both his sin and his senselessness. Besides the infinite displeasure of God, wickedness makes the heart incapable of Grace, and impregnable to the means of Conversion.

Even the very first act of *Herod's* cruelty was hainous. He was foul enough with other sins ; *he added this above*

all, that he shut up *John* in prison. The violence offered to God's messengers is branded for notorious. The Sanctity and austere carriage of the man wone him honour justly from the multitude, and aggravated the sin : but whatever his person had been, his mission was sacred, (*He shall send his messenger;*) the wrong redounds to the God that sent him. It is the charge of God, *Touch not mine anointed, nor doe my Prophets any harm.* The precept is perhaps one, for even Prophets were anointed; but at least next to violation of Majesty, is the wrong to a Prophet. But what? do I not hear the Evangelist say that *Herod heard John gladly?* How is it then? Did *John* take the ear and heart of *Herod*, and doth *Herod* bind the hands and feet of *John*? Doth he wilfully imprison whom he gladly heard? How inconstant is a carnall heart to good resolutions? How little trust is to be given to the good motions of unregenerate persons? We have known when even mad dogs have fawned upon their master, yet he hath been too wise to trust them but in chains. As a true friend loves always, so a gracious heart always affects good : neither can be altered with change of occurrences. But the carnal man, like an hollow Parasite or a fawning Spaniel, flatters onely for his own turn; if that be once either served or crossed, like a churlish curre, he is ready to snatch us by the fingers. Is there a worldly-minded man that lives in some known sin, yet makes much of the Preacher, frequents the Church, talks godly, looks demurely, carries fair? trust him not; he will prove, after his pious fits, like some resty horse, which goes on some paces readily and eagerly, but anon either stands still, or falls to flinging and plunging, and never leaves till he have cast his rider.

What then might be the cause of *John's* bonds, and *Herod's* displeasure? *For Herodias sake his brother Philip's wife.* That woman was the subject of *Herod's* lust, and the exciter of his revenge. This light huswife ran away with her Husband's brother; and now doting upon her incestuous lover,
and

and finding *John* to be a rub in the way of her licentious adultery, is impatient of his liberty, and will not rest till his restraint. Resolved sinners are mad upon their leud courses, and run furiously upon their gainfayers. A Bear robbed of her whelps is less impetuous. Indeed, those that have determined to love their sins more then their Souls, whom can they care for? Though *Herod* was wicked enough, yet had it not been upon *Herodias's* instigation, he had never imprisoned *John*.

Importunity of leud solicitours may be of dangerous consequence, and many times draws Greatness into those ways which it either would not have thought of, or abhorred. In the remotion of the wicked is the establishment of the throne.

Yet still is this Dame called the wife of *Philip*. She had utterly left his bed, and was solemnly coupled to *Herod*; but all the ritual Ceremonies of her new Nuptials cannot make her other then *Philip's* wife. It is a sure rule, That which is originally faulty can never be rectified. The ordination of Marriage is one for one; *They twain shall be one flesh*. There cannot be two heads to one body, nor two bodies to one head. *Herod* was her Adulterer, he was not her Husband; she was *Herod's* Harlot, *Philip's* Wife. Yet how doth *Herod* dote on her, that for her sake he loads *John* with irons? Whether will not the fury of inordinate Lust transport a man? Certainly *John* was of late in *Herod's* favour. That rough-hewn Preacher was for a Wilderness, not for a Court: *Herod's* invitation drew him thither, his reverence and respects encouraged him there. Now the love of his Lust hath carried him into an hate of God's Messenger. That man can have no hold of himself or care of others, who hath given the reins to his unruly Concupiscence. He that hath once fixed his heart upon the face of an Harlot, and hath beslaved himself to a bewitching Beauty, casts off at once all fear of God, respect to Laws, shame of the world, regard of his estate, care of wife, children,

friends, reputation, patrimony, body, Soul. So violent is this beastly passion where it takes; neither ever leaves till it hath hurried him into the chambers of death.

Herodias her self had first plotted to kill the *Baptist*; her murtherers were suborned, her ambushes laid. The success failed, and now she works with *Herod* for his durance. O marvellous hand of the Almighty! *John* was a mean man for estate, solitary, guardless, unarmed, impotent: *Herodias* a Queen, so great that she swayed *Herod* himself; and not more great then subtle; and not more great or subtle then malicious: yet *Herodias* laid to kill *John*, and could not. What an invisible, and yet sure, guard there is about the poor servants of God, that seem helpless and despicable in themselves? There is over them an hand of Divine protection, which can be no more opposed then seen. Malice is not so strong in the hand, as in the heart. The Devil is stronger then a world of men, a legion of Devils stronger then fewer spirits; yet a legion of Devils cannot hurt one Swine without a permission. What can bands of enemies or gates of Hell doe against God's secret ones? *It is better to trust in the Lord, then to trust in Princes.*

It is not more clear who was the Authour, then what was the motive of this imprisonment, the free reproof of *Herod's* Incest; *It is not lawfull, &c.* Both the offenders were nettled with this bold reprehension. *Herod* knew the reputation that *John* carried; his Conscience could not but suggest the foulness of his own fact: neither could he but see how odious it would seem to persecute a Prophet for so just a reproof. For the colour therefore of so tyrannical an act, he brands *John* with Sedition: these presumptuous taxations are a disgrace and disparagement to Authority. It is no news with wicked Tyrants, to cloak their Cruelty with pretences of Justice. Never was it other then the lot of God's faithfull servants, to be loaded with unjust reproaches in the conscionable performance of their duties. They should

should speed too well in the opinion of men, if they might but appear in their true shape.

The fact of *Herod* was horrible and prodigious; to rob his own Brother of the partner of his bed; to tear away part of his flesh, yea his body from his head. So as here was at once in one act, Adultery, Incest, Violence. Adultery, that he took another's wife: Incest, that he took his Brother's: Violence, that he thus took her, in spite of her Husband. Justly therefore might *John* say, *It is not lawfull for thee.* He barked not one of *Herod's* sins, but reprov'd him of *all the evils that he had done*; though more eminently of this, as that which more filled the eye of the world. It was not the Crown or awfull Scepter of *Herod* that could daunt the homely, but faithfull, messenger of God: as one that came in the spirit of *Elias*, he fears no faces, spares no wickedness. There must meet in God's ministers Courage and Impartiality. Impartiality, not to make difference of persons; Courage, not to make spare of the sins of the greatest. It is an hard condition that the necessity of our Calling casts upon us, in some cases to run upon the pikes of displeasure. Prophecies were no Burthens, if they did not expose us to these dangers. We must connive at no evil: Every sin unreprieved becomes ours.

Hatred is the daughter of Truth. *Herod* is inwardly vexed with so peremptory a reprehension: and now he seeks to kill the authour. And why did he not? *He feared the people.* The time was when he feared *John* no less than now he hates him: he once revered him as a just and holy man, whom now he heart-burns as an enemy; neither was it any counterfeit respect, sure the man was then in earnest. What shall we say then? was it that his inconstant heart was now fetcht off by *Herodias*, and wrought to a disaffection? or was it with *Herod* as with *Salomon's* Sluggard, that at once would and would not? His thoughts are distracted with a mixt-voluntary contradiction of purposes: as an holy man and honoured of the people, he would

would not kill *John*; he would kill him, as an enemy to his Lust. The worse part prevaieth; Appetite overways Reason and Conscience: and now, were it not for fear of the people, *John* should be murdered. What a self-conflicting and prodigious creature is a wicked man left over to his own thoughts? whilst on the one side he is urged by his Conscience, on the other by his lustfull desires and by the importunity of Satan. *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*: and after all his inward broils, he falls upon the worst; so as his yeldance is worse then his fight. When God sees fit, *Herod's* tyranny shall effect that which the wise Providence of the Almighty hath decreed for his Servant's glory. In the mean while, rubs shall be cast in his way; and this for one, *He feared the people*. What an absurd and sottish thing is Hypocriſy? *Herod* fears the people, he fears not God. Tell me then, *Herod*, what could the people doe at the worst? Perhaps, mutiny against thee, raise arms and tumults, disturb the Government, it may be, shake it off.

What could God doe? yea, what not? stir up all his creatures to plague thee, and when he hath done, tumble thee down to Hell, and there torment thee everlastingly. O fond *Herod*, that fearest where no fear was, and fearest not where there is nothing but terrour!

How God fits lewd men with restraints? If they be so godless as to regard his creature above himself, he hath externall buggs to affright them withall; if bashfull, he hath shame; if covetous, losses; if proud, disgrace: and by this means the most wise Providence keeps the world in order. We cannot better judge of our hearts, then by what we most fear.

No man is so great as to be utterly exempted from fear. The *Jews* feared *Herod*; *Herod* feared the *Jews*: the healthfull fear sickness; the free, servitude: the people fear a Tyrant's oppression and cruelty; the Tyrant fears the people's mutiny and insurrection. If there have been some

so great as to be above the reach of the power and machinations of inferiours, yet never any that have been free from their fears and suspicions. Happy is he that fears nothing but what he should, God.

Why did *Herod* fear the people? *They held John for a Prophet.* And this opinion was both common and constant: even the Scribes and Pharisees durst not say, his Baptism was from men. It is the wisdom and goodness of God, ever to give his children favour somewhere. If *Jezebel* hate *Elias*, *Ahab* shall for the time honour him: and if *Herod* hate the *Baptist*, and would kill him, yet the people reverence him. *Herod's* malice would make him away; the people's reputation keeps him alive. As wise Princes have been content to maintain a faction in their Court or State for their own purposes; so here did the God of Heaven contrive and order differences of judgment and affection betwixt *Herod* and his Subjects for his own holy ends. Else certainly, if all wicked men should conspire in evil, there could be no being upon earth; as contrarily, if evil spirits did not accord, Hell could not stand. Oh the unjust and fond partiality of this people! They all generally applaud *John* for a Prophet, yet they receive not his message. Whose Prophet was *John*, but of the Highest? what was his errand, but to be the way-maker unto *Christ*? what was he but the Voice of that Eternal Word of his Father? what was the sound of that Voice but, *Behold the Lamb of God: He that comes after me is greater then I, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose?* Yet they honour the Servant, and reject the Master: they contemn that Prince whose Embassage they reverence. How could they but argue, *John* is a Prophet; he speaks from God; his words must be true; he tells us this is the Lamb of God, the *Messias* that should come to redeem the World: this must then needs be he; we will look for no other? Yet this perverse people receives *John*, and rejects *Jesus*. There is ever an absurdity in unbelief, whilst it separates those relations and respects

which can never in nature be disjoyned. Thus it readily apprehends God as mercifull in pardoning, not as just in punishing; *Christ* as a Saviour, not as a Judge. Thus we ordinarily (in a contrariety to these *Jews*) profess to receive the Master, and contemn the Servants: whilst he hath said that will make it good, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.*

That which *Herod* in policy durst not, in wine he dares doe: And that which God had restrained till his own time, now in his own time he permits to be done. The day was, as one of the Evangelists styles it, *convenient*: if for the purpose of *Herodias*, I am sure for God's; who, having determined to glorify himself by *John's* martyrdom, will cast it upon a time when it may be most notified, *Herod's birth-day*. All the Peers of the Country, perhaps of the neighbour Nations, are now assembled. *Herodias* could not have found out a time more fit to blazon her own shame and cruelty then in such a confluence. The wise Providence of God many times pays us with our own choice; so as when we think to have brought about our own Ends to our best content, we bring about his purposes to our own confusion.

Herod's Birth-day is kept; and so was *Pharaoh's*: both of them with blood. These personal stains cannot make the practice unlawfull. Where the man is good, the Birth is memorable.

What blessing have we, if Life be none? and if our life be a blessing, why should it not be celebrated? Excess and disorder may blemish any Solemnity; but that cleaves to the act, not to the institution.

Herod's birth-day was kept with a Feast, and this Feast was a Supper. It was fit to be a night-work: this Festivity was spent in works of darkness, not of the light; it was a child of darkness that was then born, not of the day.

Those that are drunken, are drunk in the night. There is a kind of shame in Sin, even where it is committed with the stiffest

stiffest resolution: at least there was wont to be: if now Sin be grown impudent, and Justice grown bashfull, wo be to us.

That there might be perfect revells at *Herod's* Birth-day, besides the Feast, there is musick and dancing, and that by *Salome* the daughter of *Herodias*. A meet Daughter for such a Mother, bred according to the disposition of so immodest a Parent. Dancing in it self, as it is a set, regular, harmonious motion of the body, cannot be unlawfull, more then walking or running; Circumstances may make it sinfull. The wanton gesticulations of a Virgin in a wild assembly of Gallants warmed with Wine, could be no other then riggish and unmaidenly. It is not so frequently seen that the Child follows the good qualities of the Parent; it is seldome seen that it follows not the evil. Nature is the soil; good and ill Qualities are the herbs and weeds: the soil bears the weeds naturally, the herbs not without culture. What with traduction, what with education, it were strange if we should miss any of our Parents mis-dispositions.

Herodias and *Salome* have what they desired. The dance pleased *Herod* well: those indecent motions that would have displeased any modest eye, (though what should a modest eye doe at *Herod's* Feast?) over-pleased *Herod*. Well did *Herodias* know how to fit the tooth of her Paramour, and had therefore purposely so composed the carriage and gesture of her Daughter, as it might take best: although doubtless the same action could not have so pleased from another. *Herod* saw in *Salome's* face and fashion the image of her whom he doated on; so did she look, so did she move: besides that his lavish cups had predisposed him to wantonness: and now he cannot but like well that which so pleasingly suted his inordinate desire. All humours love to be fed; especially the vicious, so much more, as they are more eager and stirring. There cannot be a better glass wherein to discern the face of our hearts, then our

pleasures : such as they are , such are we , whether vain , or holy .

What a strange transportation was this ? *Whatsoever thou shalt ask* : half a Kingdom for a dance ? *Herod* , this pastime is over-pay'd for ; there is no proportion in this remuneration : this is not bounty , it is prodigence . Neither doth this pass under a bare Promise onely , but under an Oath , and that solemn and (as it might be in wine) serious . How largely do sensual men both profer and give for a little momentary and vain contentment ? How many censure *Herod's* gross impotence , and yet second it with a worse , giving away their precious Souls for a short pleasure of sin ? What is half a Kingdom , yea a whole World , to a Soul ? So much therefore is their madness greater , as their loss is more .

So large a boon was worthy of a deliberation . *Salome* consults with her Mother upon so ample and ratified a promise . Yet so much good nature and filial respect was in this wanton Damsel , that she would not carve her self of her option , but takes her Mother with her . If *Herodias* were infamously leud , yet she was her Parent , and must direct her choice . Children should have no will of their own ; as their flesh is their Parents , so should their will be . They do justly unchild themselves , that in main elections dispose of themselves without the consent of those which gave them being . It is both unmannerly and unnatural in the Child to run before , without , against the will of the Parent .

Oh that we could be so officious to our good and Heavenly Father , as she was to an earthly and wicked Mother ; not to ask , not to undertake ought without his allowance , without his directions : that when the world shall offer us whatsoever our heart desires , we could run to the Oracles of God for our resolution ; not daring to accept what he doth not both license and warrant .

Oh the wonderfull strength of malice ! *Salome* was offered .

fered no less then half the Kingdome of *Herod*, yet chuses to ask the head of a poor Preacher. Nothing is so sweet to a corrupt heart as revenge; especially when it may bring with it a full scope to a dear sin. All worldlings are of this diet: they had rather sin freely for a while and die, then refrain and live happily, eternally.

What a suit was this, *Give me here in a Charger the head of John Baptist?* It is not enough for her to say, Let *John's* head be cut off; but, *Give me it in a Charger.* What a service was here to be brought into a Feast, especially to a Woman? a dead man's head swimming in blood. How cruel is a wicked heart, that can take pleasure in those things which have most horreur?

Oh the importunity of a galled conscience! *Herodias* could never think her self safe till *John* was dead; she could never think him dead till his head were off; she could not think his head was off till she had it brought her in a platter: a guilty heart never thinks it hath made sure enough. Yea, even after the head was thus brought, they thought him alive again. Guiltiness and Security could never lodge together in one bosome.

Herod was sorry, and no doubt in earnest, in the midst of his cups and pleasance. I should rather think his jollity counterfeited then his grief. It is true, *Herod* was a Fox; but that subtle beast dissembles not always: when he runs away from the dogs, he means as he does. And if he were formerly willing to have killed *John*, yet he was unwillingly willing; and so far as he was unwilling to kill him as a Prophet, as a just man, so far was he sorry that he must be killed. Had *Herod* been wise, he had not been perplexed. Had he been so wise as to have ingaged himself lawfully and within due limits, he had not now been so intangled as to have needed sorrow. The folly of Sinners is guilty of their pain, and draws upon them a late and unprofitable repentance.

But here the act was not past; though the word were

past. It was his misconceived intanglement that caused this sorrow ; which might have been remedied by flying off. A threefold cord tied him to the performance ; the conscience of his Oath, the respect to his Guests, a lothness to discontent *Herodias* and her daughter. *Herod* had so much religion as to make scruple of an Oath ; not so much as to make scruple of a Murther. No man casts off all justice and piety at once ; but whilst he gives himself over to some sins, he sticks at others. It is no thank to leud men that they are not universally vicious. All God's severall Laws cannot be violated at once : there are Sins contrary to each other ; there are Sins disagreeing from the leudest dispositions. There are Oppressours that hate Drunkenness ; there are Unclean persons which abhor Murther ; there are Drunkards which hate Cruelty. One sin is enough to damn the Soul, one leak to drown the Vessel.

But, O fond *Herod*, what needed this unjust scrupulousness? Well and safely mightest thou have shifted the bond of thine Oath with a double evasion. One, That this generality of thy promise was onely to be construed of lawfull acts and motions : That onely can we doe, which we can justly doe ; Unlawfulness is in the nature of Impossibility. The other, That had this ingagement been so meant, yet might it be as lawfully rescinded as it was unlawfully made. A sinfull Promise is ill made, worse performed. Thus thou mightest, thou shouldst have come off fair ; where now, holding thy self by an irreligious religion tied to thy foolish and wicked Oath, thou onely goest away with this mitigation, that thou art a scrupulous Murtherer.

In the mean while, if an *Herod* made such conscience of keeping an unlawfull Oath, how shall he in the day of judgement condemn those Christians which make no conscience of Oaths lawfull, just, necessary? Woe is me, one sells an Oath for a bribe, another lends an Oath for favour, another

another casts it away for malice. I fear to think it may be a question whether there be more Oaths broken, or kept. O God, I marvell not, if being implored as a witness, as an avenger of falshood, thou hold him not guiltless that thus dares take thy Name in vain.

Next to his Oath is the respect to his Honour. His Guests heard his deep engagement, and now he cannot fall off with reputation. It would argue levity and rashness to say and not to doe, and what would the world say? The misconceits of the points of Honour have cost millions of Souls. As many a one doeth good onely to be seen of men, so many a one doeth evil onely to satisfie the humour and opinion of others. It is a damnable plausibility so to regard the vain approbation or censure of the beholders, as in the mean time to neglect the allowance or judgment of God. But how ill guests were these? how well worthy of an *Herod's* table? Had they had but common civility, finding *Herod* perplexed, they had acquitted him by their dissuasions, and would have disclaimed the expectation of so bloody a performance: but they rather (to gratifie *Herodias*) make way for so slight and easie a condescent. Even godly Princes have complained of the *iniquity of their heels*: how much more must they needs be ill attended, that give encouragements and examples of leudness?

Neither was it the least motive, that he was loth to displease his Mistres. The Damsell had pleased him in her dance; he would not discontent her in breaking his word. He saw *Herodias* in *Salome*: the suit, he knew, was the mother's, though in the daughter's lips: both would be displeas'd in falling off; both would be gratified in yielding. O vain and wicked *Herod*! He cares not to offend God, to offend his Conscience; he cares to offend a wanton Mistres. This is one means to fill Hell, lothness to displease.

A good heart will rather fall out with all the world then with God, then with his Conscience.

The mis-grounded sorrow of worldly hearts doth not withhold them from their intended sins. It is enough to vex, not enough to restrain them. *Herod* was sorry, but he sends the Executioner for *John's* head. One act hath made *Herod* a Tyrant, and *John* a Martyr. *Herod* a Tyrant, in that without all legall proceedings, without so much as false witnesses, he takes off the head of a man, of a Prophet. It was Lust that carried *Herod* into Murder. The proceedings of sin are more hardly avoided then the entrance. Whoso gives himself leave to be wicked, knows not where he shall stay.

John a Martyr, in dying for bearing witness to the Truth; Truth in life, in judgment, in doctrine. It was the holy purpose of God, that he which had baptized with water should now be baptized with blood. Never did God mean that his best children should dwell always upon earth: should they stay here, wherefore hath he provided Glory above? Now would God have *John* delivered from a double prison; of his own, of *Herod's*; and placed in the glorious liberty of his sons. His head shall be taken off, that it may be crowned with glory. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.*

O happy birth-day (not of *Herod*, but) of the *Baptist*! Now doth *John* enter into his joy; and in his name is this day ever celebrated of the Church. This blessed Fore-runner of *Christ* said of himself, *I must decrease*. He is decreased indeed, and now grown shorter by the head; but he is not so much decreased in stature, as increased in glory. For one minute's pain he is possessed of endless joy; and as he came before his Saviour into the world, so is he gone before him into Heaven.

The Head is brought in a Charger. What a dish was here for a Feast? How prodigiously insatiable is the cruelty of a wicked heart! O blessed service fit for the table of Heaven! It is not for thee, O wicked *Herod*, nor for thee, malicious and wanton *Herodias*; it is a dish precious and

and pleasing to the God of Heaven, to the blessed Angels, who look'd upon that Head with more delight in his constant fidelity, then the beholders saw it with hor-
rour, and *Herodias* with contentment of revenge.

It is brought to *Salome* as the reward of her dance; she presents it to her Mother as the dainty she had longed for. Methinks I see how that chaste and holy countenance was tossed by impure and filthy hands; that true and faithfull tongue, those sacred lips, those pure eyes, those mortified cheeks are now insultingly handled by an incestuous Harlot, and made a scorn to the drunken eyes of *Herod's* guests.

Oh the wondrous judgments and incomprehensible dispositions of the holy, wise, Almighty God! He that was sanctified in the womb, born and conceived with so much note and miracle, (*What manner of child shall this be?*) lived with so much reverence and observation, is now, at midnight, obscurely murdered in a close prison, and his head brought forth to the insultation and irrision of Harlots and Ruffians. O God, thou knowest what thou hast to doe with thine own. Thus thou sufferest thine to be misused and slaughtered here below, that thou mayest crown them above. It should not be thus, if thou didst not mean that their glory should be answerable to their depression.

XXII.

The five Loaves and two Fishes.

WHat flocking there was after *Christ* which way so ever he went? How did the Kingdom of Heaven suffer an holy violence in these his followers? Their importunity drave him from the land to the sea. When he was upon the sea of *Tiberias*, they followed him with their eyes; and when they saw which way he bent, they followed him so fast on foot that they prevented his landing. Whether it were that our Saviour staid some while upon the water, (as that which yielded him more quietness, and freedom of respiration,) or whether the foot-passage (as it oft falls out) were the shorter cut, by reason of the compasses of the water and the many elbows of the land, I inquire not: sure I am, the wind did not so swiftly drive on the ship, as desire and zeal drave on these eager clients. Well did *Christ* see them all the way; well did he know their steps, and guided them: and now he purposely goes to meet them, whom he seemed to fly. Nothing can please God more then our importunity in seeking him: when he withdraws himself, it is that he may be more earnestly inquired for. Now then he comes to find them whom he made shew to decline: and seeing a great multitude, he passes from the ship to the shore. That which brought him from Heaven to earth, brought him also from the sea to land; his compassion on their Souls, that he might teach them; compassion on their Bodies, that he might heal and feed them.

Judea was not large, but populous: it could not be but there must be amongst so many men many diseased: it is no marvel if the report of so miraculous and universal sanations.

sanations drew customers. They found three advantages of cure above the power and performance of any earthly Physician, Certainty, Bounty, Ease. Certainty, in that all comers were cured without fail: Bounty, in that they were cured without charge: Ease, in that they were cured without pain. Far be it from us, O Saviour, to think that thy Glory hath abated of thy Mercy: still and ever thou art our assured, bountifull, and perfect Physician, who healest all our diseases, and takest away all our infirmities. O that we could have our faithfull recourse to thee in all our spiritual maladies: it were as impossible we should want help, as that thou shouldst want power and mercy.

That our Saviour might approve himself every way beneficent, he that had filled the Souls of his Auditours with spiritual repast, will now fill their Bodies with temporal: and he that had approved himself the universal Physician of his Church, will now be known to be the great householder of the world, by whose liberal provision mankind is maintained. He did not more miraculously heal, then he feeds miraculously.

The Disciples having well noted the diligent and importune attendance of the multitude, now towards evening come to their Master in a care of their repast and discharge. *This is a desert place, and the time is now past: Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.* How well it becomes even spiritual guides to regard the bodily necessities of God's people? This is not directly in our charge, neither may we leave our sacred ministration to serve Tables. But yet, as the bodily father must take care for the Soul of his child; so must the spiritual have respect to the Body. This is all that the world commonly looks after, measuring their Pastours more by their dishes then by their doctrine or conversation; as if they had the charge of their Bellies, not of their Souls: if they have open Cellars, it matters not

whether their Mouths be open. If they be sociable in their carriage, favourable and indulgent to their recreations, full in their chear, how easily doth the world dispense with either their negligence or enormities? As if the Souls of these men lay in their weasand, in their gut. But surely they have reason to expect from their Teachers a due proportion of Hospitality. An unmeet parsimony is here not more odious then it is sinfull : And where ability wants, yet care may not be wanting. Those Preachers which are so intent upon their spiritual work, that in the mean time they over-strain the weakneses of their people, holding them in their Devotions longer then humane frailty will permit, forget not themselves more then their pattern ; and must be sent to school to these compassionate Disciples, who, when evening was come, sue to *Christ* for the people's dismissal.

The place was desert ; the time, evening. Doubtless our Saviour made choice of both these, that there might be both more use and more note of his Miracle. Had it been in the morning, their stomach had not been up, their feeding had been unnecessary. Had it been in the Village, provision either might have been made, or at least would have seemed made by themselves. But now that it was both desert and evening, there was good ground for the Disciples to move, and for *Christ* to work their sustentation. Then onely may we expect and crave help from God, when we find our need. Superfluous aid can neither be heartily desired, nor earnestly lookt for, nor thankfully received from the hands of mercy. *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* If it be not a burthen, it is no casting it upon God. Hence it is that Divine aid comes ever in the very upshot and exigence of our trialls ; when we have been exercised, and almost tired with long hopes, yea with despairs of success : that it may be both more longed for ere it come, and when it comes more welcome.

Oh the Faith and Zeal of these clients of *Christ* ! They not onely follow him from the City into the Desert, from delicacy to want, from frequency to solitude ; but forget their Bodies in pursuit of the food of their Souls.

Nothing is more hard for an healthfull man to forget then his belly ; within few hours this will be sure to solicit him, and will take no denials. Yet such sweetness did these hearers find in the spiritual repast, that they thought not on the bodily : the Disciples pitied them, they had no mercy on themselves. By how much more a man's mind is taken up with Heavenly things, so much less shall he care for earthly. What shall Earth be to us, when we are all Spirit ? And in the mean time, according to the degrees of our intellectual elevations, shall be our neglect of bodily contentments.

The Disciples think they move well : *Send them away that they may buy victuals.* Here was a strong Charity, but a weak Faith. A strong Charity, in that they would have the people relieved ; a weak Faith, in that they supposed they could not otherwise be so well relieved. As a man when he sees many ways lie before him, takes that which he thinks both fairest and nearest ; so do they : this way of relief lay openest to their view, and promised most. Well might they have thought, It is as easie for our Master to feed them as to heal them ; there is an equal facility in all things to a supernatural power : yet they say, *Send them away.* In all our projects and suits we are still ready to move for that which is most obvious, most likely, when sometimes that is less agreeable to the will of God.

The All-wise and Almighty Arbiter of all things hath a thousand secret means to honour himself in his proceedings with us. It is not for us to carve boldly for our selves ; but we must humbly depend on the disposal of his Wisdom and Mercy.

Our Saviour's answer gives a strange check to their motion ; *They need not depart.* Not need ? They had no vic-

tuals; they must have; there was none to be had. What more need could be? He knew the supply which he intended, though they knew it not. His command was therefore more strange than his assertion, *Give ye them to eat*. Nothing gives what it hath not. Had they had victuals, they had not called for a dismissal; and not having, how should they give? It was thy wisdom, O Saviour, thus to prepare thy Disciples for the intended Miracle: Thou wouldst not doe it abruptly, without an intimation both of the purpose of it and the necessity. And how modestly dost thou undertake it, without noise, without ostentation? I hear thee not say, I will give them to eat; no, but, *Give ye*: as if it should be their act, not thine. Thus sometimes it pleaseth thee to require of us what we are not able to perform; either that thou mayest shew us what we cannot doe, and so humble us; or that thou mayest erect us to a dependence upon thee, which canst doe it for us. As when the Mother bids the Infant come to her, which hath not yet the steady use of his legs, it is that he may cling the faster to her hand or coat for supportation.

Thou bidst us, impotent wretches, to keep thy royal Law. Alas! what can we Sinners doe? there is not one letter of those thy Ten words that we are able to keep. This charge of thine intends to shew us not our strength, but our weakness. Thus thou wouldst turn our eyes both back to what we might have done, to what we could have done; and upwards to thee in whom we have done it, in whom we can doe it. He wrongs thy Goodness and Justice that misconstrues these thy commands, as if they were of the same nature with those of the *Ægyptian* task-masters, requiring the brick, and not giving the straw. But in bidding us doe what we cannot, thou inabilityst us to doe what thou biddest. Thy Precepts under the Gospel have not onely an intimation of our duty, but an habilitation of thy power: as here, when thou badest the

the Disciples to give to the multitude, thou meantest to supply unto them what thou commandedst to give.

Our Saviour hath what he would, an acknowledgement of their insufficiency: *We have here but five loaves and two fishes.* A poor provision for the family of the Lord of the whole earth: Five loaves, and those barley; two fishes, and those little ones. We well know, O Saviour, that the beasts were thine on a thousand mountains, all the corn thine that covered the whole surface of the earth, all the fowls of the air thine; it was thou that providedst those drifts of Quails that fell among the tents of thy rebellious *Israelites*, that rainedst down those showrs of Manna round about their camp: and dost thou take up (for thy self and thy meiny) with *five barley loaves, and two little fishes*? Certainly this was thy will, not thy need: to teach us, that this body must be fed, not pampered. Our belly may not be our master, much less our God; or if it be, the next word is, *whose glory is their shame, whose end damnation.* It is noted as the crime of the rich glutton, that *he fared deliciously every day.* I never find that *Christ* entertained any guests but twice; and that was onely with loaves and fishes. I find him sometimes feasted by others more liberally. But his domesticall fare how simple, how homely it is? The end of food is to sustain Nature. Meat was ordained for the belly, the belly for the body, the body for the Soul, the Soul for God: we must still look through the subordinate Ends to the highest. To rest in the pleasure of the meat, is for those creatures which have no Souls. Oh the extreme delicacy of these times! What conquisition is here of all sorts of curious dishes from the farthest seas and lands, to make up one hour's meal? what broken cookery? what devised mixtures? what nice sauces? what feasting not of the tast onely, but of the sent? Are we the Disciples of him that took up with the loaves and fishes; or the scholars of a *Philoxenus*, or an *Apitius*, or *Vitellius*, or those other monsters of the palate? the true sons of those first Parents that killed themselves with their teeth? Nei-

Neither was the quality of these victuals more coarse, then the quantity small. They make a *But* of five loaves and two fishes; and well they might, in respect of so many thousand mouths. A little food to an hungry stomach doth rather stir up appetite then satisfy it: as a little rain upon a drougthy soil doth rather help to scorch then refresh it. When we look with the eye of Sense or Reason upon any Object, we shall see an impossibility of those effects which Faith can easily apprehend, and Divine power more easily produce. Carnall minds are ready to measure all our hopes by humane possibilities; and when they fail, to despair of success: where true Faith measures them by Divine power, and therefore can never be disheartned. This Grace is for things not seen, and whether beyond hope, or against it.

The virtue is not in the means, but in the agent. *Bring them hither to me.* How much more easie had it been for our Saviour to fetch the loaves to him, then to multiply them? The hands of the Disciples shall bring them, that they might more fully witness both the Authour and manner of the instant Miracle. Had the loaves and fishes been multiplied without this bringing, perhaps they might have seemed to have come by the secret provision of the guests: now there can be no question either of the act, or of the agent. As God takes pleasure in doing wonders for men, so he loves to be acknowledged in the great works that he doeth. He hath no reason to part with his own glory; that is too precious for him to lose, or for his creature to embezzell. And how justly didst thou, O Saviour, in this mean to teach thy Disciples, that it was thou onely who feedest the world; and upon whom both themselves and all their fellow-creatures must depend for their nourishment and provision; and that if it came not through thy hands, it could not come to theirs?

There need no more words. I do not hear the Disciples stand upon the terms of their own necessity; Alas! Sir, it is too little for our selves; whence shall we then relieve our
own

own hunger? Give leave to our Charity to begin at home. But they willingly yield to the command of their Master, and put themselves upon his Providence for the sequel. When we have a charge from God, it is not for us to stand upon self-respects; in this case there is no such sure liberty as in a self-contempt. O God, when thou callest to us for our five loaves, we must forget our own interest: otherwise, if we be more thrifty than obedient, our good turns evil; and much better had it been for us to have wanted that which we withhold from the owner.

He that is the Master of the Feast marshals the guests; *He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass.* They obey, and expect. O marvellous Faith! So many thousands sit down, and address themselves to a meal, when they saw nothing but five poor barley loaves and two small fishes. None of them say, Sit down? to what? Here are the mouths, but where is the meat? We can soon be set, but whence shall we be served? Ere we draw our knives, let us see our cheer. But they meekly and obediently dispose themselves to their places, and look up to *Christ* for a miraculous purveyance. It is for all that would be *Christ's* followers, to lead the life of Faith; and, even where means appear not, to wait upon that mercifull hand. Nothing is more easy then to trust God when our barns and coffers are full; and to say, *Give us our daily bread*, when we have it in our cupboard. But when we have nothing, when we know not how or whence to get any thing, then to depend upon an invisible bounty, this is a true and noble act of Faith. To cast away our own, that we may immediately live upon Divine Providence, I know no warrant. But when the necessity is of God's making, we see our refuge; and happy are we if our confidence can fly to it, and rest in it. Yea fulness should be a Curse, if it should debar us from this dependence: at our best we must look up to this great householder of the world, and cannot but need his provision. If we have meat, perhaps not appetite; if appetite, it may

be not digestion ; or if that, not health, and freedom from pain ; or if that, perhaps (from other occurrents) not life.

The guests are set full of expectation. He that could have multiplied the bread in absence, in silence takes it and blesses it ; that he might at once shew them the Authour and the means of this increase. It is thy blessing, O God, that maketh rich. What a difference do we see in mens estates ? Some languish under great means, and enjoy not either their substance or themselves ; others are chearfull and happy in a little. Second causes may not be denied their work ; but the over-ruling power is above. The subordinateness of the Creature doth not take away from the right, from the thank of the First Mover.

He could as well have multiplied the loaves whole ; why would he rather doe it in the breaking ? Was it to teach us that in the distribution of our goods we should expect his blessing, not in their intireness and reservation ? *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*, saith Solomon : Yea, there is no man but increaseth by scattering. It is the grain thrown into the several furrows of the earth which yields the rich interest unto the Husbandman : that which is tied up in his sack, or heaped in his granary, decreaseth by keeping. *He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally.*

Away with our weak distrust. If Wealth came by us, giving were the way to want : now that God gives to the giver, nothing can so sure enrich us as our beneficence. He multiplied the bread not to keep, but to give ; *He gave it to the Disciples.* And why not rather by his own hand to the multitude, that so the Miracle and thank might have been more immediate ? Wherefore was this, O Saviour, but that thou mightest win respect to thy Disciples from the people ? As great Princes, when they would ingratiate a Favourite, pass no suits but through his hands. What an honour was this to thy servants, that as thou wert Mediatour betwixt thy Father and Man, so thou wouldst have them

them in some beneficiall occasion mediate betwixt men and thee? How fit a type is this of thy spirituall provision, that thou who couldst have fed the world by thine immediate word, wouldst by the hands of thy Ministers divide the bread of life to all hearers? Like as it was with the Law: well did the *Israelites* see and hear that thou couldst deliver that dreadfull message with thine own mouth; yet in favour of their weakness thou wouldst treat with them by a *Moses*. Use of means derogates nothing from the efficacy of the principal Agent, yea adds to it. It is a strange weakness of our spirituall eyes, if we can look but to the next hand. How absurd had these guests been, if they had termined the thanks in the servitours, and had said, We have it from you, whence ye had it is no part of our care: we owe this favour to you; if you owe it to your Master, acknowledge your obligations to him, as we do unto you? But since they well knew that the Disciples might have handled this bread long enough ere any such effect could have followed, they easily find to whom they are beholden. Our Christian wisdom must teach us, whosoever be the means, to reserve our main thanks for the Authour of our good.

He gave the bread then to his Disciples, not to eat, not to keep, but to distribute. It was not their particular benefit he regarded in this gift, but the good of many.

In every Feast each servitour takes up his dish, not to carry it aside into a corner for his own private repast; but to set it before the guests, for the honour of his Master: when they have done, his chear begins. What shall we say to those injurious waiters, who fatten themselves with those concealed messes which are meant to others? Their table is made their snare; and these stolln morsels cannot but end in bitterness.

Accordingly the Disciples set this fare before the guests. I do not see so much as *Judas* reserve a share to himself, whether out of hunger or distrust. Had not our Saviour

commanded so free a distribution, their self-love would easily have taught them where to begin. Nature says, First thy self, then thy friends: either extremity or particular charge gives Grace occasion to alter the case. Far be it from us to think we have any claim in that which the owner gives us meerly to bestow.

I know not now whether more to wonder at the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. Here were a whole hoast of guests, five thousand men; and in all likelihood no fewer women and children. Perhaps some of these onely look'd on. Nay, *they did all eat*. Perhaps every man a crum, or a bit. Nay, they did eat to satiety; *all were satisfied*. So many must needs make clean work; of so little there could be left nothing. Yea, there were *fragments* remaining. Perhaps some crumbs or crusts, hardly to be discerned, much less gathered. Nay, *twelve baskets full*: more remained then was first set down. Had they eaten nothing, it was a just Miracle that so much should be left; had nothing remained, it was no less Miracle that so many had eaten, and so many satisfied: but now that so many bellies and so many baskets were filled, the Miracle was doubled. O work of a boundless Omnipotency! Whether this were done by creation or by conversion, uses to be questioned, but needs not. Whilst *Christ* multiplies the bread, it is not for us to multiply his Miracles. To make ought of nothing, is more then to adde much unto something. It was therefore rather by turning of a former matter into these substances, then by making these substances of nothing.

Howsoever, here is a marvellous provision made, a marvellous bounty of that provision, a no less marvellous extent of that bounty.

Those that depend upon God, and busy themselves in his work, shall not want a due purveyance in the very desert. Our streight and confined beneficence reaches so far as to provide for our own; those of our Domesticks which labour

labour in our service do but justly expect and challenge their diet; whereas day-labourers are oft-times at their own finding. How much more will that God, who is infinite in mercy and power, take order for the livelihood of those that attend him? We see the birds of the air provided for by him; how rarely have we found any of them dead of hunger? yet what doe they but what they are carried unto by natural instinct? How much more where, besides propriety, there is a rational and willing service? Shall the *Israelites* be fed with Manna, *Eliab* by the Ravens, the Widow by her multiplied meal and oyl, *Christ's* clients in the wilderness with loaves and fishes? O God, whilst thou dost thus promerit us by thy Providence, let not us wrong thee by distrust.

God's undertakings cannot but be exquisite: those whom he professes to feed, must needs have enough. The measure of his bounty cannot but run over. Doth he take upon him to prepare a table for his *Israel* in the desert? the bread shall be the food of Angels, the flesh shall be the delicates of Princes, Manna and Quails. Doth he take upon him to make wine for the marriage-feast of *Cana*? there shall be both store and choice; the vintage yields poor stuff to this. Will he feast his Auditours in the wilderness? if they have not dainties, they shall have plenty; *They were all satisfied*. Neither yet, O Saviour, is thy hand closed. What abundance of heavenly doctrine dost thou set before us? how are we feasted, yea pampered with thy celestiall delicacies? Not according to our meanness, but according to thy state, are we fed. Thrifty and niggardly collations are not for Princes. We are full of thy goodness; O let our hearts run over with thanks.

I do gladly wonder at this Miracle of thine, O Saviour; yet so as that I forget not mine own condition. Whence is it that we have our continuall provision? One and the same munificent hand doeth all. If the *Israelites* were fed with Manna in the desert, and with corn in *Canaan*, both

were done by the same power and bounty. If the Disciples were fed by the loaves multiplied, and we by the grain multiplied, both are the act of one Omnipotence. What is this but a perpetuall Miracle, O God, which thou workest for our preservation? Without thee, there is no more power in the grain to multiply then in the loaf: it is thou that *givest it a body at thy pleasure, even to every seed his own body*; it is thou that *givest fulness of bread and cleanness of teeth*. It is no reason thy goodness should be less magnified because it is universall.

One or two baskets could have held the five loaves and two fishes; not less then twelve can hold the remainders. The Divine munificence provides not for our necessity onely, but for our abundance, yea superfluity. Envy and ignorance, whilst they make God the authour of enough, are ready to impute the surplusage to another cause; as we commonly say of Wine, that the liquour is God's, the excess Satan's.

Thy Table, O Saviour, convinces them, which had more taken away then set on: thy Blessing makes an estate not competent onely, but rich. I hear of barns full of plenty, and presses bursting out with new wine, as the rewards of those that honour thee with their substance. I hear of heads anointed with oyl, and cups running over. O God, as thou hast a free hand to give, so let us have a free heart to return thee the praise of thy Bounty.

Those fragments were left behind. I do not see the people, when they had filled their bellies, cramming their pockets, or stuffing their wallets; yet the place was desert, and some of them doubtless had far home.

It becomes true Disciples to be content with the present, not too solicitous for the future. O Saviour, thou didst not bid us beg bread for to morrow, but for to day: not that we should refuse thy bounty when thou pleasest to give; but that we should not distrust thy Providence for the need we may have.

Even these fragments (though but of barley loaves and fish-bones) may not be left in the desert, for the compost of that earth whereon they were increased; but by our Saviour's holy and just command are gathered up. The liberrall housekeeper of the world will not allow the loss of his orts: the childrens bread may not be given to dogs: and if the crums fall to their share, it is because their smallness admits not of a collection. If those who out of obedience or due thrift have thought to gather up crums, have found them pearls, I wonder not: Surely both are alike, the good creatures of the same Maker; and both of them may prove equally costly to us in their wilfull mis-spending. But oh, what shall we say, that not crusts and crums, not loaves and dishes and cups, but whole patrimonies are idly lavisht away; not merely lost, (this were more easy) but ill spent in a wicked riot upon dice, drabs, drunkards? Oh the fearfull account of these unthrifty Bailifs, which shall once be given in to our great Lord and Master, when he shall call us to a strict reckoning of all our talents! He was condemned that increased not the summe concredited to him: what shall become of him that lawlessly impairs it?

Who gathered up these fragments but the twelve Apostles, every one his basket-full? They were the servitours that set on this banquet at the command of *Christ*, they waited on the Tables, they took away.

It was our Saviour's just care that those offalls should not perish: but he well knew that a greater loss depended upon those scraps; a loss of glory to the omnipotent Worker of that Miracle. The feeding of the multitude was but the one half of the work, the other half was in the remnant. Of all other it most concerns the successours of the Apostles to take care that the marvellous works of their God and Saviour may be improved to the best; they may not suffer a crust or crum to be lost that may yield any glory to that Almighty Agent.

Here was not any morsel or bone that was not worthy to be a relique, every the least parcel whereof was no other then miraculous. All the ancient monuments of God's supernatural power and mercy were in the keeping of *Aaron* and his sons. There is no Servant in the Family but should be thriftily carefull for his Master's profit ; but most of all the Steward, who is particularly charged with this oversight. Wo be to us if we care onely to gather up our own scraps, with neglect of the precious morsels of our Maker and Redeemer.

XXIII.

The Walk upon the Waters.

ALL Elements are alike to their Maker. He that had well approved his power on the Land, will now shew it in the Air and the Waters; he that had preserved the multitude from the peril of hunger in the Desert, will now preserve his Disciples from the peril of the tempest in the Sea.

Where do we ever else find any compulsion offered by *Christ* to his Disciples? He was like the good Centurion; he said to one, *Go, and he goeth*. When he did but call them from their nets they came; and when he sent them by pairs into the Cities and Country of *Judea* to preach the Gospel, they went. There was never errand whereon they went unwillingly: onely now *he constrained them to depart*. We may easily conceive how loth they were to leave him; whether out of love, or of common civility. *Peter's* tongue did but (when it was) speak the heart of the rest; *Master, thou knowest that I love thee*. Who could

could chuse but be in love with such a Master? And who can willingly part from what he loves? But had the respects been onely common and ordinary, how unfit might it seem to leave a Master now towards night, in a wild place, amongst strangers, unprovided of the means of his passage? Where otherwise therefore he needed but to bid, now he constrains. O Saviour, it was ever thy manner to call all men unto thee; *Come to me, all that labour and are heavy laden.* When didst thou ever drive any one from thee? Neither had it been so now, but to draw them closer unto thee, whom thou seemedst for the time to abdicate. In the mean while, I know not whether more to excuse their unwillingness, or to applaud their obedience. As it shall be fully above, so it was proportionally here below; *In thy presence (O Saviour) is the fulness of joy.* Once, when thou askedst these thy Domesticks whether they also would depart, it was answered thee by one tongue for all, *Master, whither should we go from thee? thou hast the words of eternal life.* What a death was it then to them to be compelled to leave thee? Sometimes it pleaseth the Divine goodness to lay upon his servants such commands as favour of harshness and discomfort; which yet both in his intention and in the event are no other then gracious and sovereign. The more difficulty was in the charge, the more praise was in the obedience. I do not hear them stand upon the terms of capitulation with their Master, nor pleading importunately for their stay; but instantly upon the command they yield and go. We are never perfect Disciples, till we can depart from our reason, from our will; yea, O Saviour, when thou biddest us, from thy self.

Neither will the multitude be gone without a dismissal. They had followed him whilst they were hungry, they will not leave him now they are fed. Fain would they put that honour upon him, which to avoid he is fain to avoid them: gladly would they pay a Kingdom to him as

their shot for their late banquet ; he shuns both it and them. O Saviour, when the hour of thy Passion was now come, thou couldst offer thy self readily to thine apprehenders ; and now when the glory of the world presses upon thee, thou runnest away from a crown. Was it to teach us that there is less danger in suffering than in outward prosperity ? What do we dote upon **that worldly honour**, which thou heldst worthy of avoidance and contempt ?

Besides this reservedness, it was devotion that drew *Jesus* aside. He went alone up to the mountain to pray. Lo, thou, to whom the greatest throng was a solitude in respect of the fruition of thy Father, thou who wert incapable of distraction from him with whom thou wert one, wouldst yet so much act man as to retire for the opportunity of prayer : to teach us, who are nothing but wild thoughts and giddy distractedness, to go aside when we would speak with God. How happy is it for us that thou prayedst ? O Saviour, thou prayedst for us, who have not grace enough to pray for our selves, nor worth enough to be accepted when we do pray. Thy prayers, which were most perfect and impetrative, are they by which our weak and unworthy prayers receive both life and favour. And now how assiduous should we be in our supplications, who are empty of grace, full of wants ; when thou, who wert a God of all power, praiedst for that which thou couldst command ? Therefore do we pray, because thou praiedst : therefore do we expect to be graciously answered in our prayers, because thou didst pray for us here on earth, and now intercedest for us in Heaven.

The evening was come ; the Disciples look'd long for their Master, and loth they were to have stirred without him : but his command is more then the strongest wind to fill their sails, and they are now gone. Their expectation made not the evening seem so long as our Saviour's devotion made it seem short to him. He is on the mount, they

they on the sea: yet whilst he was in the mount praying, and lifting up his eyes to his Father, he fails not to cast them about upon his Disciples tossed on the waves. Those all-seeing eyes admit of no limits. At once he sees the highest Heavens, and the midst of the Sea; the glory of his Father, and the misery of his Disciples. Whatever prospects present themselves to his view, the distress of his Followers is ever most noted.

How much more dost thou now, O Saviour, from the height of thy glorious advancement behold us thy wretched servants tossed on the unquiet sea of this World, and beaten with the troublesome and threatening billows of Affliction? Thou foresawest their toil and danger ere thou dismissedst them, and purposely sendest them away that they might be tossed. Thou that couldst prevent our sufferings by thy power, wilt permit them in thy wisdom, that thou mayest glorifie thy mercy in our deliverance, and confirm our Faith by the issue of our distresses.

How do all things now seem to conspire to the vexing of the poor Disciples? The night was fullen and dark, their Master was absent, the sea was boistrous, the winds were high and contrary. Had their Master been with them, howsoever the elements had raged, they had been secure. Had their Master been away, yet if the sea had been quiet or the winds fair, the passage might have been endured. Now both season, and sea, and wind, and their Master's desertion had agreed to render them perfectly miserable. Sometimes the Providence of God hath thought good so to order it, that to his best servants there appeareth no glimpse of comfort; but so absolute vexation, as if Heaven and earth had plotted their full affliction. Yea, O Saviour, what a dead night, what a fearfull tempest, what an astonishing dereliction was that, wherein thou thy self criedst out in the bitterness of thine anguished Soul, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Yet in all

these extremities of misery, our gracious God intends nothing but his greater glory and ours; the triumph of our Faith, the crown of our Victory.

All that lonesome and tempestuous night must the Disciples wear out in danger and horror, as given over to the winds and waves; but in the fourth watch of the night, when they were wearied out with toils and fears, comes deliverance.

At their entrance into the ship, at the arising of the tempest, at the shutting in of the evening, there was no news of *Christ*: but when they have been all the night long beaten, not so much with storms and waves as with their own thoughts, now in the fourth watch (which was near to the morning) *Jesus* came unto them, and purposely not till then; that he might exercise their patience; that he might inure them to wait upon Divine Providence in cases of extremity; that their Devotions might be more whetted by delay; that they might give gladder welcome to their deliverance. O God, thus thou thinkest fit to doe still. We are by turns in our sea, the winds bluster, the billows swell, the night and thy absence heighten our discomfort: thy time and ours is set; as yet it is but midnight with us; can we but hold out patiently till the fourth watch, thou wilt surely come and rescue us. Oh let us not faint under our sorrows, but wear out our three watches of tribulation with undaunted patience and holy resolution.

O Saviour, our extremities are the seasons of thine aid. Thou camest at last; but yet so, as that there was more dread than joy in thy presence. Thy coming was both miraculous and frightfull.

Thou God of Elements passedst through the air, walkedst upon the waters. Whether thou meantest to terminate this Miracle in thy Body, or in the waves which thou trodest upon, whether so lightning the one, that it should make no impression in the liquid waters, or whether so

consolidating the other, that the paved waves yielded a firm causey to thy sacred feet to walk on, I neither determine nor inquire; thy silence ruleth mine: thy power was in either miraculous; neither know I in whether to adore it more. But withall give me leave to wonder more at thy passage then at thy coming. Wherefore camest thou but to comfort them? and wherefore then wouldst thou pass by them, as if thou hadst intended nothing but their dismay? Thine absence could not be so grievous as thy preterition: that might seem justly occasioned, this could not but seem willingly neglective. Our last conflicts have wont ever to be the forest: as when after some dripping rain it pours down most vehemently, we think the weather is changing to serenity.

O Saviour, we may not always measure thy meaning by thy semblance: sometimes what thou most intendest, thou shewest least. In our Afflictions thou turnest thy back upon us, and hidest thy face from us, when thou most mindest our distresses. So *Jonathan* shot the arrows beyond *David*, when he meant them to him. So *Joseph* calls for *Benjamin* into bonds, when his heart was bound to him in the strongest affection. So the tender mother makes as if she would give away her crying child, whom she hugs so much closer in her bosome.

If thou pass by us whilst we are struggling with the tempest, we know it is not for want of mercy. Thou canst not neglect us; O let not us distrust thee.

What Object should have been so pleasing to the eyes of the Disciples as their Master; and so much the more as he shewed his Divine power in this miraculous walk? But lo, contrarily, *they are troubled*; not with his presence, but with this form of presence.

The supernatural works of God, when we look upon them with our own eyes, are subject to a dangerous misprision. The very Sun-beams to whom we are beholden for our sight, if we eye them directly, blind us. Miserable

rable men! we are ready to suspect Truths, to run away from our safety, to be afraid of our comforts, to mis-know our best friends.

And why are they thus troubled? *They had thought they had seen a Spirit.* That there have been such apparitions of Spirits, both good and evil, hath ever been a Truth undoubtedly received of Pagans, Jews, Christians; although in the blind times of Superstition there was much collusion mixed with some verities: Crafty men and lying spirits agreed to abuse the credulous world. But even where there was not Truth, yet there was Horrour. The very Good Angels were not seen without much fear; their sight was construed to bode Death: how much more the Evil, which in their very nature are harmfull and pernicious? We see not a Snake or a Toad without some recoiling of bloud and sensible reluctance, although those creatures run away from us: how much more must our hairs stand upright and our senses boggle at the sight of a Spirit, whose both nature and will is contrary to ours, and professedly bent to our hurt?

But say it had been what they mistook it for, a Spirit; why should they fear? Had they well considered, they had soon found that evil spirits are never the less present, when they are not seen; and never the less harmfull or malicious, when they are present unseen. Visibility adds nothing to their spite or mischief. And could their eyes have been opened, they had, with *Elisba's* servant, seen *more with them then against* them; a sure, though invisible, guard of more powerfull Spirits, and themselves under the protection of the God of Spirits: so as they might have bidden a bold defiance to all the powers of darkness. But, partly their Faith was yet but in the bud; and partly the presentation of this dreadfull Object was sudden, and without the respite of a recollection and settlement of their thoughts.

Oh the weakness of our frail Nature, who, in the want
of

of Faith, are affrighted with the visible appearance of those adversaries whom we profess daily to resist and vanquish, and with whom we know the Decree of God hath matched us in an everlasting conflict! Are not these they that ejected Devils by their command? Are not these of them that could say, *Master, the evil spirits are subdued to us?* Yet now when they see but an imagined Spirit, they fear. What power there is in the eye to betray the heart!

Whilst *Goliath* was mingled with the rest of the *Philistin* hoast, *Israel* camped boldly against them; but when that Giant stalks out single between the two armies, and fills and amazes their eyes with his hideous stature, now they run away for fear. Behold, we are committed with Legions of Evil spirits, and complain not: Let but one of them give us some visible token of his presence, we shriek and tremble, and are not our selves.

Neither is our weakness more conspicuous than thy mercy, O God, in restraining these spiritual enemies from these dreadfull and ghastly representations of themselves to our eyes. Might those infernal Spirits have liberty to appear how and when and to whom they would, certainly not many would be left in their wits, or in their lives. It is thy power and goodness to frail mankind that they are kept in their chains, and reserved in the darkness of their own spiritual being, that we may both oppugn and subdue them unseen.

But oh the deplorable condition of reprobate souls! If but the imagined sight of one of these spirits of darkness can so daunt the heart of those which are free from their power, what a terrour shall it be to live perpetually in the sight, yea under the torture, of thousands, of legions, of millions of Devils? Oh the madness of wilfull sinners, that will needs run themselves headily into so dreadfull a damnation!

It was high time for our Saviour to speak: What with the Tempest, what with the Apparition, the Disciples were almost

almost lost with fear. How seasonable are his gracious redresses? Till they were thus affrighted, he would not speak; when they were thus affrighted, he would not hold his peace. If his presence were fearfull, yet his word was comfortable; *Be of good cheer, it is I*: yea it is his word onely which must make his presence both known and comfortable. He was present before; they mistook him, and feared: there needs no other erection of their drooping hearts but, *It is I*. It is cordial enough to us in the worst of our afflictions, to be assured of *Christ's* presence with us. Say but, *It is I*, O Saviour, and let evils doe their worst; thou needest not say any more. Thy voice was evidence enough; so well were the Disciples acquainted with the tongue of thee their Master, that, *It is I*, was as much as an hundred names. Thou art the good Shepherd; we are not of thy Flock, if we know thee not by thy voice from a thousand. Even this one is a great word, yea an ample style, *It is I*. The same tongue that said to *Moses*, *I am bath sent thee*, saith now to the Disciples, *It is I*; I your Lord and Master, I the Commander of winds and waters, I the sovereign Lord of Heaven and earth, I the God of Spirits. Let Heaven be but as one scroll, and let it be written all over with titles, they cannot expresse more then, *It is I*. Oh sweet and seasonable word of a gracious Saviour, able to calm all tempests, able to revive all hearts! Say but so to my Soul, and, in spite of Hell, I am safe.

No sooner hath *Jesus* said, *I*, then *Peter* answers, *Master*. He can instantly name him that did not name himself. Every little hint is enough to Faith. The Church sees her Beloved as well through the Lattice, as through the open Window. Which of all the Followers of *Christ* gave so pregnant testimonies upon all occasions of his Faith, of his Love to his Master, as *Peter*? The rest were silent, whilst he both owned his Master, and craved access to him in that liquid way. Yet what a sensible mixture

is here of Faith and Distrust? It is Faith that said, *Master*; it was Distrust (as some have construed it) that said, *If it be thou*. It was Faith that said, *Bid me come to thee*; (implying that his word could as well enable as command;) it was Faith that durst step down upon that watery pavement: it was Distrust that upon the sight of a mighty wind feared. It was Faith, that he walked; it was Distrust, that he sunk; it was Faith that said, *Lord, save me*. Oh the imperfect composition of the best Saint upon earth; as far from pure Faith, as from meer Infidelity! If there be pure earth in the center, all upward is mixed with the other elements: contrarily, pure Grace is above in the glorified Spirits; all below is mixed with infirmity, with corruption. Our best is but as the Air; which never was, never can be at once fully enlightned: neither is there in the same Region one constant state of light. It shall once be noon with us, when we shall have nothing but bright beams of Glory; now it is but the dawning, wherein it is hard to say whether there be more light then darkness. We are now fair as the Moon, which hath some spots in her greatest beauty; we shall be pure as the Sun, whose face is all bright and glorious. Ever since the time that *Adam* set his tooth in the Apple, till our mouth be full of mould, it never was, it never can be other with us. Far be it from us to settle willingly upon the dregs of our Infidelity; far be it from us to be disheartned with the sense of our defects and imperfections: *We believe; Lord, help our unbelief.*

Whilst I find some disputing the lawfulness of *Peter's* suit; others quarrelling his, *If it be thou*: let me be taken up with the wonder at the Faith, the fervour, the Heroicall valour of this prime Apostle, that durst say, *Bid me come to thee upon the waters*. He might have suspected that the Voice of his Master might have been as easily imitated by that imagined Spirit as his Person; he might have feared the blustering tempest, the threatning billows, the

yielding nature of that devouring element : but, as despising all these thoughts of misdoubt, such is his desire to be near his Master, that he says, *Bid me come to thee upon the waters.* He says not, *Come thou to me* : this had been *Christ's* act, and not his. Neither doth he say, *Let me come to thee* : this had been his act, and not *Christ's*. Neither doth he say, *Pray that I may come to thee*, as if this act had been out of the power of either. But, *Bid me come to thee.* I know thou canst command both the waves and me : me to be so light that I shall not bruise the moist surface of the waves ; the waves to be so solid that they shall not yield to my weight. All things obey thee : *Bid me come to thee upon the waters.*

It was a bold spirit that could wish it, more bold that could act it. No sooner hath our Saviour said, *Come*, then he sets his foot upon the unquiet Sea ; not fearing either the softness or the roughness of that uncouth passage. We are wont to wonder at the courage of that daring man who first committed himself to the Sea in a frail Bark, though he had the strength of an oaken planck to secure him : how valiant must we needs grant him to be, that durst set his foot upon the bare sea and shift his paces ? Well did *Peter* know that he who bade him could uphold him ; and therefore he both sues to be bidden, and ventures to be upholden. True Faith tasks it self with difficulties ; neither can it be dismaied with the conceits of ordinary impossibilities. It is not the scattering of straws, or casting of mole-hills, whereby the virtue of it is described, but removing of mountains. Like some courageous Leader, it desires the honour of a danger, and sues for the first onset : whereas the worldly heart freezes in a lazy or cowardly fear, and onely casts for safety and ease.

Peter sues, *Jesus* bids. Rather will he work Miracles, then disappoint the suit of a faithfull man. How easily might our Saviour have turned over this strange request of his bold Disciple, and have said, What my Omnipotence can doe

doe is no rule for thy Weakness: It is no less then presumption in a meer man, to hope to imitate the miraculous works of God and man. Stay thou in the ship, and wonder; contenting thy self in this, that thou hast a Master to whom the land and water is alike. Yet I hear not a Check, but a Call; *Come*. The suit of Ambition is suddenly quashed in the Mother of the *Zebedees*. The suits of Revenge prove no better in the mouth of the two fiery Disciples. But a suit of Faith, though high and seemingly unfit for us, he hath no power to deny. How much less, O Saviour, wilt thou stick at those things which lie in the very road of our Christianity? Never man said, Bid me to come to thee in the way of thy commandments, whom thou didst not both bid and inable to come.

True Faith rests not in great and good desires, but acts and executes accordingly. *Peter* doth not wish to go, and yet stand still: but his foot answers his tongue, and instantly chops down upon the waters. To sit still and wish, is for sluggish and cowardly spirits.

Formal volitions, yea velleities of good, whilst we will not so much as step out of the ship of our Nature to walk unto *Christ*, are but the faint motions of vain Hypocrisie. It will be long enough ere the gale of good wishes can carry us to our Heaven. *Ease slayeth the foolish*. O Saviour, we have thy command to come to thee out of the ship of our natural corruption: Let no Sea affray us, let no Tempest of Temptation withhold us. No way can be but safe, when thou art the End.

Lo, *Peter* is walking upon the waves: two hands uphold him; the hand of *Christ's* Power, the hand of his own Faith; neither of them would doe it alone. The hand of *Christ's* Power laid hold on him; the hand of his Faith laid hold on the power of *Christ* commanding. Had not *Christ's* hand been powerfull, that Faith had been in vain: Had not that Faith of his strongly fixed upon *Christ*, that Power had not been effectual to his preservation. Whilst we

are here in the world, we walk upon the waters ; still the same hands bear us up. If he let goe his hold of us, we drown ; if we let goe our hold of him, we sink and shreek as *Peter* did here, who, when he saw the wind boistrous, was afraid, and, *beginning to sink, cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

When he wisht to be bidden to walk unto *Christ*, he thought of the waters ; *Bid me to come to thee on the waters* : he thought not on the winds which raged on those waters ; or if he thought of a stiff gale, yet that tempestuous and sudden gust was out of his account and expectation. Those evils that we are prepared for, have not such power over us as those that surprize us. A good water-man sees a dangerous billow coming towards him, and cuts it, and mounts over it with ease ; the unheedy is overwhelmed. O Saviour, let my haste to thee be zealous, but not improvident ; ere I set my foot out of the ship, let me foresee the Tempest : when I have cast the worst, I cannot either miscarry or complain.

So soon as he began to fear, he began to sink : whilst he believed, the Sea was brass ; when once he began to distrust, those waves were water. He cannot sink, whilst he trusts the power of his Master ; he cannot but sink when he misdoubts it. Our Faith gives us, as courage and boldness, so success too : our Infidelity lays us open to all dangers, to all mischiefs.

It was *Peter's* improvidence not to foresee ; it was his weakness to fear ; it was the effect of his fear to sink : it was his Faith that recollects it self, and breaks through his Infidelity, and in sinking could say, *Lord, save me.* His foot could not be so swift in sinking, as his heart in imploring : he knew who could uphold him from sinking, and being sunk deliver him ; and therefore he says, *Lord, save me.*

It is a notable both sign and effect of true Faith, in sudden extremities to ejaculate holy desires ; and with the wings of
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our first thoughts to fly up instantly to the throne of Grace for present succour. Upon deliberation it is possible for a man that hath been careless and profane, by good means to be drawn to holy dispositions: but on the sudden a man will appear as he is; what-ever is most rise in the heart will come forth at the mouth. It is good to observe how our surprisals find us: the rest is but forced; this is natural. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* O Saviour, no evil can be swifter then my thought: my thoughts shall be upon thee, ere I can be seized upon by the speediest mischief: at least, if I over-run not evils, I shall overtake them.

It was *Christ* his Lord whom *Peter* had offended in distrusting; it is *Christ* his Lord to whom he sues for deliverance. His weakness doth not discourage him from his refuge. O God, when we have displeased thee, when we have sunk in thy displeasure, whither should we fly for aid but to thee whom we have provoked? Against thee onely is our sin; in thee onely is our help. In vain shall all the powers of Heaven and Earth conspire to relieve us, if thou withhold from our succour. As we offend thy Justice daily by our sins, so let us continually rely upon thy Mercy by the strength of our Faith. *Lord, save us.*

The mercy of *Christ* is at once sought and found; *Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.* He doth not say, Hadst thou trusted me, I would have safely preserved thee; but since thou wilt needs wrong my power and care with a cowardly diffidence, sink and drown: but rather, as pitying the infirmity of his fearfull Disciple, he puts out the hand for his relief. That hand hath been stretch'd forth for the aid of many a one that hath never ask'd it; never any ask'd it, to whose succour it hath not been stretched. With what speed, with what confidence should we fly to that sovereign bounty, from which never any suttour was sent away empty?

Jesus gave *Peter* his hand; but withall he gave him a check: *O thou of little faith, why doubtedst thou?* As *Peter's* Faith was not pure, but mixed with some distrust; so our Saviour's help was not clear and absolute, but mixed with some reproof. A reproof, wherein there was both a censure and an exhortation; a censure of his Faith, an exhortation for his Doubt: both of them sore and heavy.

By how much more excellent and usefull a grace Faith is, by so much more shamefull is the defect of it; and by how much more reason here was of confidence, by so much more blame-worthy was the Doubt. Now *Peter* had a double reason of his confidence; the command of *Christ*, the power of *Christ*: the one in bidding him to come; the other in sustaining him whilst he came. To misdoubt him whose will he knew, whose power he felt, was well worth a reprehension.

When I saw *Peter* stepping forth upon the waters, I could not but wonder at his great Faith; yet behold, ere he can have measured many paces, the Judge of hearts taxes him for little Faith. Our mountains are but moats to God. Would my heart have served me to dare the doing of this that *Peter* did? Durst I have set my foot where he did? O Saviour, if thou foundest cause to censure the weakness and poverty of his Faith, what mayest thou well say to mine? They mistake that think thou wilt take up with any thing. Thou lookest for firmitude and vigour in those Graces which thou wilt allow in thy best Disciples, no less then truth.

The first steps were confident, there was fear in the next: Oh the sudden alteration of our affections, of our dispositions! One pace varies our spiritual condition. What hold is there of so fickle creatures, if we be left never so little to our selves? As this lower world wherein we are is the region of mutability; so are we (the living pieces of it) subject to a perpetual change. It is for the blessed Saints and Angels above to be fixed in good: Whilst we
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are here, there can be no constancy expected from us, but in variableness.

As well as our Saviour loves *Peter*, yet he chides him. It is the fruit of his favour and mercy that we escape judgment, not that we escape reproof. Had not *Peter* found grace with his Master, he had been suffered to sink in silence; now he is saved with a check. There may be more love in frowns than in smiles: *Whom he loves he chastises*. What is chiding but a verbal castigation? and what is chastisement but a real chiding? *Correct me, O Lord, yet in thy judgment, not in thy fury. O let the righteous God smite me* (when I offend) with his gracious reproofs; these shall be a precious oyl that shall not break my head.

XXIV.

The Bloody issue healed.

THE time was, O Saviour, when a worthy woman offered to touch thee, and was forbidden: now a meaner touchèd thee with approbation and encouragement. Yet as there was much difference in that Body of thine which was the Object of that touch, (being now mortal and passible, then impassible and immortal,) so there was in the Agents; this a stranger, that a familiar; this obscure, that famous.

The same actions vary with time and other circumstances; and accordingly receive their dislike or allowance.

Doubtless thou hadst herein no small respect to the faith of *Jairus*, unto whose house thou wert going. That good man had but one onely Daughter, which lay sick in the beginning of his suit, ere the end, lay dead. Whilst she lived,
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his hope lived ; her death disheartned it. It was a great work that thou meanteft to doe for him ; it was a great word that thou faidft to him, *Fear not ; believe ; and ſhe ſhall be made whole.* To make this good, by the touch of the verge of thy garment thou revivedft one from the verge of death. How muſt *Jairus* needs now think, He who by the virtue of his garment can pull this woman out of the paws of death which hath been twelve years dying, can as well by the power of his word pull my daughter (who hath been twelve years living) out of the jaws of death which hath newly ſeized on her? It was fit the good Ruler ſhould be raiſed up with this handſell of thy Divine power, whom he came to ſolicit.

That thou mighteſt loſe no time, thou curedſt in thy paſſage. The Sun ſtands not ſtill to give his influences, but diffuſes them in his ordinary motion. How ſhall we imitate thee, if we ſuffer our hands to be out of ure with good? Our life goes away with our time : we loſe that which we improve not.

The Patient laboured of an Iſſue of bloud ; a Diſeaſe that had not more pain then ſhame, nor more natural infirmity then Legal impurity. Time added to her grief ; twelve long years had ſhe languiſhed under this woſull complaint. Beſides the tediousneſs, diſeaſes muſt needs get head by continuance ; and ſo much more both weaken Nature and ſtrengthen themſelves, by how much longer they afflict us. So it is in the Soul, ſo in the State ; Vices, which are the Sickneſſes of both, when they grow inveterate, have a ſtrong plea for their abode and uncontrollableneſs.

Yet more, to mend the matter, Poverty (which is another diſeaſe) was ſuperadded to her ſickneſs : *She had ſpent all ſhe had upon Phyſicians.* Whiſt ſhe had wherewith to make much of her ſelf, and to procure good tendance, choice diet, and all the ſuccours of a diſtreſſed languishment, ſhe could not but find ſome mitigation of her
forrow:

Sorrow : but now want began to pinch her no less then her distemper, and help'd to make her perfectly miserable.

Yet could she have parted from her substance with ease, her complaint had been the less. Could the Physicians have given her, if not health, yet relaxation and painlesness, her means had not been mis-bestowed : but now, *she suffered many things from them* ; many an unpleasing potion, many tormenting incisions and divulsions did she endure from their hands : the Remedy was equal in trouble to the Disease.

Yet had the cost and pain been never so great, could she have hereby purchased health, the match had been happy ; all the world were no price for this commodity : but alas ! her estate was the worse, her body not the better ; her money was wasted, not her disease. Art could give her neither cure nor hope. It were injurious to blame that noble Science, for that it always speeds not. Notwithstanding all those sovereign remedies, men must (in their times) sicken and die. Even the miraculous Gifts of healing could not preserve the owners from disease and dissolution.

It were pity but that this woman should have been thus sick ; the nature, the durableness, cost, pain, incurableness of her disease both sent her to seek *Christ*, and moved *Christ* to her cure. Our extremities drive us to our Saviour ; his love draws him to be most present and helpfull to our extremities. When we are forsaken of all succours and hopes, we are fittest for his redress. Never are we nearer to help, then when we despair of help. There is no fear, no danger, but in our own insensibleness.

This woman was a stranger to *Christ* ; it seems she had never seen him. The report of his Miracles had lifted her up to such a confidence of his power and mercy, as that she said in her self, *If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole*. The shame of her Disease stopt her mouth from any verbal suit. Had she been acknownd of her infirmity, she had been shunned and abhorred, and disdainfully put

back of all the beholders, (as doubtless where she was known, the Law forced her to live apart.) Now she conceals both her grief, and her desire, and her Faith; and onely speaks (where she may be bold) within her self: *If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole.*

I seek not mysteries in the virtue of the hem rather than of the garment. Indeed it was God's command to *Israel*, that they should be marked, not onely in their skin, but in their cloaths too: those fringes and ribbands upon the borders of their garments were for holy memorials of their duty, and God's Law. But that hence she supposed to find more virtue and sanctity in the touch of the hem than of the coat, I neither dispute nor believe. It was the site, not the signification, that she intimated; not as of the best part, but the utmost. In all likelihood, if there could have been virtue in the garment, the nearer to the body, the more. Here was then the praise of this woman's Faith, that she promiseth her self cure by the touch of the utmost hem. Whosoever would look to receive any benefit from *Christ*, must come in Faith: It is that onely which makes us capable of any favour. Satan, the common ape of the Almighty, imitates him also in this point: All his charms and spells are ineffectual without the Faith of the user, of the receiver.

Yea the endeavour and issue of all, both humane and spiritual, things depends upon our Faith. Who would commit a plant or a seed to the earth, if he did not believe to have it nursed in that kindly bosome? What Merchant would put himself upon the guard of an inch-board in a furious Sea, if he did not trust to the faithfull custody of that planck? Who would trade, or travell, or war, or marry, if he did not therein surely trust he should speed well? What benefit can we look to carry from a Divine exhortation, if we do not believe it will edify us? from a Sacramental banquet, (the food of Angels) if we do not believe it will nourish our Souls? from our best Devotions, if we do
not

not perswade our selves they will fetch down blessings? Oh our vain and heartless services, if we do not say, May I drink but one drop of that heavenly Nectar, may I tast but one crum of that Bread of life, may I hear but one word from the mouth of *Christ*, may I send up but one hearty sigh or ejaculation of an holy desire to my God, I shall be whole!

According to her resolution is her practice. She touched, but *she came behind to touch*; whether for humility, or her secrecy rather, as desiring to steal a cure unseen, unnoted. She was a *Jewess*, and therefore well knew that her touch was (in this case) no better then a pollution; as hers, perhaps, but not of him. For on the one side, Necessity is under no positive law; on the other, the Son of God was not capable of impurity. Those may be defiled with a touch that cannot heal with a touch: he that was above Law is not comprised in the Law. Be we never so unclean, he may heal us; we cannot infect him. O Saviour, my Soul is sick and foul enough with the Spirituall impurities of sin: let me by the hand of Faith lay hold but upon the hem of thy garment, (thy Righteousness is thy garment) it shall be both clean and whole.

Who would not think but a man might lade up a dish of water out of the Sea unmixed? Yet that water (though much) is finite; those drops are within number: that Art which hath reckoned how many corns of sand would make up a World, could more easily compute how many drops of water would make up an Ocean. Whereas the mercies of God are absolutely infinite, and beyond all possibility of proportion: And yet this bashfull soul cannot steal one drop of mercy from this endless, boundless, bottomless Sea of Divine bounty, but it is felt and questioned. *And Jesus said, Who touched me?*

Who can now say that he is a poor man that reckons his store, when that God, who is rich in mercy, doth so? He knows all his own Blessings, and keeps just tallies of our

receits; delivered so much Honour to this man, to that so much Wealth; so much Knowledge to one, to another so much Strength. How carefully frugal should we be in the notice, account, usage of God's several favours, since his bounty sets all his gifts upon the file? Even the worst servant in the Gospel confess his Talents, though he employed them not. We are worse then the worst, if either we misknow, or dissemble, or forget them.

Who now can forbear the Disciples reply? Who touched thee, O Lord? the multitude. Dost thou ask of one; when thou art pressed by many? In the midst of a throng; dost thou ask, *Who touched me?*

Yea but yet *some one touched me*: All thronged me; but one touched me. How riddle-like soever it may seem to sound, they that thronged me touched me not; she onely touched me that thronged me not, yea that touched me not. Even so, O Saviour, others touched thy body with theirs; she touched thy hem with her hand, thy Divine power with her Soul.

Those two parts whereof we consist (the bodily, the spiritual) do in a sort partake of each other. The Soul is the Man, and hath those parts, senses, actions which are challenged as proper to the Body. This spiritual part hath both an hand, and a touch; it is by the hand of Faith that the Soul toucheth: yea this alone both is; and acts all the spiritual senses of that immaterial and Divine part; this sees, hears, tasteth, toucheth God; and without this the Soul doeth none of these. All the multitude then pressed *Christ*: he took not that for a touch, since Faith was away; onely she touched him that believed to receive virtue by his touch. Outward fashionableness comes into no account with God; that is onely done which the Soul doeth. It is no hoping that virtue should go forth from *Christ* to us, when no hearty desires go forth from us to him. He that is a Spirit, looks to the deportment of that part which resembleth himself: as without it the body is dead;

so without the actions thereof bodily Devotions are but carkasses.

What reason had our Saviour to challenge this touch? *Some body touch'd me.* The multitude (in one extreme) denied any touch at all: *Peter* (in another extreme) affirmed an over-touching of the multitude. Betwixt both, he who felt it can say, *Some body touched me.* Not *all*, as *Peter*; not *none*, as the multitude; but *some body*. How then, O Saviour, how doth it appear that some body touch'd thee? *For I perceive virtue is gone out from me.* The effect proves the act; virtue gone out evinces the touch. These two are in thee convertible: virtue cannot go out of thee but by a touch; and no touch can be of thee without virtue going out from thee. That which is a Rule in Nature, That every Agent works by a contact, holds spiritually too: Then dost thou, O God, work upon our Souls, when thou touchest our hearts by thy Spirit; then do we re-act upon thee, when we touch thee by the hand of our Faith and confidence in thee: and in both these virtue goes out from thee to us. Yet goes not so out, as that there is less in thee. In all bodily emanations, whose powers are but finite, it must needs follow, that the more is sent forth, the less is reserved: but as it is in the Sun, which gives us light, yet loseth none ever the more, (the luminosity of it being no whit impaired by that perpetual emission of lightsome beams;) so much more is it in thee, the Father of lights. Virtue could not go out of thee without thy knowledge, without thy sending. Neither was it in a dislike, or in a grudging exprobration, that thou saidst, *Virtue is gone out from me.* Nothing could please thee better, then to feel virtue fetch'd out from thee by the Faith of the receiver. It is the nature and praise of good to be communicative: none of us would be other then liberal of our little, if we did not fear it would be lessened by imparting. Thou that knowest thy store so infinite, that participation doth onely glorifie and not diminish it, canst not but be more willing to give then we to receive.

If we take but one drop of water from the Sea, or one corn of sand from the shore, there is so much (though insensibly) less : but were we capable of Worlds of virtue and benediction from that munificent hand, our enriching could no whit impoverish thee. Thou which wert wont to hold it much *better to give then to receive*, canst not but give gladly. Fear not, O my Soul, to lade plentifully at this Well, this Ocean of Mercy, which, the more thou takest, overflows the more.

But why then, O Saviour, why didst thou thus inquire, thus expostulate ? Was it for thy own sake ; that the glory of the Miracle might thus come to light, which otherwise had been smothered in silence ? Was it for *Jairus* his sake ; that his depressed heart might be raised to a confidence in thee, whose mighty Power he saw proved by this Cure, whose Omniscience he saw proved by the knowledge of the Cure ? Or was it chiefly for the Woman's sake ; for the praise of her Faith, for the securing of her Conscience ?

It was within her self that she said, *If I may but touch* : none could hear this voice of the heart, but he that made it. It was within her self that the Cure was wrought : none of the beholders knew her complaint, much less her recovery ; none noted her touch, none knew the occasion of her touch. What a pattern of powerfull Faith had we lost, if our Saviour had not called this act to triall ? As her modesty hid her disease, so it would have hid her vertue. *Christ* will not suffer this secrecy. Oh the marvellous, but free, dispensation of *Christ* ! One while he enjoyns a silence to his cured Patients, and is troubled with their divulgation of his favour ; another while (as here) he will not lose the honour of a secret mercy, but fetches it out by his Inquisition, by his profession ; *Who hath touched me ? for I perceive virtue is gone out from me.* As we see in the great work of his Creation, he hath placed some Stars in the midst of Heaven, where they may be most conspicuous ; others he hath set in the Southern obscurity, obvious to but few eyes :
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in the Earth, he hath planted some flowers and trees in the famous gardens of the World ; others, no less beautifull, in untracked Woods or wild Desarts , where they are either not seen, or not regarded.

O God, if thou have intended to glorifie thy self by thy Graces in us, thou wilt find means to fetch them forth into the notice of the World ; otherwise our very privacy shall content us, and praise thee.

Yet even this great Faith wanted not some weakness. It was a poor conceit in this Woman, that she thought she might receive so sovereign a remedy from *Christ* without his heed, without his knowledge. Now that she might see she had trusted to a power which was not more bountifull then sensible, and whose goodness did not exceed his apprehension, but one that knew what he parted with, and willingly parted with that which he knew beneficial to so faithfull a receiver, he can say, *Some body hath touched me, for I perceive virtue is gone out from me.* As there was an error in her thought, so in our Saviour's words there was a correction. His mercy will not let her run away with that secret offence. It is a great favour of God to take us in the manner, and to shame our closeness. We scour off the rust from a Weapon that we esteem, and prune the Vine we care for. O God, do thou ever find me out in my Sin ; and do not pass over my least infirmities without a feeling controlment.

Neither doubt I but that herein, O Saviour, thou didst graciously forecast the securing of the Conscience of this faithfull (though over-seen) Patient ; which might well have afterwards raised some just scruples, for the filching of a Cure, for Unthankfulness to the Authour of her Cure ; the continuance whereof she might have good reason to misdoubt, being surreptitiously gotten, ingratefully concealed. For prevention of all these dangers, and the full quieting of her troubled heart, how fitly, how mercifully didst thou bring forth this close business to the light, and clear it to the bottom ?

bottom? It is thy great mercy to foresee our perils, and to remove them ere we can apprehend the fear of them: as some skilfull Physician, who perceiving a Fever or Phrensy coming, which the distempered Patient little misdoubts, by seasonable applications anticipates that grievous malady; so as the sick man knows his safety ere he can suspect his danger.

Well might the Woman think, He who can thus cure, and thus know his cure, can as well know my name, and descry my person, and shame and punish my ingratitude. With a pale face therefore and a trembling foot she comes, and falls down before him, and humbly acknowledges what she had done, what she had obtained. *But the Woman, finding she was not hid, &c.*

Could she have perceived that she might have slyly gone away with the Cure, she had not confessed it: So had she made God a loser of Glory, and her self an unthankfull receiver of so great a Benefit.

Might we have our own wills, we should be injurious both to God and our selves. Nature lays such plots as would be sure to befool us; and is witty in nothing but deceiving her self. The onely way to bring us home, is to find we are found, and to be convinced of the discovery of all our evasions: As some unskilfull Thief, that finds the owner's eye was upon him in his pilfering, laies down his stolln commodity with shame. Contrarily, when a man is possessed with a conceit of secrecy and cleanly escape, he is emboldened in his leudness. The Adulterer chuses the twilight, and says, *No eye shall see me*; and joys in the sweetness of his stolln waters. O God, in the deepest darkness, in my most inward retiredness, when none sees me, when I see not my self, yet let me then see thine all-seeing eye upon me: and if ever mine eyes shall be shut, or held with a prevailing Temptation, check me with a speedy reproof, that, with this abashed Patient, I may come in, and confess my errour, and implore thy mercy.

It is no unusual thing for kindness to look sternly for the time, that it may indear it self more when it lists to be discovered. With a severe countenance did our Saviour look about him, and ask, *Who touched me?* When the woman comes in trembling, and confessing both her act and success, he clears up his brows, and speaks comfortably to her; *Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.* O sweet and seasonable word, fit for those mercifull and Divine lips; able to secure any heart, to dispell any fears! Still, O Saviour, thou doest thus to us: when we fall down before thee in an awfull dejectedness, thou rearest us up with a chearfull and compassionate encouragement; when thou findest us bold and presumptuous, thou lovest to take us down; when humbled, it is enough to have prostrated us. Like as that Lion of *Bethel* worries the disobedient Prophet, guards the poor *As* that stood quaking before him: Or like some mighty wind, that bears over a tall *Elme* or *Cedar* with the same breath that it raiseth a stooping *Reed*: Or like some good Physician, who, finding the body obstructed and surcharged with ill humours, evacuates it, and when it is sufficiently pulled down, raises it up with sovereign *Cordials*.

And still doe thou so to my Soul; if at any time thou perceivest me stiff and rebellious, ready to face out my sin against thee, spare me not; let me smart, till I relent. But *a broken and contrite heart thou wilt not, O Lord, O Lord, do not reject.*

It is onely thy Word which gives what it requires, comfort and confidence. Had any other shaken her by the shoulder, and cheared her up against those oppressive passions, it had been but waste wind. No voice but his who hath power to remit sin can secure the heart from the conscience of sin, from the pangs of Conscience. *In the midst of the sorrows of my heart, thy comforts, O Lord, thy comforts onely have power to refresh my soul.* Her cure was

Christ's act, yet he gives the praise of it to her; *Thy faith hath made thee whole.* He had said before, *Virtue is gone out from me;* now he acknowledges a virtue inherent in her. It was his virtue that cured her, yet he graciously casts this work upon her Faith. Not that her Faith did it by way of merit, by way of efficiency, but by way of impetration. So much did our Saviour regard that Faith which he had wrought in her, that he will honour it with the success of her Cure. Such and the same is still the remedy of our spiritual diseases, our sins. *By faith we are justified, by faith we are saved.* Thou onely, O Saviour, canst heal us; thou wilt not heal us but by our Faith: not as it issues from us, but as it appropriates thee. The sickness is ours, the remedy is ours: the sickness is our own by nature, the remedy ours by thy grace both working and accepting it. Our Faith is no less from thee then thy Cure is from our Faith.

O happy dismissal, *Go in peace!* How unquiet had this poor Soul formerly been? She had no outward peace with her Neighbours; they shunned and abhorred her presence in this condition; yea they must doe so. She had no peace in Body; that was pained and vexed with so long and foul a disease. Much less had she peace in her Mind, which was grievously disquieted with sorrow for her sickness, with anger and discontentment at her torturing Physicians, with fear of the continuance of so bad a guest. Her Soul (for the present) had no peace, from the sense of her guiltiness in the carriage of this business; from the conceived displeasure of him to whom she came for comfort and redress. At once now doth our Saviour calm all these storms; and in one word and act restores to her peace with her Neighbours, peace in her Self; peace in Body, in Mind, in Soul. *Goe in peace.* Even so, Lord, it was for thee onely, who art the Prince of Peace, to bestow thy peace where thou pleasest. Our body, mind, Soul, estate is thine, whether to afflict, or ease. It is a wonder if all of us do not ail somewhat. In vain shall we speak peace to our selves,

selves, in vain shall the world speak peace to us, except thou say to us, as thou didst to this distressed soul, *Go in peace.*

XXV.

Jairus and his Daughter.

HOW troublesome did the people's importunity seem to *Jairus*? That great man came to sue unto *Jesus* for his dying Daughter; the throng of the multitude intercepted him. Every man is most sensible of his own necessity. It is no straining courtesy in the challenge of our interest in *Christ*: there is no unmannerliness in our strife for the greatest share in his presence and benediction.

That onely Child of this Ruler lay a dying when he came to solicit *Christ's* aid, and was dead whilst he solicited it. There was hope in her sickness; in her extremity there was fear; in her death despair and impossibility (as they thought) of help. *Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master.* When we have to doe with a mere finite power, this word were but just. He was a Prophet no less than a King that said, *Whilst the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall goe to him, but he shall not return to me.* But since thou hast to doe with an omnipotent agent, know now, O thou faithless messenger, that death can be no bar to his power. How well would it have become thee to have said, *Thy daughter is dead; but who can tell whether thy*

God and Saviour will not be gracious to thee that the child may revive? Cannot he, in whose hands are the issues of death, bring her back again?

Here were more Manners than Faith; *Trouble not the Master.* Infidelity is all for ease, and thinks every good work tedious. That which Nature accounts troublesome, is pleasing and delightfull to Grace. Is it any pain for an hungry man to eat? O Saviour, it was thy *meat and drink to doe thy Father's will*; and his will was that thou shouldst bear our griefs and take away our sorrows. It cannot be thy trouble which is our happiness, that we may still sue to thee.

The messenger could not so whisper his ill news, but *Jesus* heard it. *Jairus* hears that he feared, and was now heartless with so sad tidings. He that resolved not to trouble the Master, meant to take so much more trouble to himself, and would now yield to a hopeless sorrow. He whose work it is to comfort the afflicted, rouzeth up the dejected heart of that pensive father; *Fear not, believe onely, and she shall be made whole.* The word was not more chearfull then difficult. *Fear not?* Who can be insensible of so great an evil? Where death hath once seized, who can but doubt he will keep his hold? No less hard was it not to grieve for the loss of an onely Child, then not to fear the continuance of the cause of that grief.

In a perfect Faith there is no Fear: by how much more we fear, by so much less we believe. Well are these two then coupled, *Fear not, believe onely.* O Saviour, if thou didst not command us somewhat beyond Nature, it were no thank to us to obey thee. While the Child was alive, to believe that it might recover, it was no hard task; but now that she was fully dead, to believe she should live again, was a work not easy for *Jairus* to apprehend, though easy for thee to effect: yet must that be believed, else there is no capacity of so great a Mercy. As *Love*, so *Faith is stronger then death*; making those bonds no other then

then (as *Sampson* did his wifes) like threds of tow. How much natural impossibility is there in the return of these Bodies from the dust of their Earth, into which through many degrees of corruption they are at the last mouldred ? Fear not, O my Soul ; believe onely : it must, it shall be done.

The sum of *Jairus* his first suit was for the Health, not for the Resuscitation of his Daughter : now that she was dead, he would, if he durst, have been glad to have asked her Life. And now, behold, our Saviour bids him expect both her Life and her Health ; *Thy daughter shall be made whole* : alive from her death, whole from her disease.

Thou didst not, O *Jairus*, thou daredst not ask so much as thou receivest. How glad wouldst thou have been, since this last news, to have had thy Daughter alive, though weak and sickly ? Now thou shalt receive her not living onely, but sound and vigorous. Thou dost not, O Saviour, measure thy gifts by our petitions, but by our wants and thine own mercies.

This work might have been as easily done by an absent command ; the Power of *Christ* was there whilst himself was away : but he will go personally to the place, that he might be confessed the Authour of so great a Miracle. O Saviour, thou lovest to go to the house of mourning ; thy chief pleasure is the comfort of the afflicted. What a confusion there is in worldly sorrow ? The mother shrieks, the servants cry out, the people make lamentation, the minstrells howl and strike dolefully, so as the ear might question whether the Ditty or the Instrument were more heavy. If ever expressions of sorrow sound well, it is when Death leads the quire. Soon doth our Saviour charm this noise, and turns these unseasonable mourners (whether formal or serious) out of doors. Not that he dislikes Musick, whether to condole or comfort ; but that he had life in his eye, and would have them know that he held

these Funeral ceremonies to be too early and long before their time. *Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.* Had she been dead, she had but slept; now she was not dead, but asleep, because he meant this nap of death should be so short, and her awakening so speedy. Death and Sleep are alike to him, who can cast whom he will into the sleep of Death, and awake when and whom he pleaseth out of that deadly sleep.

Before the people and domesticks of *Jairus* held *Jesus* for a Prophet; now they took him for a Dreamer. *Not dead, but asleep?* They that came to mourn cannot now forbear to laugh. Have we piped at so many Funerals, and seen and lamented so many Corpses, and cannot we distinguish betwixt Sleep and Death? The eyes are set, the breath is gone, the lims are stiff and cold. Who ever died, if she do but sleep? How easily may our Reason or Sense befool us in Divine matters? Those that are competent Judges in natural things, are ready to laugh God to scorn when he speaks beyond their compass; and are by him justly laughed to scorn for their unbelief. Vain and faithless men! as if that unlimited power of the Almighty could not make good his own word; and turn either Sleep into Death, or Death into Sleep, at pleasure. Ere many minutes they shall be ashamed of their error and incredulity.

There were witnesses enough of her death, there shall not be many of her restoring. Three choice Disciples and the two Parents are onely admitted to the view and testimony of this miraculous work. The eyes of those incredulous scoffers were not worthy of this honour. Our infidelity makes us incapable of the secret favours and the highest counsels of the Almighty.

What did these scorers think and say, when they saw him putting the minstrels and people out of doors? Doubtless the maid is but asleep; the man fears lest the noise

noise shall awake her; we must speak and tread softly that we disquiet her not: What will he and his Disciples doe the while? Is it not to be feared they will startle her out of her rest? Those that are shut out from the participation of God's counsells, think all his words and projects no better then foolishness. But art thou, O Saviour, ever the more discouraged by the derision and censure of these scornfull unbelievers? Because fools jeer thee, dost thou forbear thy work? Surely I do not perceive that thou heedest them, save for contempt; or carest more for their words then their silence. It is enough that thine act shall soon honour thee, and convince them. *He took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise; and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.*

How could that touch, that Call be other then effectual? He who made that hand, touched it; and he who shall once say, *Arise, ye dead, said now, Maid, arise.* Death cannot but obey him who is the Lord of life. The Soul is ever equally in his hand who is the God of Spirits: it cannot but go and come at his command. When he says, *Maid, arise,* the now-dissolved spirit knows his office, his place, and instantly re-assumes that room which by his appointment it had left.

O Saviour, if thou do but bid my Soul to arise from the death of Sin, it cannot lie still; if thou bid my Body to arise from the grave, my Soul cannot but glance down from her Heaven, and animate it. In vain shall my sin or my grave offer to withhold me from thee.

The Maid revives: not now to languish for a time upon her sick-bed, and by some faint degrees to gather an insensible strength; but at once she arises from her death and from her couch; at once she puts off her fever with her dissolution; she finds her life and her feet at once; at once she finds her feet and her stomach. *He commanded to give her meat.* Omnipotency doth not use to go the pace of Nature. All God's immediate works are (like him-

himself) perfect. He that raised her supernaturally, could have so fed her. It was never the purpose of his Power, to put ordinary Means out of office.

XXVI.

*The Motion of the two fiery Disciples
repelled.*

THE time drew now on wherein *Jesus* must be received up. He must take death in his way. *Calvary* is in his passage to mount *Olivet*. He must be lift up to the Cross, thence to climb into his Heaven. Yet this comes not into mention; as if all the thought of *Death* were *swallowed up* in this *Victory* over *Death*. Neither, O Saviour, is it otherwise with us, the weak members of thy mystical body: We must die, we shall be glorified. What if *Death* stand before us? we look beyond him at that transcendent *Glory*. How should we be dismay'd with that pain which is attended with a blessed *Immortality*?

The strongest receipt against *Death* is the happy estate that follows it; next to that is the fore-expectation of it and resolution against it. *He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem: Jerusalem* the nest of his enemies, the Amphitheater of his conflicts, the fatal place of his death. Well did he know the plots and ambushes that were there laid for him, and the bloody issue of those designs: yet he will go, and goes resolved for the worst. It is a sure and wise way to send our thoughts before us, to grapple with those evils which we know

know must be incountred. The enemy is half overcome that is well prepared for. The strongest mischief may be outfaced with a seasonable fore-resolution.

There can be no greater disadvantage then the suddenness of a surprisall. O God, what I have not the power to avoid, let me have the wisdom to expect.

The way from *Galilee* to *Judea* lay through the Region of *Samaria*, if not through the City. *Christ* now towards the end of his Preaching could not but be attended with a multitude of followers : It was necessary there should be purveyours and harbingers to procure lodgings and provision for so large a troupe. Some of his own retinue are addressed to this service : they seek not for palaces and delicates, but for house-room and victuals. It was He whose the earth was and the fulness thereof, whose the Heavens are and the mansions therein ; yet He, who could have commanded Angels, sues to *Samaritans* : He that filled and comprehended Heaven, sendeth for shelter in a *Samaritan* Cottage. It was thy choice, O Saviour, to take upon thee the shape, not of a Prince, but of a Servant. How can we either neglect means, or despise homeliness, when thou the God of all the World wouldst stoop to the suit of so poor a provision ?

We know well in what terms the *Samaritans* stood with the *Jews* ; so much more hostile as they did more symbolize in matter of Religion : no Nations were mutually so hatefull to each other. A *Samaritan's* bread was no better then Swines-flesh ; their very fire and water was not more grudged then infectious. The looking towards *Jerusalem* was here cause enough of repulse. No enmity is so desperate as that which arises from matter of Religion. Agreement in some points, when there are differences in the main, doth but advance hatred the more.

It is not more strange to hear the Son of God sue

for a lodging, then to hear him repelled. Upon so churlish a denial, the two angry Disciples return to their Master on a fiery errand; *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, as Elias did?*

The *Sons of Thunder* would be lightning straight; their zeal, whether as kinsmen or Disciples, could not brook so harsh a refusal. As they were naturally more hot than their fellows, so now they thought their Piety bade them be impatient.

Yet they dare not but begin with leave, *Master, wilt thou?* His will must lead theirs; their choler cannot drive their wills before his: all their motion is from him onely. True Disciples are like those artificiall engines which goe no otherwise than they are set; or like little Children, that speak nothing but what they are taught. O Saviour, if we have wills of our own, we are not thine. Do thou set me as thou wouldst have me goe; do thou teach me what thou wouldst have me say or doe.

A mannerly preface leads in a faulty suit; *Master, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them?* Faulty, both in presumption, and in desire of private revenge. I do not hear them say, *Master, will it please thee, who art the sole Lord of the Heavens and the Elements, to command fire from Heaven upon these men?* but, *Wilt thou that we command?* As if, because they had power given them over diseases and unclean spirits, therefore Heaven and Earth were in their managing. How easily might they be mistaken? Their large commission had the just limits. Subjects that have munificent grants from their Princes can challenge nothing beyond the words of their Patent. And if the fetching down fire from Heaven were less than the dispossessing of Devils, (since the Devil shall inable the Beast to doe thus much,) yet how possible is it to doe the greater and stick at the less,

less, where both depend upon a delegated power? The Magicians of *Ægypt* could bring forth Frogs and Bloud; they could not bring Lice: ordinary Corruption can doe that which they could not.

It is the fashion of our bold Nature, upon an inch given, to challenge an ell; and where we find our selves graced with some abilities, to flatter our selves with the faculty of more.

I grant, Faith hath done as great things as ever Presumption undertook; but there is great difference in the enterprises of both. The one hath a warrant, either by instinct, or express command; the other none at all. Indeed, had these two Disciples either meant, or said, Master, if it be thy pleasure to command us to call down fire from Heaven, we know thy word shall enable us to doe what thou requirest; if the words be ours, the power shall be thine; this had been but holy, modest, faithfull: but if they supposed there needed nothing save a leave onely, and that (might they be but let loose) they could go alone, they presumed, they offended.

Yet had they thus overshoot themselves in some pious and charitable motion, the fault had been the less: now the act had in it both cruelty, and private revenge. Their zeal was not worthy of more praise, then their fury of censure. That fire should fall down from Heaven upon men, is a fearfull thing to think of, and that which hath not been often done. It was done in the case of *Sodome*, when those five unclean Cities burned with the unnatural fire of hellish Lust: it was done two severall times at the suit of *Elijah*: it was done (in an height of triall) to that great pattern of Patience. I find it no more, and tremble at these I find.

But besides the dreadfulness of the judgment it self, who can but quake at the thought of the suddenness of this destruction, which sweeps away both Body and Soul in a state

of unpreparation, of unrepentance ; so as this fire should but begin a worse, this Heavenly flame should but kindle that of Hell ?

Thus unconceivably heavy was the revenge : but what was the offence ? We have learned not to think any indignity light that is offered to the Son of God ; but we know these spiritual affronts are capable of degrees. Had these *Samaritans* reviled *Christ* and his train, had they violently assaulted him, had they followed him with stones in their hands and blasphemies in their mouths, it had been a just provocation of so horrible a vengeance : Now the wrong was onely negative, *they received him not* : And that, not out of any particular quarrel or dislike of his Person, but of his Nation onely ; the men had been welcome, had not their Country distasted. All the charge that I hear our Saviour give to his Disciples in case of their rejection is, *If they receive you not, shake off the dust of your feet*. Yet this was amongst their own, and when they went on that sacred errand of publishing the Gospel of Peace. These were strangers from the commonwealth of *Israel*. This measure was not to Preachers, but to Travellers ; onely a meer inhospitality to disliked guests. Yet no less revenge will serve them then fire from Heaven.

I dare say for you, ye holy sons of *Zebedee*, it was not your spleen, but your zeal, that was guilty of so bloody a suggestion : your indignation could not but be stirred to see the great Prophet and Saviour of the world so unkindly repelled : yet all this will not excuse you from a rash Cruelty, from an inordinate Rage.

Even the best heart may easily be miscarried with a well-meant Zeal. No affection is either more necessary, or better accepted. Love to any Object cannot be severed from hatred of the contrary : whence it is that all creatures which have the concupiscible part, have also the irascible adjoynd unto it. Anger and displeasure is not so much

an enemy, as a guardian and champion of Love. Whoever therefore is rightly affected to his Saviour, cannot but find much regret at his wrongs. O gracious and divine Zeal, the kindly warmth and vital temper of Piety, whither hast thou withdrawn thy self from the cold hearts of men? Or is this according to the just constitution of the old and decrepit age of the world, into which we are fallen? How many are there that think there is no wisdom but in a dull indifferency; and chuse rather to freeze than burn? How quick and apprehensive are men in cases of their own indignities? how insensible of their Saviour's?

But there is nothing so ill as the corruption of the best. Rectified zeal is not more commendable and usefull, than inordinate and misguided is hatefull and dangerous. Fire is a necessary and beneficial element; but if it be once misplaced, and have caught upon the beams of our houses or stacks of our corn, nothing can be more direfull.

Thus sometimes Zeal turns Murther, (*They that kill you shall think they doe God service,*) sometimes Phrensie, sometimes rude Indiscretion. Wholsome and blessed is that Zeal that is well grounded and well governed: grounded upon the word of Truth, not upon unstable fancies; governed by Wisdom and Charity: Wisdom, to avoid rashness and excess; Charity, to avoid just offence.

No motion can want a pretence. *Elias* did so; why not we? He was an holy Prophet: the occasion, the place abluces not much: there wrong was offered to a servant, here to his Master; there to a man, here to a God and man. If *Elias* then did it, why not we? There is nothing more perillous then to draw all the actions of Holy men into examples: For as the best men have their weaknesses; so they are not privileged from letting fall unjustifiable actions. Besides that, they may have had perhaps peculiar warrants signed from Heaven, whether by instinct, or special command, which we shall expect in vain. There must

be much caution used in our imitation of the best patterns, (whether in respect of the persons, or things;) else we shall make our selves Apes, and our acts sinfull absurdities.

It is a rare thing for our Saviour to find fault with the errors of zeal, even where have appeared sensible weaknesses. If *Moses* in a sacred rage and indignation brake the Tables written with God's own hand, I find him not checked. Here our meek Saviour turns back, and frowns upon his furious suitours, and takes them up roundly; *Ye know not of what spirit ye are.* The faults of uncharitableness cannot be swallowed up in zeal. If there were any colour to hide the blemishes of this disposition, it should be this crimson die. But he that needs not our Lie, will let us know he needs not our Injury; and hates to have a good cause supported by the violation of our Charity. We have no reason to disclaim our Passions: Even the Son of God chides sometimes, yea where he loves. It offends not that our Affections are moved, but that they are inordinate.

It was a sharp word, *Ye know not of what spirit ye are.* Another man would not perhaps have felt it; a Disciple doth. Tender hearts are galled with that which the carnal mind slighteth. The spirit of *Elias* was that which they meant to assume and imitate: they shall now know their mark was mistaken. How would they have hated to think that any other but God's Spirit had stirréd them up to this passionate motion? now they shall know it was wrought by that ill spirit whom they professed to hate.

It is far from the good Spirit of God to stir up any man to private revenge or thirst of bloud. Not an Eagle, but a Dove, was the shape wherein he chose to appear. Neither wouldst thou, O God, be in the whirlwind, or in the fire, but in the soft voice. O Saviour, what do we seek for any precedent but thine, whose name we challenge?

Thou

Thou *camest to thine own*, thine own received thee not. Didst thou call for fire from Heaven upon them? didst thou not rather send down water from thy compassionate eyes, and weep for them by whom thou must bleed? Better had it been for us never to have had any spirit, than any but thine. We can be no other then wicked, if our mercies be cruelty.

But is it the name of *Elias* (O ye Zelots) which ye pretend for a colour of your impotent desire? Ye do not consider the difference betwixt his Spirit and yours. His was extraordinary and heroical, besides the instinct or secret command of God for this act of his; far otherwise is it with you, who by a carnal distemper are moved to this furious suggestion. Those that would imitate God's Saints in singular actions must see they go upon the same grounds. Without the same Spirit and the same warrant it is either a mockery or a sin to make them our Copies. *Elias* is no fit pattern for Disciples, but their Master. *The Son of man came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*

Then are our actions and intentions warrantable and praise-worthy, when they accord with his. O Saviour, when we look into those sacred Acts and monuments of thine, we find many a life which thou preservedst from perishing, some that had perished by thee recalled; never any by thee destroyed. Onely one poor fig-tree (as the reall Emblem of thy severity to the unfruitfull) was blasted and withered by thy curse. But to man, how ever favourable and indulgent wert thou? So repelled as thou wert, so reviled, so persecuted, laid for, sold, betrayed, apprehended, arraigned, condemned, crucified; yet what one man didst thou strike dead for these hainous indignities? Yea, when one of thine enemies lost but an ear in that ill quarrel, thou gavest that ear to him who came to take life from thee. I find some whom thou didst scourge and correct, as the sacrilegious money-changers; none whom thou killedst. Not that thou either lovest not, or requirest

requirest not the duly severe execution of justice. Whose sword is it that Princes bear but thine? Offenders must smart and bleed. This is a just sequel, but not the intention of thy coming; thy will, not thy drift.

Good Princes make wholesome Laws for the well-ordering of their people: there is no authority without due coercion. The violation of these good Laws is followed with death, whose end was preservation, life, order: and this not so much for revenge of an offence past, as for prevention of future mischief.

How can we then enough love and praise thy mercy, *O thou preserver of men?* How should we imitate thy saving and beneficent disposition towards mankind, as knowing, the more we can help to save, the nearer we come to thee that camest to save all; and the more destructive we are, the more we resemble him who is *Abaddon*, a murtherer from the beginning?

XXVII.

The Ten Lepers.

THE *Samaritans* were tainted, not with Schism, but Heresie, but Paganism; our Saviour yet balks them not, but makes use of the way as it lies, and bestows upon them the courtesie of some Miracles. Some kind of commerce is lawfull even with those without. Terms of intireness and leagues of inward amity are here unfit, unwarrantable, dangerous; but civil respects, and wise uses of them for our convenience or necessity, need not, must not be forborn.

Ten Lepers are here met : those that are excluded from all other society seek the company of each other. Fellowship is that we all naturally affect, though even in Leprosy. Ever Lepers will flock to their fellows : where shall we find one spiritual Leper alone ? Drunkards, Profane persons, Hereticks will be sure to consort with their matches. Why should not God's Saints delight in an holy communion ? Why is it not our chief joy to assemble in good ?

Jews and *Samaritans* could not abide one another, yet here in Leprosy they accord ; here was one *Samaritan* Leper with the *Jewish* : community of passion hath made them friends, whom even Religion disjoyned. What virtue there is in misery, that can unite even the most estranged hearts ?

I seek not mystery in the number. These Ten are met together, and all meet *Christ* : not casually, but upon due deliberation ; they purposely waited for this opportunity. No marvel if they thought no attendance long to be delivered from so loathsome and miserable a disease. Great *Naaman* could be glad to come from *Syria* to *Judea*, in hope of leaving that hatefull guest behind him. We are all sensible enough of our bodily infirmities. Oh that we could be equally weary of the sicknesses and deformities of our better part. Surely our spiritual maladies are no less then mortal, if they be not healed ; neither can they heal alone. These men had died Lepers if they had not met with *Christ*.

O Saviour, give us grace to seek thee, and patience to wait for thee ; and then we know thou wilt find us, and we remedy.

Where do these Lepers attend for *Christ* but in a village : and that, not in the street of it, but in the entrance, in the passage to it ? The Cities, the Towns were not for them ; the Law of God had shut them out from all frequency, from all conversation. Care of safety

and fear of infection was motive enough to make their neighbours observant of this piece of the Law. It is not the body onely that is herein respected by the God of Spirits. Those that are spiritually contagious must be still and ever avoided; they must be separated from us, we must be separated from them: they from us, by just censures; or (if that be neglected) we from them, by a voluntary declination of their familiar conversation. Besides the benefit of our safety, wickedness would soon be ashamed of it self, if it were not for the encouragement of companions. Solitariness is the fittest antidote for spiritual infection. It were happy for the wicked man, if he could be separated from himself.

These Lepers that came to seek *Christ*, yet finding him, they stand afar off; whether for reverence, or for security. God had enacted this distance. It was their charge, if they were occasioned to pass through the streets, to cry out, *I am unclean*. It was no less then their duty to proclaim their own infectiousness: there was not danger onely, but sin in their approach.

How happy were it, if in those wherein there is more perill, there were more remoteness, less silence? O God, we are all Lepers to thee, overspread with the loathsome scurf of our own corruptions: It becomes us well, in the conscience of our shame and vileness, to stand afar off. We cannot be too awfull of thee, too much ashamed of our selves.

Yet these men, though they be far off in the distance of place, yet they are near in respect of the acceptance of their Prayer.

The Lord is near unto all that call upon him in truth. O Saviour, whilst we are far off from thee, thou art near unto us. Never dost thou come so close to us, as when in an holy bashfulness we stand farthest off. Justly dost thou expect we should be at once bold and bashfull. How boldly should we come to the throne of Grace, in respect of the
grace

grace of that throne? how fearfully, in respect of the awfulness of the Majesty of that throne, and that unworthiness which we bring with us into that dreadfull presence?

He that stands near may whisper; but he that stands afar off must cry aloud: so did these Lepers. Yet not so much distance as passion strained their throats. That which can give voice to the Dumb, can much more give loudness to the Vocall.

All cried together: these ten voices were united in one sound, that their conjoynd forces might expugn that Gracious ear. Had every man spoken singly for himself, this had made no noise, neither yet any shew of a fervent importunity: Now, as they were all affected with one common disease, so they all set out their throats together, and (though *Jews* and *Samaritans*) agree in one joynt supplication. Even where there are ten tongues, the word is but one; that the condescendent may be universal. When we would obtain common favours, we may not content our selves with private and solitary Devotions, but must joyn our spiritual forces together, and set upon God by troupes. *Two are better then one; because they have a good reward for their labour.* No faithfull Prayer goes away unrecompensed: but where many good hearts meet, the retribution must be needs answerable to the number of the petitioners. O holy and happy violence that is thus offered to Heaven! How can we want Blessings, when so many cords draw them down upon our heads?

It was not the sound, but the matter, that carried it with *Christ*: if the sound were shrill, the matter was faithfull; *Jesu Master, have mercy upon us.* No word can better become the mouth of the miserable. I see not where we can meet with fitter patterns. Surely, they were not verier Lepers then we: why do we not imitate them in their actions, who are too like them in our condition? Whither should we seek but to our *Jesus*? How should we

stand aloof in regard of our own wretchedness? how should we lift up our voice in the fervour of our supplications? what should we rather sue for than mercy? *Jesus Master, have mercy upon us.*

O gracious prevention of mercy, both had and given ere it can be asked! *Jesus*, when he saw them, said, *Go shew your selves to the Priests.* Their disease is cured ere it can be complained of; their shewing to the Priest presupposes them whole; whole in his grant, though not in their own apprehension. That single Leper that came to *Christ* before (*Matt. 8. Luk. 5.*) was first cured in his own sense; and then was bid to goe to the Priest for approbation of the Cure. It was not so with these, who are sent to the Judges of Leprosy, with an intention they shall in the way find themselves healed. There was a different purpose in both these: In the one, that the perfection of the Cure might be convinced, and seconded with a due sacrifice; in the other, that the Faith of the Patients might be tried in the way; which if it had not held as strong in the prosecution of their suit as in the beginning, had (I doubt) failed of the effect. How easily might these Lepers think, "Alas! to what purpose is this? Shew our selves to the Priests? What can their eyes doe? They can judge whether it be cured, (which we see yet it is not) they cannot cure it. This is not now to doe: We have been seen enough, and loathed. What can their eyes see more than our own? We had well hoped that *Jesus* would have vouchsafed to call us to him, and to lay his hands upon us, and to have healed us. These thoughts had kept them Lepers still. Now shall their Faith and Obedience be proved by their submission both to this sudden command, and that Divine ordination.

That former Leper was charged to shew himself to the chief Priest, these to the Priests; either would serve: the original command runs, either to *Aaron*, or to one of his Sons. But why to them? Leprosy was a bodily sickness; what

what is this to spiritual persons? Wherefore serve Physicians, if the Priests must meddle with diseases? We never shall find those Sacred persons to pass their judgement upon Fevers, Dropsies, Palsies, or any other bodily distemper: neither should they on this, were it not that this affection of the body is joynd with a Legall uncleanness. Not as a sickness, but as an impurity must it come under their cognisance: neither this, without a farther implication. Who but the successours of the Legall Priesthood are proper to judge of the uncleanneses of the Soul? Whether an act be sinfull, or in what degree it is such; what grounds are sufficient for the comfortable assurance of Repentance, of forgiveness; what courses are fittest to avoid the danger of relapses, who is so like to know, so meet to judge, as our Teachers? Would we in these cases consult oster with our spiritual Guides, and depend upon their faithfull advices and well-grounded absolutions, it were safer, it were happier for us. Oh the dangerous extremity of our wisdom! Our hood-wink'd Progenitours would have no eyes but in the heads of their ghostly Fathers: We think our selves so quick-sighted, that we pity the blindness of our able Teachers; none but our selves are fit to judge of our own Leprosie.

Neither was it onely the peculiar judgement of the Priest that was here intended, but the thankfulness of the Patient: that by the sacrifice which he should bring with him, he might give God the glory of his sanation. O God, whomsoever thou curest of this spiritual Leprosie, it is reason he should present thee with the true Evangelical sacrifices, not of his praises onely, but of himself, which are *reasonable and living*. We are still leprous if we do not first see our selves foul, and then find our selves thankfully serviceable.

The Lepers did not, would not go of themselves, but are sent by *Christ: Goe and shew your selves*. And why sent by him? Was it in obedience to the Law? was it out

of respect to the Priesthood? was it for prevention of cavills? was it for conviction of gain-sayers? or was it for confirmation of the Miracle? *Christ* that was above the Law would not transgress it; he knew this was his charge by *Moses*. How justly might he have dispensed with his own? but he will not: though the Law doth not bind the Maker, he will voluntarily bind himself. He was within the ken of his *Consummatum est*; yet would not anticipate that approaching end, but holds the Law on foot till his last pace. This was but a branch of the Ceremonial; yet would he not slight it, but in his own person gives example of a studious observation.

How carefully should we submit our selves to the Royall laws of our Creatour, to the wholesome laws of our Superiours, whilst the Son of God would not but be so punctual in a Ceremony?

Whilst I look to the Persons of those Priests, I see nothing but corruption, nothing but professed hostility to the true *Messiah*. All this cannot make thee, O Saviour, to remit any point of the observance due to their places. Their Function was sacred, whatever their Persons were: though they have not the grace to give thee thy due, thou wilt not fail to give them theirs. How justly dost thou expect all due regard to thine Evangelicall Priesthood, who gavest so curious respect to the Legall? It were shame the Synagogue should be above the Church; or that Priesthood which thou meantest speedily to abrogate, should have more honour then that which thou meantest to establish and perpetuate.

Had this duty been neglected, what clamours had been raised by his emulous adversaries? what scandalls? though the fault had been the Patient's, not the Physician's. But they that watched *Christ* so narrowly, and were apt to take so poor exceptions at his Sabbath-cures, at the unwasht hands of his Disciples, how much more would they have calumniated him if by his neglect the Law of Leprosie had been

been palpably transgressed? Not onely evil must be avoided, but offence; and that not on our parts, but on others. That offence is ours, which we might have remedied.

What a noble and irrefragable testimony was this to the power, to the truth of the *Messiah*? How can these *Jews* but either believe, or be made inexcusable in not believing? When they shall see so many Lepers come at once to the Temple, all cured by a secret will, without word or touch, how can they chuse but say, This work is supernatural; no limited power could doe this? How is he not God, if his power be infinite? Their own eyes shall be witnesses and judges of their own conviction.

The Cure is done by *Christ* more exquisitely then by Art or Nature; yet it is not publickly assured and acknowledged, till according to the *Mosaicall* Law certain subsequent rites be performed. There is no admittance into the Congregation, but by sprinkling of bloud. O Saviour, we can never be ascertained of our cleansing from that spirituall Leprosie wherewith our Souls are tainted, but by the sprinkling of thy most precious bloud: *wash us* with that, *and we shall be whiter then snow*. This act of shewing to the Priest was not more required by the Law then pre-required of those Lepers by our Saviour, for the triall of their Obedience. Had they now stood upon terms with *Christ*, and said, We will first see what cause there will be to shew our selves to the Priests; they need not see our Leprie, we shall be glad they should see our Cure: do thou work that which we shall shew, and bid us shew what thou hast wrought: till then excuse us: it is our grief and shame to be seen too much; they had been still Lepers.

It hath been ever God's wont by small Precepts to prove mens dispositions. Obedience is as well tried in a trifle, as in the most important charge; yea so much more, as the thing required is less: for oft-times those who would be carefull in main affairs, think they may neglect the smallest.

left. What command soever we receive from God or our Superiours, we must not scan the weight of the thing, but the authority of the commander. Either difficulty or slightness are vain pretences for Disobedience.

These Lepers are wiser; they obeyed, and went. What was the issue? *As they went, they were healed.* Lo, had they stood still, they had been Lepers; now they went, they are whole. What haste the Blessing makes to overtake their Obedience? This walk was required by the very Law, if they should have found themselves healed: what was it to prevent the time a little, and to doe that sooner upon hopes which upon sense they must doe after? The horror of the Disease adds to the grace of the Cure; and that is so much more gracious as the task is easier: It shall cost them but a walk. It is the bounty of that God whom we serve, to reward our worthless endeavours with infinite requitals. He would not have any proportion betwixt our acts and his remunerations.

Yet besides this recompence of Obedience, O Saviour, thou wouldst herein have respect to thine own just Glory. Had not these Lepers been cured in the way, but in the end of their walk, upon their shewing to the Priests, the Miracle had lost much light: perhaps the Priests would have challenged it to themselves, and have attributed it to their prayers; perhaps the Lepers might have thought it was thy purpose to honour the Priests as the instruments of that marvellous Cure. Now there can be no colour of any others participation, since the Leprosie vanishes in the way. As thy Power, so thy Praise admits of no partners.

And now, methinks, I see what an amazed joy there was amongst these Lepers, when they saw themselves thus suddenly cured: each tells other what a change he feels in himself; each comforts other with the assurance of his outward clearness; each congratulates other's happiness, and thinks, and says how joyfull this news will be to their friends

friends and families. Their society now serves them well to applaud and heighten their new felicity.

The Miracle, indifferently wrought upon all, is differently taken. All went forward (according to the appointment) toward the Priests, all were obedient; one onely was thankfull. All were cured, all saw themselves cured: their sense was alike, their hearts were not alike. What could make the difference but Grace? and who could make the difference of Grace but he that gave it? He that wrought the Cure in all, wrought the Grace not in all, but in one. The same act, the same motives, are not equally powerfull to all: where the Oxe finds grass, the Viper poison. We all pray, all hear; one goes away bettered, another cavils. Will makes the difference; but who makes the difference of wills but he that made them? He that creates the new Heart, leaves a stone in one bosome, puts flesh into another. *It is not in him that willetth nor in him that runneth, but in God that hath mercy.* O God, if we look not up to thee, we may come and not be healed; we may be healed, and not be thankfull.

This one man bréaks away from his fellows to seek *Christ*. Whilst he was a Leper, he consorted with Lepers; now that he is healed, he will be free. He saith not, I came with these men, with them I will goe; if they will return, I will accompany them; if not, what should I goe alone? As I am not wiser then they, so I have no more reason to be more thankfull. There are cases wherein Singularity is not lawfull onely, but laudable. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe evil. I and my house will serve the Lord.* It is a base and unworthy thing for a man so to subject himself to others examples, as not sometimes to resolve to be an example to others. When either evil is to be done, or good neglected, how much better is it to goe the right way alone, then to erre with company?

O noble pattern of Thankfulness! what speed of retribution is here? No sooner doth he see his Cure, then he hafts

to acknowledge it: the Benefit shall not die, not sleep in his hand. Late professions of our obligations favour of dulness and ingratitude. What a laborious and diligent officiousness is here? He stands not still, but puts himself to the pains of a return. What an hearty recognition of the blessing? His voice was not more loud in his suit then in his thanks. What an humble reverence of his Benefactour? He falls down at his feet, as acknowledging at once beneficence and unworthiness. It were happy for all *Israel*, if they could but learn of this *Samaritan*.

This man is sent with the rest to the Priests. He well knew this duty a branch of the Law of Ceremonies, which he meant not to neglect: but his heart told him there was a Moral duty of professing thankfulness to his Benefactour, which called for his first attendence. First therefore he turns back, ere he will stir forward. Reason taught this *Samaritan* (and us in him) that ceremony must yield to substance, and that main points of Obedience ought to take place of all Ritually complements.

It is not for nothing that note is made of the Countrey of this thankfull Leper; *He was a Samaritan*: The place is known and branded with the infamy of a Paganish misreligion. Outward disadvantage of place or parentage cannot block up the way of God's Grace and free election; as contrarily the privileges of birth and nature avail us nothing in spirituall occasions.

How sensible wert thou, O Saviour, of thine own beneficence? *Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?* The trouping of these Lepers together did not hinder thy reckoning. It is both justice and wisdom in thee to keep a strict account of thy favours. There is an wholesome and usefull art of forgetfulness in us men, both of Benefits done, and of Wrongs offered. It is not so with God. Our injuries indeed he soon puts over, making it no small part of his style, that he *forgives iniquities*: but
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for his mercies, there is no reason he should forget them; they are worthy of more then our memory. His favours are universal over all his works; there is no creature that taſts not of his bounty; his Sun and Rain are for others beſides his friends: but none of his good turns eſcapes either his knowledge or record. Why ſhould not we (O God) keep a book of our receipts from thee, which agreeing with thine may declare thee bounteous, and us thankfull?

Our Saviour doth not ask this by way of doubt, but of exprobration. Full well did he count the ſteps of thoſe abſent Lepers; he knew where they were; he upbraids their ingratitude, that they were not where they ſhould have been. It was thy juſt quarrel, O Saviour, that whilſt one *Samaritan* returned, nine *Iſraelites* were healed and returned not. Had they been all *Samaritans*, this had been faulty; but now they were *Iſraelites*, their Ingratitude was more foul then their Leproſy. The more we are bound to God, the more ſhamefull is our unthankfulneſs. There is ſcarce one in ten that is carefull to give God his own: this neglect is not more general then diſpleaſing. *Chriſt* had never miſſed their preſence, if their abſence had not been hatefull and injurious.

XXVIII.

The Pool of Bethesda.

Otherwhere ye may look long, and ſee no Miracle; but here behold two Miracles in one view: the former, of the Angel curing Diſeaſes; the latter, of the God of Angels, viz. *Chriſt Jeſus*, preventing the Angel in his

Cure. Even the first *Christ* wrought by the Angel; the second immediately by himself. The first is incomparable, for, (as *Montanus* truly observes) there is no one *miraculum perpetuum* but this one, in the whole Book of God. Be content to spend this hour with me in the Porches of *Bethesda*, and consider with me the Topography, the Aitiology, the Chronography of this Miracle. These three limit our speech and your patient attention. The Chronography (which is first in place and time) offers us two heads: 1. a Feast of the *Jews*; 2. *Christ* going up to the Feast. The *Jews* were full of Holy-days, both of God's institution and the Church's. Of God's, both weekly, monthly, anniversary. Weekly, that one of seven, which I would to God we had learned of them to keep better. In this regard it was that *Seneca* said, the *Jews* did *Septimam atatis partem perdere, lose the seventh part of their life*. Monthly, the New moons, *Numb.* 18. Anniversary, Easter, Pentecost, and the September-feasts. The Church's, both the *Purim* by *Mardocheus*; and the *Encania* by *Judas Maccabeus*; which yet *Christ* honoured by his solemnization, *John* 10. Surely God did this for the cheerfulness of his people in his service: hence the Church hath laudably imitated this example. To have no Feasts, is sullen: to have too many, is Paganish and Superstitious. Neither would God have cast the Christian Easter upon the just time of the *Jewish* Pasch, and their Whitfontide upon the *Jewish* Pentecost, if he would not have had these Feasts continued. And why should the Christian Church have less power than the *Jewish* Synagogue? Here was not a mere Feriation, but a Feasting; they must appear before God *cum muneribus with gifts*. The tenth part of their increase must be spent upon the three solemn Feasts, besides their former tithes to *Levi*, *Deut.* 14. 23. There was no Holy-day wherein they feasted above six hours; and in some of them Tradition urged them to their quantities of drink: And *David*,
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when he would keep holy-day to the Ark, allows every *Israélite* a cake of bread, a piece of flesh, a bottle of wine; not a dry dinner, (*prandium caninum*) not a meer drinking, of wine without meat, but to make up a perfect feast, Bread, Flesh, Wine, 2 *Sam.* 6. The true *Purims* of this Island are those two Feasts of *August* and *November*. He is no true *Israélite* that keeps them not, as the days which the Lord hath made. When are joy and triumphs seasonable if not at Feasts? but not excess. Pardon me, I know not how Feasts are kept at the Court: but, as *Job*, when he thought of the banquets of his Sons, says, *It may be they have sinned*; so let me speak at peradventures, If sensuall immoderation should have set her foot into these Christian Feasts, let me at least say with indulgent *Eli*, *Non est bona fama, filii, It is no good report, my sons.* Do ye think that *S. Paul's* rule, *Non in comessationibus & ebrietate, not in surfeiting and drunkenness*, was for work-days onely? The *Jews* had a conceit, that on their Sabbath and Feast-days the Devils fled from their Cities *ad montes umbrosos, to the shady mountains.* Let it not be said, that on our Christian Feasts they should *è montibus aulam petere*: and that he seeks, and finds not, *loca arida, but madida.* God forbid that Christians should sacrifice to *Bacchus* in stead of the ever-living God: and that on the day when you should have been blown up by treacherous fire from earth to Heaven, you should fetch down the fire of God's anger from Heaven upon you by swilling and surfeits: God forbid. God's service is *unum necessarium, one thing necessary*, saith *Christ.* *Homo ebrius, superflua creatura, A drunken man is a superfluous creature*; saith *Ambrose.* How ill do those two agree together? This I have been bold to say out of caution, not of reproof.

Thus much, that there was a Feast of the *Jews.* Now, what Feast it was, is questionable: whether the Pasch, as *Ireneus*, and *Beza* with him, thinks, upon the warrant of *John* 4. 35. where our Saviour had said, *Yet four months,*

and then comes harvest: or whether Pentecost, which was fifty days from the shaking of the sheaf, (that was Easter Sunday) as *Cyrril*; *Chrysoſtome*, *Theophylact*, *Euthymius*, and some later: or whether one of the *September Feaſts*, as some others. The excellency of the Feaſt makes for Easter, the Feaſt *καὶ ἑξοχῶ* the number of Interpreters for Pentecost; the number of Feaſts for *September*. For as God delighted in the number of Seven, the seventh day was holy, the seventh year, the seventh seventh year: so he shewed it in the seventh month, which reserves his number still, *September*; the first day whereof was the Sabbath of Trumpets, the tenth *dies expiationum*, and on the fifteenth began the Feaſt of Tabernacles for seven days. It is an idleness to seek that which we are never the better when we have found. What if Easter? what if Tabernacles? what if Pentecost? what loss, what gain is this? *Magnâ nos molestiâ Joannes liberâſſet, si unum adjecisset verbum*; *John had eased us of much trouble, if he had added but one word*, saith *Maldonat*. But for us, God give them sorrow which love it: this is one of Saint *Paul's διαπραγματεῖαι*, *vain disputations*, that he forbids his *Timothy*; yea, (which is the subject thereof) one of them which he calls *μωροὶ καὶ ἀπαιδῶδες ζητήσεις*, *foolish and unlearned questions*, *2 Tim. 2. 23.* *Quantum mali facit nimia subtilitas?* *How much mischief is done by too much subtility?* saith *Seneca*. These are for some idle Cloisterers, that have nothing to doe but to pick straws in Divinity: Like to *Appian* the Grammarian, that with long discourse would pick out of *Homer's* first verse of his *Iliads*, and the first word, (*μῆνιν*) the number of the books of *Iliads* and *Odyſſes*; or like *Didymus χαλκόντιος*, that spent some of his four thousand books about, which was *Homer's* Country, who was *Aeneas's* true mother, what the age of *Hecuba*, how long it was betwixt *Homer* and *Orpheus*; or those wise Criticks of whom *Seneca* speaks, that spend whole volumes, whether *Homer* or *Hesiod* were the elder. *Non profuturam scientiam tradunt,*
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They went an unprofitable skill, as he said. Let us be content with the learned ignorance of what God hath concealed; and know, that what he hath concealed, will not avail us to know.

Rather let us inquire why *Christ* would go up to the Feast. I find two silken cords that drew him up thither. 1. His Obedience. 2. His desire of manifesting his Glory.

First, It was a generall Law, All males must appear thrice a year before the Lord. Behold, he was the God whom they went up to worship at the Feast; yet he goes up to worship. He began his life in Obedience, when he came into his Mother's belly to *Bethlehem* at the taxation of *Augustus*, and so he continues it. He knew his due. *Of whom do the Kings of the earth receive tribute? of their own, or of strangers? Then their Sons are free.* Yet he that would pay tribute to *Cæsar*, will also pay this tribute of Obedience to his Father. He that was above the Law, yields to the Law: *Legi. satisfacere voluit, etsi non sub Lege, He would satisfie the Law, though he were not under the Law.* The Spirit of God says, *He learned obedience in that he suffered.* Surely also he taught Obedience in that he did. This was his *ωφέπρω ἐστὶ* to *John Baptist*, *It becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.* He will not abate his Father one Ceremony. It was dangerous to go up to that *Jerusalem* which he had left before, for their malice: yet now he will up again. His Obedience drew him up to that bloody Feast, wherein himself was sacrificed; how much more now, that he might sacrifice? What can we plead to have learned of *Christ*, if not his first Lesson, Obedience? The same proclamation that *Gedeon* made to *Israel*, he makes still to us, *As ye see me doe, so doe ye.* Whatsoever therefore God enjoyns us, either immediately by himself, or mediately by his Deputies, if we will be Christians, we must so observe, as those that know themselves bound to tread in his steps that said, *In the volume of thy book it is*

written of me, I desired to doe thy will, O God, Psal. 40. 6. I will have obedience, (saith God) and not sacrifice. But where Sacrifice is Obedience, he will have Obedience in sacrificing. Therefore *Christ* went up to the Feast.

The second motive was the manifestation of his Glory. If we be *the light of the world*, who are so much snuffe, what is he that is *the Father of lights*? It was not for him to be set under the bushell of *Nazareth*, but upon the table of *Jerusalem*. Thither and then was the confluence of all the Tribes. Many a time had *Christ* passed by this man before, when the streets were empty; for there he lay many years; yet heals him not till now. He that sometimes modestly steals a Miracle with a *Vide nè cui dixeris*, See thou tell no man, that no man might know it; at other times does wonders upon the Scaffold of the World, that no man might be ignorant, and bids proclaim it on the house tops. It was fit the world should be thus publicly convinced, and either wone by belief, or lost by inexcusableness. Good, the more common it is, the better. *I will praise thee*, saith *David*, in *Ecclesia magna*, in the great Congregation. Glory is not got in corners. No man (say the envious kinsmen of *Christ*) keeps close, and would be famous: No, nor that would have God celebrated. The best opportunities must be taken in glorifying him. He that would be Crucified at the feast, that his Death and Resurrection might be more famous; will at the Feast doe Miracles, that his Divine power might be approved openly. *Christ* is *Flos campi, non horti*, the flour of the field, and not of the garden, saith *Bernard*. God cannot abide to have his Graces smothered in us. *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart*, saith the Psalmist. *Abalom*, when he would be *insignitè improbus, notoriously wicked*, does his villany publicly in the eyes of the Sun, under no curtain but Heaven. He that would doe notable service to God, must doe it conspicuously. *Nicodemus* gain'd well by *Christ*, but *Christ* got nothing by him, so
long

long as, like to a night-bird, he never came to him but with owls and bats. Then he began to be a profitable Disciple, when he durst oppose the Pharisees in their condemnation of *Christ*, though indefinitely : but most, when in the night of his death the light of his Faith brought him openly to take down the Sacred Corps before all the gazing multitude, and to embalm it. When we confess God's name, with the Psalmist, before Kings ; when Kings, defenders of the Faith, profess their Religion in publick and everlasting monuments to all nations, to all times ; this is glorious to God, and in God to them. It is no matter how close evils be, nor how publick good is.

This is enough for the Chronography ; the Topography follows. I will not here stand to shew you the ignorance of the Vulgar translation, in joyning *probatica* and *piscina* together, against their own fair *Vatican* copy, with other ancient : nor spend time to discuss whether ἀγορὰ or πύλη be here understood for the substantive of προβατική it is most likely to be that Sheep-gate spoken of in *Ezra* : nor to shew how ill *piscina* in the Latin answers the Greek κολυμβήθεα. ours turn it a pool, better then any Latin word can express it : nor to shew you (as I might) how many publick Pools were in *Jerusalem* : nor to discuss the use of this Pool, whether it were for washing the beasts to be sacrificed, or to wash the entralls of the Sacrifice ; whence I remember *Hierom* fetches the virtue of the water, and in his time thought he discerned some redness, as if the blood spilt four hundred years before could still retain his first tincture in a liquid substance ; besides that it would be a strange swimming-pool that were brewed with blood, and this was κολυμβήθεα. This conceit arises from the error of the construction in mis-matching κολυμβήθεα with προβατική. Neither will I argue whether it should be *Bethsida*, or *Bethzida*, or *Bethsbeda*, or *Bethesda*. If either you or my self knew not how to be rid of time,

we might easily wear out as many hours in this Pool as this poor impotent man did years. But it is Edification that we affect, and not curiosity. This Pool had *five Porches*. Neither will I run here with *S. Austin* into Allegories; that this Pool was the people of the *Jews*, *Aqua multa*, *populus multus*, and these five Porches the Law in the five books of *Moses*: nor stand to confute *Adrichomius*, who out of *Josephus* would persuade us that these five Porches were built by *Solomon*, and that this was *stagnum Solomonis*, for the use of the Temple. The following words shew the use of the Porches; for the receipt of *impotent, sick, blind, halt, withered, that waited for the moving of the water*. It should seem it was walled about to keep it from Cattel, and these five vaulted entrances were made by some Benefactors for the more convenience of attendance. Here was the Mercy of God seconded by the Charity of men: If God will give Cure, they will give Harbour. Surely it is a good matter to put our hand to God's; and to further good works with convenience of enjoying them.

Jerusalem was grown a City of bloud, to the persecution of the Prophets, to a wilfull despight of what belonged to her peace, to a profanation of God's Temple, to a mere formality in God's services: and yet here were publick works of Charity in the midst of her streets. We may not always judge of the truth of Piety by charitable actions. *Judas* disbursed the money for *Christ*; there was no Traitour but he. The poor traveller that was robb'd and wounded betwixt *Jerusalem* and *Jericho*, was passed over first by the Priest, then the Levite; at last the *Samaritan* came and relieved him: His Religion was naught, yet his act was good; the Priest's and Levite's Religion good, their Uncharity ill. *Novatus* himself was a Martyr, yet a Schismatick. Faith is the soul, and good works are the breath, saith *S. James*: but as you see in a pair of bellows there is a forced breath without life;

so in those that are puffed up with the wind of ostentation, there may be charitable works without Faith. The Church of Rome, unto her four famous Orders of *Jacobins*, *Franciscans*, *Augustines*, and *Carmelites*, hath added a fifth of *Jesuites*; and, like another *Jerusalem*, for those five Leprous and lazarly Orders hath built five Porches; that if the water of any State be stirred, they may put in for a share. How many Cells and Convents hath she raised for these miserable Cripples? and now she thinks (though she exalt her self above all that is called God, though she dispense with and against God, though she fall down before every block and wafer, though she kill Kings and equivocate with Magistrates,) she is the onely City of God. *Digna est, nam struxit Synagogam, She is worthy, for she hath built a Synagogue.* Are we more orthodox, and shall not we be as charitable? I am ashamed to think of rich Noblemen and Merchants that die and give nothing to our five Porches of *Bethesda*. What shall we say? Have they made their Mammon their God, in stead of making friends with their Mammon to God? Even when they die will they not (like *Ambrose's* good Usurers) part with that which they cannot hold, that they may get that which they cannot lose? Can they begin their will, *In Dei nomine, Amen*; and give nothing to God? Is he onely a Witness, and not a Legatee? Can we bequeath our Souls to *Christ* in Heaven, and give nothing to his Lims on earth? And if they will not give, yet will they not lend to God? He that gives to the poor, *faciatur Deo, lends to God.* Will they put out to any but God? and then, when, in stead of giving security, he receives with one hand and pays with another, receives our bequest and gives us glory? Oh damnable niggardlines of vain men, that shames the Gospel, and loses Heaven! Let me shew you a *Bethesda* that wants Porches. What truer house of effusion then the Church of God, which sheds forth waters of comfort, yea of life? Behold some of the Porches

of this *Bethesda* so far from building, that they are pulled down. It is a wonder if the demolished stones of God's House have not built some of yours, and if some of you have not your rich Suits garded with Souls. There were wont to be reckoned three wonders of *England*, *Ecclesia*, *Fœmina*, *Lana*, *The Churches*, *the Women*, *the Wool*. *Fœmina* may pass still; who may justly challenge wonder for their Vanity, if not their Person. As for *Lana*, if it be wonderfull alone, I am sure it is ill joyned with *Ecclesia*: The Church is fleeced, and hath nothing but a bare pelt left upon her back. And as for *Ecclesia*, either men have said with the *Babylonians*, *Down with it, down with it even to the ground*; or else in respect of the Maintenance, with *Judas*, *Ut quid perditio hæc? Why was this waste?* How many remorsefull souls have sent back, with *Jacob's* sons, their money in their Sacks mouths? How many great Testators have in their last Will returned the anathematized *peculium* of Impropropriations to the Church, chusing rather to impair their heir then to burthen their Souls? *Dum times nè pro te patrimonium tuum perdas, ipse pro patrimonio tuo peris*, saith *Cyprian*; *Whilst thou fearest to lose thy patrimony for thy own good, thou perishest with thy patrimony*. Ye great men, spend not all your time in building Castles in the air, or houses on the sand; but set your hands and purses to the building of the Porches of *Bethesda*. It is a shame for a rich Christian to be like a Christmas-box, that receives all, and nothing can be got out till it be broken in pieces; or like unto a drown'd man's hand, that holds whatsoever it gets. *To doe good and to distribute, forget not; for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.*

This was the Place: what was the Use of it? All sorts of Patients were at the bank of *Bethesda*: where should Cripples be but at the Spittle? *The sick, blind, lame, withered*, all that did either *morbo laborare* or *vitio corporis*, complain either of sickness or impotency, were there.

In

In natural course, one receipt heals not all diseases, no nor one Agent; one is an Oculist, another a Bone-setter, another a Chirurgeon: But all diseases are alike to the supernaturall power of God.

Hippocrates, though the Prince of Physicians, yet swears by *Æsculapius* he will never meddle with cutting of the Stone. There is no Disease that Art will not meddle with: there are many that it cannot cure. The poor *Hæmorrhœissa* was eighteen years in the Physicians hands, and had purged away both her body and her substance. Yea some it kills in stead of healing: whence one Hebrew word signifies both *Physicians* and *dead men*. But behold here all Sickneses cured by one hand, and by one water. O all ye that are spiritually sick and diseased, come to the Pool of *Bethesda*, the Bloud of *Christ*. Do ye complain of the Blindness of your Ignorance? here ye shall receive clearness of Sight: of the distemper of Passions? here Ease: of the superfluity of your sinfull Humours? here Evacuation: of the impotency of your Obedience? here Integrity: of the dead witheredness of good Affections? here Life and Vigour. Whatsoever your infirmity be, come to the Pool of *Bethesda*, and be healed.

All these may be cured; yet shall be cured at leisure: all must wait, all must hope in waiting. Methinks I see how enviously these Cripples look one upon another, each thinking other a lett, each watching to prevent other, each hoping to be next; like emulous Courtiers, that gape and vie for the next preferment, and think it a pain to hope, and a torment to be prevented. But *Bethesda* must be waited on. He is worthy of his Crutches that will not stay God's leisure for his Cure. There is no virtue, no success without patience. Waiting is a familiar lesson with Courtiers: and here we have all need of it. One is sick of an overflowing of the Gall, another of a Tumour of Pride, another of the Tentigo of Lust, another of the Vertigo of Inconstancy, another of the choaking Squinancy

of Curfes and Blasphemies ; one of the Boulimy of Gluttony, another of the Pleuritical fitches of Envy ; one of the contracting Cramp of Covetoufnefs, another of the Atrophie of Unproficiency : one is hide-bound with Pride, another is confumed with Emulation, another rotten with Corrupt defires : and we are fo much the sicker, if we feel not thefe diftempers. Oh that we could wait at the *Bethesda* of God, attend diligently upon his Ordinances : we could no more fail of cure, then now we can hope for cure. We wait hard, and endure much for the Body. *Quantis laboribus agitur ut longiore tempore laboretur ! Multi cruciatus suscipiuntur certi, ut pauci dies adjiciantur incerti.* What toil do we take that we may toil yet longer ! We endure many certain pains for the addition of a few uncertain days, saith *Austin*. Why will we not doe thus for the Soul ? Without waiting it will not be. The Cripple (*A^ct. 3. 4.*) was bidden, *Βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς, Look up to us.* He look'd up. It was cold comfort that he heard, *Silver and Gold have I none* : but the next clause made amends for all, *Surge & ambula, Rise and walk* : and this was, because *ἐπέσχευεν προσδοκῶν, he attended expecting*, verse 5. Would we be cured ? It is not for us to snatch at *Bethesda*, as a Dog at *Nilus* ; nor to draw water and away, as *Rebecca* ; nor to set us a while upon the banks, as the *Israelites* by the rivers of *Babylon* : but we must dwell in God's House, wait at *Bethesda*. But what shall I say to you Courtiers, but even as *Saint Paul* to his *Corinthians*, *Ye are full, ye are rich, ye are strong without us* ? Many of you come to this place not as to *Bethel*, the House of God, or *Bethesda*, the house of effusion ; but as to *Bethaven*, the house of vanity. If ye have not lost your old wont, there are more words spoken in the outer Closet by the hearers, then in the Chappel by the Preacher ; as if it were Closet, *quasi close-set*, in an Exchange, like communication of News. What do ye think of Sermons as matters of formality, as very Superfluties, as your own idle Complements,

which

which either ye hear not, or believe not? What do ye think of your selves? Have ye onely a postern to go to Heaven by your selves, where-through ye can go, besides the foolishness of Preaching? or do ye sing that old *Pelagian* note, *Quid nunc mihi opus est Deo?* What need have I of God? What should I say to this but, *Increpa, Domine.* As for our household Sermons, our Auditours are like the fruit of a tree in an unseasonable year; or like a wood new felled, that hath some few spires left for standers some poles distance; or like the tithe sheaves in a field when the corn is gone, εἰς, δύο, τρεῖς, &c. as he said. It is true, ye have more Sermons and more excellent than all the Courts under Heaven put together: but, as *Austin* said well, *Quid mihi proderit bona res non utenti bene?* What am I the better for a good thing if I use it not well? Let me tell you, all these forcible means, not well used, will set you the farther off from Heaven. If the Chappel were the *Bethesda* of promotion, what thronging would there be into it? Yea if it were but some mask-house, wherein a glorious (though momentary) show were to be presented, neither white staves nor halberts could keep you out. Behold here, ye are offered the honour to be (by this seed of regeneration) the Sons of God. The Kingdom of Heaven, the Crown of Glory, the Scepter of Majesty, in one word, Eternall Life is here offered and performed to you. O let us not so far forget our selves, as in the Ordinances of God to contemn our own Happiness. But let us know the time of our visitation: let us wait reverently and intently upon this *Bethesda* of God; that when the Angel shall descend and move the Water, our Souls may be cured, and through all the degrees of Grace may be carried to the full height of their Glory.

XXIX.

The Transfiguration of CHRIST.

THere is not in all Divinity an higher speculation then this of *Christ* transfigured. Suffer me therefore to lead you up by the hand into mount *Tabor*, (for nearer to Heaven ye cannot come while ye are upon earth,) that you may see him glorious upon Earth, the Region of his shame and abasement, who is now glorious in Heaven, the Throne of his Majesty. He that would not have his transfiguration spoken of till he were raised, would have it spoken of all the world over now that he is raised and ascended, that by this momentary glory we may judge of the eternall. The Circumstances shall be to us as the skirts of the Hill, which we will climbe up lightly; the Time, Place, Attendants, Company. The Time, *after six days*; the Place, *an high hill apart*; the Attendants, *Peter, James, John*; the Company, *Moses and Elias*: which when we have passed, on the top of the hill shall appear to us that sight which shall once make us glorious, and in the mean time make us happy.

All three Evangelists accord in the *Terminus à quo*, that it was immediatly after those words, *There be some of them that stand here which shall not tast of death till they have seen the Son of Man come in his Kingdom*. Wherein, methinks, the act comments upon the words. *Peter, James and John*, were these *some*: they tasted not of death, till they saw this Heavenly image of the Royalty of *Christ* glorified. But the *Terminus quò* disagrees a little. *Matthew* and *Mark* say, *after six*; *Luke*, *post ferè octo*: which as they are easily reconciled by the usuall distinction of *inclusive* and *exclusive*, necessary for all computations, and

Luke's

Luke's about eight ; so, methinks, seems to intimate God's seventh day, the Sabbath : why should there be else so precise mention of *six days after*, and *about eight*, but to imply that day which was betwixt the sixth and eighth ? God's day was fittest for so Divine a work : and well might that day which imported God's rest and man's glory, be used for the clear representation of the rest and glory of God and man. But in this conjecture (for ought I know) I goe alone : I dare not be too resolute. Certainly it was the seventh, whether it were that seventh ; the seventh after the promise of the glory of his Kingdom exhibited : and this perhaps not without a mystery. *God teacheth both by words and acts*, saith *Hilary*, that after six Ages of the world should be Christ's glorious appearance, and our transfiguration with him. But I know what our Saviour's farewell was, *ἐχ' ὁμῶν γινώσκει*, it is not for us to know. - But if we may not know, we may conjecture ; yet not above that we ought, saith *S. Paul* : we may not *super sapere*, as *Tertullian's* phrase is.

For the Place, tradition hath taken it still for *Tabor*. I list not to cross it without warrant. This was an high Hill indeed : *thirty furlongs high*, saith *Josephus* ; *mirâ rotunditate sublimis*, saith *Hierome* : and so steep, that some of our English travellers, that have desired to climbe it of late, have been glad to give it up in the mid-way, and to measure the rest with their eyes. Doubtless this Hill was a Symbol of Heaven, being near it, as in situation, in resemblance. Heaven is expressed usually by the name of *God's hill* : and Nature or this appellation taught the Heathens to figure it by their *Olympus*. All Divine affairs of any magnificence were done on Hills. On the hill of *Sinai* was the Law delivered : on the hill of *Moriab* was *Isaac* to be sacrificed ; whence *Abraham's* posse is, *בְּהַר יְרֵאָה*, *In monte providebitur* : on the hill of *Rephidim* stood *Moses* with the rod of God in his stretched hand, and figured him crucified upon the hill, whom *Joshua* figured victorious

in the valley : on the hills of *Ebal* and *Gerizim* were the Blessings and Curses : on *Carmel* was *Eliab's* sacrifice : the *Phrontisteria*, Schools or Universities of the Prophets were still *Ramah* and *Gibeah*, *Excelsa*, High places : who knows not that on the hill of *Sion* stood the Temple ? *I have looked up to the hills*, saith the Psalmist. And Idolatry, in imitation, had its hill-altars. On the mount of Olives was *Christ* wont to send up his Prayers, and sent up himself. And here *Luke* saith, he went up to an high hill to pray ; not for that God makes difference of places, to whose immensity Heaven it self is a valley. It was an heathenish conceit of those *Aramites*, that God is *Deus montium*, the *God of the mountains*. But because we are commonly more disposed to good by either the freedome of our scope to Heaven, or the awfulness or solitary silence of places, which (as one saith) strikes a kind of adoration into us, or by our locall removall from this attractive body of the earth ; howsoever, when the body sees it self above the earth, the eye of the Mind is more easily raised to her Heaven. It is good to take all advantage of place (setting aside superstition) to further our Devotion. *Aaron* and *Hur* were in the mountain with *Moses*, and held up his hands. *Aaron* (say some Allegorists) is mountainous ; *Hur*, fiery : Heavenly meditation and the fire of Charity must lift up our prayers to God. As Satan carried up *Christ* to an high hill to tempt him, so he carries up himself to be freed from temptation and distraction. If ever we would be transfigured in our dispositions, we must leave the earth below, and abandon all worldly thoughts. *Venite, ascendantus* ; O come, let us climbe up to the hill, where God sees, or is seen, saith devout Bernard. O all ye cares, distractions, thoughtfulness, labours, pains, servitudes, stay me here with this *Ass*, my Body, till I with the Boy, that is, my Reason and Understanding, shall worship and return, saith the same Father, wittily alluding to the journey of *Abraham* for his sacrifice.

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Wherefore then did *Christ* climbe up this high hill? Not to look about him, but, saith *S. Luke*, *προσευχᾶσαι*, to pray; not for prospect, but for devotion; that his thoughts might climbe up yet nearer to Heaven. Behold how *Christ* entered upon all his great works with Prayers in his mouth. When he was to enter into that great work of his Humiliation in his Passion, he went into the garden to pray; when he is to enter into this great work of his Exaltation in his Transfiguring, he went up into the mountain to pray: he was taken up from his knees to both. O noble example of Piety and Devotion to us! He was God that prayed: the God that he prayed to, he might have commanded; yet he prayed, that we men might learn of him to pray to him. What should we men dare to doe without prayers, when he that was God would doe nothing without them? The very heathen Poet could say, *A Jove principium*: and which of those verse-mongers ever durst write a ballad without imploring of some Deity? which of the heathens durst attempt any great enterprize, *insalutato numine*, without invocation and sacrifice? *Saul* himself would play the Priest, and offer a burnt-offering to the Lord, rather then the *Philistins* should fight with him unsupplicated; as thinking any devotion better then none; and thinking it more safe to sacrifice without a Priest, then to fight without Prayers. *Ungirt, unblest*, was the old word; as not ready till they were girded, so not till they had prayed. And how dare we rush into the affairs of God or the State; how dare we thrust our selves into actions either perillous or important, without ever lifting up our eyes and hearts unto the God of Heaven? Except we would say, (as the devillish malice of *Surius* slanders that zealous *Luther*,) *Nec propter Deum hæc res cæpta est, nec propter Deum finiatur, &c.* This business was neither begun for God, nor shall be ended for him. How can God bless us, if we implore him not? how can we prosper, if he bless us not? How can we hope ever to be transfigured from a lump of corrupt

flesh, if we do not ascend and pray? As the *Samaritan* woman said weakly, we may seriously, *The well of mercies is deep*: if thou hast *nothing to draw with*, never look to tast of the waters of life. I fear the worst of men, *Turks*, and the worst *Turks*, the *Moors*, shall rise up in Judgment against many Christians, with whom it is a just exception against any witness by their Law, that he hath not prayed six times in each naturall day. Before the day break, they pray for day; when it is day, they give God thanks for day; at noon they thank God for half the day past; after that they pray for a good Sun-set; after that they thank God for the day passed; and lastly, pray for a good night after their day. And we Christians suffer so many Suns and Moons to rise and set upon our heads, and never lift up our hearts to their Creatour and ours, either to ask his blessing, or to acknowledge it. Of all men under Heaven, none had so much need to pray as Courtiers. That which was done but once to *Christ*, is always done to them. They are set upon the hill, and see the glory of the Kingdoms of earth: but I fear it is seen of them as it is with some of the Mariners, The more need, the less devotion.

Ye have seen the Place, see the Attendants. He would not have many, because he would not have it yet known to all: hence was his intermination, and sealing up their mouths with a *Nemini dicite, Tell no man*. Not none, because he would not have it altogether unknown; and afterwards would have it known to all. Three were a legall number; *in ore duorum aut trium, in the mouth of two or three witnesses*. He had eternally possessed the glory of his Father without any witnesses: in time the Angels were blessed with that sight; and after that two bodily, yet Heavenly, witnesses were allowed, *Enoch* and *Elias*. Now in his humanity he was invested with glory, he takes but three witnesses, and those earthly and weak, *Peter, James, John*. And why these? We may be too curious. *Peter*, because the eldest; *John*, because the dearest; *James*, because next *Peter* the

the zealous: *Peter*, because he loved *Christ* most; *John*, because *Christ* most loved him; *James*, because next to both he loved, and was loved most. I had rather to have no reason but, *quia complacuit, because it so pleased him*. Why may we not as well ask why he chose these twelve from others, as why he chose these three out of the twelve? If any *Romanists* will raise from hence any privilege to *Peter*, (which we could be well content to yield, if that would make them ever the honestest men,) they must remember that they must take company with them; which these *Pompeian* spirits cannot abide. As good no privilege as any partners. And withall, they must see him more taxed for his error in this act, then honoured by his presence at the act: whereas the Beloved Disciple saw and erred not. These same three which were witnesses of his Transfiguration in the mount, were witnesses of his Agony in the garden; all three, and these three alone, were present at both: but both times sleeping. These were *arietes gregis, the Bell-weathers of the flock*, as *Austin* calls them. Oh weak devotion of three great Disciples! These were *Paul's* three pillars, *οἱ σῦλοι δοκῆνες, Gal. 2. 9*. *Christ* takes them up twice; once to be witnesses of his greatest Glory, once of his greatest Extremity: they sleep both times. The other was in the night, more tolerable; this by day, yea in a light above day. *Chrysostome* would fain excuse it to be an amazedness, not a sleep; not considering that they slept both at that Glory, and after in the Agony. To see that Master praying, one would have thought should have fetcht them on their knees: especially to see those Heavenly affections look out at his Eyes; to see his Soul lifted up in his Hands in that transported fashion to Heaven. But now the hill hath wearied their limbs, their body clogs their Soul, and they fall asleep. Whilst *Christ* saw Divine visions, they dreamed dreams; whilst he was in another world, ravished with the sight of his Father's Glory, yea of his own, they were in another world, a world

of fancies, surprized with the cousin of death, sleep. Besides so gracious an example, their own necessity (*quia incessanter pecco, because I continually sin, Bernard's reason*) might have moved them to pray rather than their Master: and behold, in stead of fixing their eyes upon Heaven, they shut them; in stead of lifting up their hearts, their heads fall down upon their shoulders; and shortly, here was snorting in stead of sighs and prayers. This was not *Abraham's* or *Elibu's* ecstatical sleep, *Job 33.* not the sleep of the Church, a waking sleep; but the plain sleep of the eyes: and that not תנימה, a slumbring sleep, which *David* denies to himself *Psal. 132.* but שנה, a sound sleep, which *Solomon* forbids *Prov. 6. 4.* yea rather תרדמה, the dead sleep of *Adam* or *Jonas*; and, as *Bernard* had wont to say when he heard a Monk snort, they did *carnaliter seu seculariter dormire.* Prayer is an ordinary receipt for sleep. How prone are we to it, when we should mind Divine things? *Adam* slept in Paradise, and lost a Rib: but this sleep was of God's giving, and this rib was of God's taking. The good Husband slept, and found tares. *Eutychus* slept, and fell. Whilst Satan lulls us asleep, (as he doth always rock the cradle when we sleep in our devotions,) he ever takes some good from us, or puts some evil in us, or indangers us a deadly fall. Away with this spiritual Lethargy. *Bernard* had wont to say, that those which sleep are dead to men, those that are dead are asleep to God. But I say, those that sleep at Church are dead to God: so we preach their Funeral Sermons in stead of hortatory. And as he was wont to say, he lost no time so much as that wherein he slept; so let me adde, there is no loss of time so desperate as of holy time. Think that *Christ* saith to thee at every Sermon as he did to *Peter, Etiam, Petre, dormis? Sleepest thou, Peter? couldst thou not wake with me one hour?* A slumbring and a drowzy heart do not become the business and presence of him that *keepeth Israel,* and *slumbers not.*

These were the Attendants; see the Companions of
Christ.

Christ. As our glory is not consummate without society, no more would *Christ* have his: therefore his Transfiguration hath two Companions, *Moses, Elias*. As Saint *Paul* says of himself, *Whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knows*: so say I of these two. Of *Eliab* there may seem less doubt, since we know that his body was assumed to Heaven, and might as well come down for *Christ's* glory as go up for his own; although some grave Authours, as *Calvin, Oecolampadius, Bale, Fulk*, have held his body with *Enoch's* resolved into their elements: *sed ego non credulus illis. Enoch translatus est in carne, & Elias carneus raptus est in cælum, &c. Enoch was translated in the flesh, and Elias being yet in the flesh was taken into Heaven*, saith *Hierome* in his Epistle ad *Pammachium*.

And for *Moses*; though it be rare and singular, and *Austin* makes much scruple of it; yet why might not he after death return in his body to the glory of *Christ's* Transfiguration, as well as afterwards many of the Saints did to the glory of his Resurrection? I cannot therefore with the Gloss think, there is any reason why *Moses* should take another, a borrowed body, rather than his own. Heaven could not give two fitter companions, more admirable to the *Jews* for their Miracles, more gracious with God for their Faith and Holiness: Both of them admitted to the conference with God in *Horeb*; both of them Types of *Christ*; both of them fasted forty days; both of them for the glory of God suffered many perils; both divided the waters; both the messengers of God to Kings; both of them marvellous, as in their life, so in their end. A chariot of Angels took away *Elias*; he was sought by the Prophets, and not found: *Michael* strove with the Devil for the body of *Moses*; he was sought for by the *Jews*, and not found: and now both of them are found here together on *Tabor*. This *Elias* shews himself to the Royall Prophet of his Church; this *Moses* shews himself to the true *Michael*. *Moses* the publisher of the Law; *Elias* the chief of the

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the Prophets, shew themselves to the God of the Law and Prophets. *Alter populi informator aliquando, alter reformatore quandoque, One the informer once of the people, the other the reformer sometimes,* saith Tertull. in 4. *advers. Marcionem.* *Alter initiator Veteris Testamenti, alter consummator Novi, One the first Register of the Old Testament, the other the shutter up of the New.* I verily think, with Hilary, that these two are pointed at as the forerunners of the second coming of *Christ*, as now they were the foretellers of his departure: neither doubt I that these are the Two Witnesses which are alluded to in the Apocalyps; howsoever divers of the Fathers have thrust *Enoch* into the place of *Moses*. Look upon the place, *Apoc. II. 5.* Who but *Elias* can be he of whom it is said, *If any man will hurt him, fire proceedeth out of his mouth, and devoureth his enemies,* alluding to 2 *Kings 1*? Who but *Elias* of whom it is said, *He hath power to shut the Heaven, that it rain not in the days of his prophesying,* alluding to 1 *Kings 18*? Who but *Moses* of whom it is said, *He hath power to turn the waters into bloud, and smite the earth with all manner of plagues,* alluding to *Exod. 7.* and 8? But take me aright; let me not seem a friend to the Publicans of *Rome*, an abettour of those Alcoran-like Fables of our Popish Doctours, who (not seeing the wood for trees) do *herere in cortice, stick in the bark,* taking all concerning that Antichrist according to the letter. *Odi, & arceo.* So shall *Moses* and *Elias* come again in those Witnesses, as *Elias* is already come in *John Baptist*: their Spirits shall be in these Witnesses, whose Bodies and Spirits were witnesses both of the present Glory and future Passion of *Christ*. Doubtless many thousand Angels saw this sight, and were not seen; these two both saw and were seen. O how great an Happiness was it for these two great Prophets, in their glorified flesh to see their glorified Saviour, who before his Incarnation had spoken to them? to speak to that Man God of whom they were glorified, and to become Prophets not to men, but

to God? And if *Moses* his face so shone before, when he spoke to him without a body in mount *Sinai*, in the midst of the flames and clouds; how did it shine now, when himself glorified, speaks to him a man, in *Tabor*, in light and majesty? *Elias* hid his face before with a mantle when he passed by him in the Rock: now with open face he beholds him present, and in his own glory adores his. Let that impudent *Marcion*, who ascribes the Law and Prophets to another God, and devises an hostility betwixt *Christ* and them, be ashamed to see *Moses* and *Elias* not onely in colloquio, but in consortio claritatis, not onely in conference, but in a partnership of brightness (as *Tertull.* speaks) with *Christ*; whom if he had misliked, he had his choice of all the Quire of Heaven; and now chusing them, why were they not in sordibus & tenebris, in rags and darkness? Sic inalienos demonstrat illos, dum secum habet; sic relinquendos docet, quos sibi jungit; sic destruit, quos de radiis suis exstruit: So doth he shew them far from strangeness to him, whom he hath with him; so doth he teach them to be forsaken, whom he joyns with himself; so doth he destroy those, whom he graces with his beams of glory, saith that Father. His act verifies his word. Think not that I come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill them, Matt. 5. 17. Oh what consolation, what confirmation was this to the Disciples, to see such examples of their future Glory, such witnesses and adorers of the eternal Deity of their Master? They saw in *Moses* and *Elias* what they themselves should be. How could they ever fear to be miserable, that saw such precedents of their insuing glory? how could they fear to die, that saw in others the happiness of their own change? The rich Glutton pleads with *Abraham*, that if one came to them from the dead, they will amend: *Abraham* answers, They have *Moses* and the Prophets, let them hear them. Behold, here is both *Moses* and the Prophets; and these too come from the dead: how can we now but be persuaded of the happy

state of another world, unless we will make our selves worse then the damned? See and consider that the Saints of God are not lost, but departed; gone into a far country with their Master, to return again richer and better then they went. Lest we should think this the condition of *Elias* onely, that was rapt into Heaven, see here *Moses* matched with him, that died and was buried. And is this the state of these two Saints alone? Shall none be seen with him in the *Tabor* of Heaven but those which have seen him in *Horeb* and *Carmel*? O thou weak Christian, was onely one or two limbs of *Christ's* body glorious in the Transfiguration, or the whole? He is the Head, we are the Members. If *Moses* and *Elias* were more excellent parts, Tongue, or Hand; let us be but Heels or Toes, his body is not perfect in glory without ours. *When Christ, which is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory, Colos. 3. 4.* How truly may we say to death, *Rejoyce not, mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise; yea I shall rise in falling? We shall not all sleep, we shall be changed,* saith *S. Paul* to his *Thessalonians*. *Elias* was changed, *Moses* slept; both appeared: to teach us, that neither our sleep nor change can keep us from appearing with him. When therefore thou shalt receive the sentence of death on mount *Nebo*, or when the fiery chariot shall come and sweep thee from this vale of mortality, remember thy glorious re-appearance with thy Saviour, and thou canst not but be comforted, and chearfully triumph over that last Enemy, outfacing those terrours with the assurance of a blessed Resurrection to Glory. To the which, &c.

XXX.

The Transfiguration of CHRIST.

The Second Part.

IT falls out with this Discourse as with Mount *Tabor* it self, that it is more easily climbed with the eye, then with the foot. If we may not rather say of it, as *Josephus* did of *Sinai*, that it doth not onely *ascensus hominum*, but *aspectus fatigare*, weary not onely the steps but the very sight of men. We had thought not to spend many breaths in the skirts of the hill, the Circumstances; and it hath cost us one hour's journey already: and we were glad to rest us, ere we can have left them below us. One pause more (I hope) will overcome them, and set us on the top. No Circumstance remains undiscussed but this one, What *Moses* and *Elias* did with *Christ* in their apparition. For they were not, as some sleepy attendents, (like the three Disciples in the beginning,) to be there and see nothing; nor, as some silent spectators, mute witnesses, to see and say nothing: but (as if their Glory had no whit changed their profession) they are Prophets still, and foretold his departure, as *S. Luke* tells us. Foretold, not to him who knew it before, yea who told it them; they could not have known it but from him; he was $\delta \lambda \theta \gamma \omega \nu$, the Word of his Father: they told but that which he before had told his Disciples; and now these Heavenly witnesses tell it over again, for confirmation. Like as *John Baptist* knew *Christ* before; he was *Vox clamantis*, the Voice of a crier, the other *Verbum Patris*, the Word of his Father; there is great affinity betwixt *vox* and *verbum*; yea this voice had uttered it self clearly, *Ecce Agnus Dei*, Behold the Lamb of God: yet he sends his Disciples with an *Art thou he?*

that he might confirm to them by him that which he both knew and had said of him. So our Saviour follows his Fore-runner in this, that what he knew and had told his Disciples, the other *Elias*, the typicall *John Baptist*, and *Moses* must make good to their belief.

This ἐξοδος departure of *Christ* was σκληρὸς λόγος a word both hard and harsh; hard to believe, and harsh in believing. The Disciples thought of nothing but a Kingdome; a Kingdome restored magnificently, interminably: and two of these three witnesses had so swallowed this hope, that they had put in for places in the State, to be his chief Peers. How could they think of a parting? The throne of *David* did so fill their eyes, that they could not see his Cross: and if they must let down this Pill, how bitter must it needs be? His presence was their joy and life; it was their death to think of his loss. Now therefore that they might see that his Sufferings and Death were not of any sudden impotence, but predetermined in Heaven, and revealed to the Saints, two of the most noted Saints in Heaven shall second the news of his departure, and that in the midst of his Transfiguration: that they could not chuse but think, He that can be thus happy, needs not be miserable; that Passion which he will undergoe, is not out of weakness, but out of Love. It is wittily noted by that sweet *Chrysostome*, that *Christ* never lightly spake of his Passion, but immediately before and after he did some great Miracle: And here answerably, in the midst of his miraculous Transfiguration, the two Saints speak of his Passion. A strange opportunity: In his highest Exaltation to speak of his Sufferings; to talk of *Calvary* in *Tabor*; when his Head shone with glory, to tell him how it must bleed with thorns; when his Face shone like the Sun, to tell him it must be blubbered and spat upon; when his Garments glistened with that celestial brightness, to tell him they must be stripped and divided; when he was adored by the Saints of Heaven, to tell him how he must be scorned by the basest of men; when

when he was seen between two Saints, to tell him how he must be seen between two Malefactours: in a word, in the midst of his Divine Majesty, to tell him of his shame; and whilst he was Transfigured in the Mount, to tell him how he must be disfigured upon the Cross. Yet these two Heavenly Prophets found this the fittest time for this discourse: rather chusing to speak of his Sufferings in the height of his Glory, then of his Glory after his Sufferings. It is most seasonable in our best to think of our worst estate: for both that thought will be best digested when we are well; and that change will be best prepared for when we are the farthest from it. You would perhaps think it unseasonable for me, in the midst of all your Court-jollity to tell you of the days of mourning; and, with that great King, to serve in a Death's head amongst your Royall dishes, to shew your Coffins in the midst of your Triumphs: yet these precedents above exception shew me that no time is so fit as this. Let me therefore say to you, with the Psalmist, *I have said, Ye are Gods*: if ye were Transfigured in *Tabor*, could ye be more? *but ye shall die like men*: there is your *ēzod*Ⓒ. It was a worthy and witty note of *Hierome*, that amongst all trees, the Cedars are bidden to praise God; which are the tallest: and yet *Dies Domini super omnes Cedros Libani*, Esa. 2. Ye Gallants, whom a little yellow earth and the webs of that curious worm have made gorgeous without, and perhaps proud within, remember that ere long, as one worm decks you without, so another worm shall consume you within; and that both the earth that you pranck up, and that earth wherewith you pranck it, is running back into dust. Let not your high estate hide from you your fatall humiliation: let not not your Purples hide from you your Winding-sheet: But even on the top of *Tabor* think of the depth of the Grave: think of your departure from men, while ye are advanced above men.

We are now ascended to the top of the Hill. Let us therefore stand, and see, and wonder at this great sight: as

Moses, to see the bush flaming, and not consumed; so we, to see the Humanity continuing it self in the midst of these beams of Glory. Christ was *εν μορφη δούλου*, saith S. Paul, in the form of a servant; now for the time he was truly *μεταμορφωθείς*, transformed: That there is no cause why Maldonat should so inveigh against some of ours, yea of his own, as *Jansenius*, who translates it *Transformation*: for what is the externall form but the figure? and their own Vulgar (as hotly as he takes it) reads it, *Philip. 2. 7. μορφη δούλου*, *formam servi accipiens*. There is no danger in this ambiguity. Not the substantiall form, but the external fashion of Christ was changed: he having three forms, (as Bernard distinguishes) *contemptam*, *splendidam*, *Divinam*, changeth here the first into the second. This is one of the rarest occurrences that ever befell the Saviour of the World. I am wont to reckon up these four principall wonders of his life, Incarnation, Temptation, Transfiguration, and Agony: the first in the womb of the Virgin, the second in the Wilderness, the third in the Mount, the fourth in the Garden: the first, that God should become Man; the second, that God and Man should be tempted and transported by Satan; the third, that Man should be glorified upon earth; the last, that he which was Man and God should sweat blood under the sense of God's wrath for man. And all these either had the Angels for witnesses, or the immediate voice of God. The first had Angels singing, the second Angels ministring, the third the voice of God thundring, the fourth the Angels comforting: that it may be no wonder, the Earth marvels at those things whereat the Angels of Heaven stand amazed. Bernard makes three kinds of wonderfull changes: *Sublimitas in Humilitatem*, Height to lowliness, when the Word took flesh; *Contemptibilitas in Majestatem*, when Christ transformed himself before his Disciples; *Mutabilitas in Æternitatem*, when he rose again, and ascended to Heaven to reign for ever. Ye see this is one of them: and as *Tabor* did rise

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out of the valley of Galilee, so this Exaltation did rise out of the midst of Christ's Humiliation. Other marvels do increase his dejection, this onely makes for his Glory; and the glory of this is matchable with the humiliation of all the rest. That Face wherein before (saith *Esay*) *there was no form, nor beauty*, now shines as the Sun: That Face which men hid their faces from in contempt, now shines so, that mortall eyes could not chuse but hide themselves from the luster of it, and immortall receive their beams from it. He had ever *in vultu sidereum quiddam*, as *Hierome* speaks, *a certain heavenly Majesty and port in his countenance*, which made his Disciples follow him at first sight; but now here was the perfection of supercelestiall brightness. It was a Miracle in the Three Children, that they so were delivered from the flames, that their very garments smelt not of the fire: it is no less Miracle in Christ, that his very garments were dyed Celestiall, and did favour of his Glory: like as *Aaron* was so anointed on his head and beard, that his skirts were all perfumed. His cloaths therefore shined as snow, yea (that were but a waterish white) as the Light it self, saith *S. Mark*, and *Matthew*; in the most Greek Copies. That seamless Coat, as it had no welt, so it had no spot. The King's Son is all fair, even without. O excellent Glory of his Humanity! The best Diamond or Carbuncle is hid with a case: but this brightness pierceth through all his garments, and makes them lightsome in him, which use to conceal light in others. *Herod* put him on in mockage *ἑδῆται λαμπροῦν*, *Luke* 23. not a white, but a bright robe, (the ignorance whereof makes a shew of disparity in the Evangelists:) but God the Father, to glorifie him, cloaths his very garments with Heavenly splendour. Behold, thou art fair, (*my beloved*) behold, thou art fair; and there is no spot in thee. Thine head is as fine gold, thy mouth is as sweet things, and thou art wholly delectable. Come forth, ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the Crown wherewith his Father crowned him, in the day of the gladness.

gladness of his heart. O Saviour, if thou wert such in *Tabor*, what art thou in Heaven? if this were the glory of thy Humanity, what is the presence of thy Godhead? Let no man yet wrong himself so much as to magnifie this happiness as another's, and to put himself out of the participation of this glory. *Christ* is our head, we are his members. As we all were in the First *Adam*, both innocent and sinning; so are we in the Second *Adam*, both shining in *Tabor*, and bleeding sweat in the Garden. And as we are already happy in him, so shall we be once in our selves by and through him. *He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorious body.* Behold our pattern, and rejoice; *like his glorious body.* These very bodies, that are now cloddy like the earth, shall once be bright as the Sun: and we, that now see clay in one anothers faces, shall then see nothing but Heaven in our countenances: and we, that now set forth our bodies with cloaths, shall then be cloathed upon with Immortality, out of the wardrobe of Heaven. And if ever any painted face should be admitted to the sight of this Glory, (as I much fear it; yea I am sure God will have none but true faces in Heaven;) they would be ashamed to think that ever they had faces to daub with these beastly pigments, in comparison of this Heavenly complexion. Let us therefore look upon this flesh, not so much with contempt of what it was and is, as with a joyfull hope of what it shall be. And when our courage is assaulted with the change of these bodies from healthfull to weak, from living to dead; let us comfort our selves with the assurance of this change from dust to incorruption. We are not so sure of death, as of transfiguration. *All the days of our appointed time we will therefore wait, till our changing shall come.*

Now from the Glory of the Master, give me leave to turn your eyes to the Errour of the Servant, who having slept with the rest, and now suddenly awaking, knoweth not whether he slept still. To see such a light about him,
three

three so glittering persons before him, made him doubt now, as he did after, when he was carried by the Angel through the iron gate, whether it were a pleasing dream, or a real act. All slept, and now all waked; onely *Peter* slept waking, and I know not whether more erred in his speech or in his sleep. It was a shame for a man to sleep in *Tabor*; but it is more a shame for a man to dream with his eyes open. Thus did *Peter*; *Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make us three Tabernacles.* I could well say with *Optatus* in this or any other occasion, *Ipsius Sancti Petri beatitudo veniam tribuat, dubito dicere peccasse tantam Sanctitatem, Let blessed Peter pardon me, I fear to say so great Holiness offended.* Yet since our adversaries are so over-partial to this worthy Saint, in whom they have as little as they boast much, that they can be content his praise should blemish the dignity of all the rest, yea that God himself is in danger to be a loser by the advancement of so dear a Servant; give me leave to lay my finger a little upon this blot. God would never have recorded that which it should be uncharitable for us to observe. It was the injurious kindness of *Marcion* in honour of *Peter*, to leave out the story of *Malchus*, as *Epiphanius* notes: It shall be our blame, if we do not so note, that we benefit our selves even by his imperfections. *S. Mark's* Gospel is said to be *Peter's*. O blessed Apostle, can it be any wrong to say of thee that which thou hast written of thy self, not for insultation, not for exprobration? God forbid but that men may be ashamed to give that to him which he hath denied to himself. Let me therefore not doubt to say, (with reverence to so great a Saint) that as he spake most, so he is noted to have erred most. Not to meddle with his sinning, striking, Judaizing; one while we find him carnally insinuating, another while carnally presuming; one while weakly denying, another while rashly misconstruing. Carnally insinuating; *Master, favour thy self.* Which though some Parasites of *Rome* would fain smooth up, that he in

this shewed his Love to *Christ*, as before his Faith, out of *S. Hierome* and *S. Austin*; yet it must needs be granted, which *Bernard* saith, *diligebat Spiritum carnaliter, he loved the Spirit in a carnal fashion*. Let them chuse whether they will admit *Christ* to have chid unjustly, or *Peter* worthy of chiding: Except perhaps, with *Hilary*, they will stop where they should not; *Vade post me*, spoken to *Peter* in approbation; *Satana, non sapis quæ Dei sunt*, spoken to Satan in objurgation. Carnally presuming; *Though all men, yet not I*. If he had not presumed of his strength to stand, he had not fallen. And as one yawning makes many open mouths; so did his vain resolution draw on company: *Likewise said the other Disciples*. For his weak Denial; ye all know his simple negation, lined with an oath, faced with an imprecation. And here, that no man may need to doubt of an error, the Spirit of God saith, *he knew not what he said*: not onely *τί λαλήσῃ*, as *Mark*, *what he should say*; but *ὃ λέγει*, saith *Luke*, *what he did speak*: whereof *S. Mark* gives the reason, *ἦσαν ἐκφοβοί*, *they were amazedly affrighted*. Amazedness may abate an error of speech, it cannot take it away. Besides astonishment, here was a fervour of spirit; a love to *Christ's* glory, and a delight in it: a fire, but misplaced, on the top of the chimney, not on the hearth: *præmatura devotio*, as *Ambrose* speaks, *a devotion, but rash and heady*. And if it had not been so, yet it is not in the power of a good intention to make a speech good. In this the matter failed: For what should such Saints doe in earthly Tabernacles, in Tabernacles of his making? And if he could be content to live there without a tent, (for he would have but three made,) why did he not much more conceive so of those Heavenly guests? And if he spoke this to retain them, how weak was it to think their absence would be for want of house-room? Or how could that at once be which *Moses* and *Elias* had told him, and that which he wished? For how should *Christ* both depart at *Jerusalem*, and stay in the Mount? Or if he would have their abode there,

there, to avoid the sufferings at *Jerusalem*, how did he yet again sing over that song for which he had heard before, *Come behind me, Satan*? Or if it had been fit for *Christ* to have staid there, how weakly doth he (which *Chrysostome* observes) equalize the Servant with the Master, the Saints with God? In a word, the best and the worst that can be said here of *Peter* is, that which the Psalmist saith of *Moses*, נטו' effutiit labiis, he spake unadvisedly with his lips, *Psal.* 106. 33.

Yet if any earthly place or condition might have given warrant to *Peter's* motion, this was it. Here was a Hill, the embleme of Heaven; here were two Saints, the Epitome of Heaven; here was *Christ*, the God of Heaven. And if *Peter* might not say so of this, how shall we say of any other place, *Bonum est esse hinc*? It is good to be here. Will ye say of the Country, *Bonum est esse hinc*? there is melancholick dulness, privacy, toil. Will you say of the Court, *Bonum est esse hinc*? there dwells ambition, secret undermining, attendance, serving of humours and times. Will ye say of the City, *Bonum est esse hinc*? there you find continual tumult, usury, cozenage in bargains, excess and disorder. Get you to the Wilderness, and say, *It is good to be here*. Even there evils will find us out. *In nemore habitat Lupus*, saith *Bernard*, *In the wood dwells the Wolf*: weariness and sorrow dwell every-where. The rich man wallows amongst his heaps, and when he is in his counting-house, beset with piles of bags, he can say, *Bonum est esse hinc*: He worships these molten Images; his Gold is his God, his Heaven is his Chest: not thinking of that which *Tertullian* notes, *Aurum ipsum quibusdam gentibus ad vincla servire*, that some Countries make their very fetters of gold: yea so doth he, whilst he admires it, making himself the slave to his servant, *Damnatus ad metalla*, as the old Roman punishment was. *Coacta servitus miserabilior, affectata miserior*; Forced bondage is more worthy of pity, affected bondage is more miserable. And if God's hand touch him never so little, can his Gold bribe a

disease, can his bags keep his head from aking, or the gout from his joynts? or doth his loathing stomack make a difference betwixt an earthen and silver dish? O vain desires, and impotent contentments of men, who place happiness in that which doth not onely save them from evils, but help to make them miserable! Behold, their wealth feeds them with famine, recreates them with toil, chears them with cares, blesses them with torments; and yet they say, *Bonum est esse hęc*. How are their sleeps broken with cares? how are their hearts broken with losses? Either Riches have wings, which in the clipping or pulling fly away, and take them to Heaven: or else their Souls have wings, (*Stulte, hęc nocte, Thou fool, this night,*) and fly from their riches to Hell. *Non Dominus, sed colonus*, saith *Seneca*, *Not the Lord, but the farmer*. So that here are both perishing riches, and a perishing Soul; *uncertainty of riches*, (as *S. Paul* to his *Timothy*) and certainty of misery. And yet these vain men say, *Bonum est esse hęc*.

The man of Honour, (that I may use *Bernard's* phrase) that hath *Assuerus* his proclamation made before him, which knows he is not onely *τις μέγας*, a certain great man, as *Simon* affected, but *ὁ ἀνὴρ*, the man, which *Demosthenes* was proud of, that sees all heads bare, and all knees bent to him, that finds himself out of the reach of envy, on the pitch of admiration, says, *Bonum est esse hęc*. Alas! how little thinks he of that which that good man said to his *Eugenius*, *Non est quòd blandiatur celsitudo, ubi sollicitudo major*; What care we for the fawning of that greatness, which is attended with more care? King *Henry* the Seventh's Embleme in all his buildings, (in the windows) was still a Crown in a bush of Thorns: I know not with what historicall allusion; but sure, I think, to imply that great places are not free from great cares. *Saul* knew what he did, when he hid himself among the stufte. No man knoweth the weight of a Scepter, but he that swaieth it. As for subordinate greatness, it hath so much less worth as it hath more dependence.

How.

How many sleepleſs nights, and reſtleſs days, and buſie ſhifts doth their ambition coſt them that affect eminence? Certainly, no men are ſo worthy of pity as they whoſe height thinks all others worthy of contempt. High places are ſlippery; and as it is eaſie to fall, ſo the ruine is deep, and the recovery difficult. *Altioſorem locum ſortitus es, non tutioſorem; ſublimioſorem, ſed non ſecurioſorem*, ſaith Bernard: *Thou haſt got an higher place, but not a ſafer; a loſtier, but not more ſecure.* *Aulæ culmen lubricum*, *The ſlippery ridge of the Court*, was the old title of Honour. *David's curſe* was, *Fiat via eorum tenebræ & lubricum*, *Let their way be made dark and ſlippery.* What difference is there betwixt his curſe and the happineſs of the Ambitious, but this, That the way of the one is dark and ſlippery, the way of the other liſtome and ſlippery; that dark, that they may fall, this light, that they may ſee and be ſeen to fall? Pleaſe your ſelves then, ye great ones, and let others pleaſe you in the admiration of your height. But if your goodneſs do not answer your greatneſs, *Sera querela eſt, quoniam elevans alliſiſti me*, *It is a late complaint, Thou haſt liſt me up to caſt me down.* Your ambition hath but ſet you up a ſcaffold, that your miſery might be more notorius. And yet theſe clients of Honour ſay, *Bonum eſt eſſe hîc.*

The pampered Glutton, when he ſeeth his table ſpred with full bowls, with coſtly diſhes and curious ſauces, the dainties of all three elements, ſays, *Bonum eſt eſſe hîc.* And yet eating hath a ſatiety, and ſatiety a wearineſs: his heart is never more empty of contentment, then when his ſtomack is full of Delicates. When he is empty, he is not well till he be filled; when he is full, he is not well till he have got a ſtomack: *Et momentanea blandimenta gula ſtercoris ſine condemnat*, ſaith Hierom, *And he condemns all the momentany pleaſures of his maw to the dunghill.* And when he ſits at his feaſts of marrow and fat things, (as the Prophet ſpeaks,) *his table*, according to the Pſalmiſt's imprecation, is *made his ſnare*; a true ſnare every way: his Soul

is caught in it with excess, his estate with penury, his Body with diseases. Neither doth he more plainly tear his meat in pieces with his teeth, then he doth himself. And yet this vain man says, *Bonum est esse hïc.*

The petulant Wanton thinks it the onely happiness, that he may have his full scope to filthy dalliance. Little would he so doe, if he could see his Strumpet as she is, her eyes the eyes of a Cockatrice, her hairs snakes, her painted face the visor of a fury, her heart snares, her hands bands, and her end wormwood, consumption of the flesh, destruction of the Soul, and the flames of lust ending in the flames of Hell. Since therefore neither Pleasures, nor Honour, nor Wealth, can yield any true contentment to their best favourites, let us not be so unwise as to speak of this vale of misery, as *Peter* did of the hill of *Tabor*, *Bonum est esse hïc.*

And if the best of earth cannot doe it, why will ye seek it in the worst? How dare any of you great ones seek to purchase contentment with Oppression, Sacrilege, Bribery, out-facing innocence and truth with power, damning your own Souls for but the humouring of a few miserable days? *Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde? ad quid diligitis vanitatem, & queritis mendacium? O ye sons of men, how long, &c?* But that which moved *Peter's* desire (though with imperfection) shews what will perfect our desire and felicity: for if a glimpse of this Heavenly glory did so ravish this worthy Disciple, that he thought it happiness enough to stand by and gaze upon it; how shall we be affected with the contemplation, yea fruition of the Divine Presence? Here was but *Tabor*, there is Heaven; here were but two Saints, there many millions of Saints and Angels; here was *Christ* transfigured, there he sits at the right hand of Majesty; here was a representation, there a gift and possession of Blessedness. Oh that we could now forget the world, and, fixing our eyes upon this better *Tabor*, say, *Bonum est esse hïc.* Alas! this life of ours, if it were

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were not short, yet it is miserable ; and if it were not miserable, yet it is short. Tell me, ye that have the greatest Command on earth, whether this vile world have ever afforded you any sincere contentation. The world is your servant : if it were your Parasite, yet could it make you heartily merry ? Ye delicatest Courtiers, tell me, if Pleasure it self have not an unpleasant tediousness hanging upon it, and more sting then honey. And whereas all happiness (even here below) is in the vision of God ; how is our spirituall eye hindered, as the body is from his Object, by darkness, by false light, by aversion ? Darkness ; he that doeth sin is in darkness : False light ; whilst we measure eternal things by temporary : Aversion ; whilst, as weak eyes hate the light, we turn our eyes from the true and immutable good, to the fickle and uncertain. We are not on the hill, but in the valley ; where we have tabernacles, not of our own making, but of clay ; and such as wherein we are witnesses of *Christ*, not transfigured in glory, but blemished with dishonour, dishonoured with oaths and blasphemies, re-crucified with our sins ; witnesses of God's Saints, not shining in *Tabor*, but mourning in darkness, and, in stead of that Heavenly brightness, cloathed with sackcloth and ashes. Then and there we shall have *tabernacles not made with hands, eternall in the heavens*, where we shall see how sweet the Lord is ; we shall see the triumphs of *Christ*, we shall hear and sing the *Hallelujahs* of Saints. *Quæ nunc nos angit vesania vitiorum, sitire absinthium, &c* ? faith that devout Father. Oh ! how hath our corruption bewitched us, to thirst for this wormwood, to affect the shipwrecks of this world, to dote upon the misery of this fading life ; and not rather to fly up to the felicity of Saints, to the society of Angels, to that blessed contemplation wherein we shall see God in himself, God in us, our selves in him ? There shall be no sorrow, no pain, no complaint, no fear, no death. There is no malice to rise against us, no misery to afflict us, no hunger, thirst, weariness

weariness, temptation to disquiet us. There, O there, one day is better then a thousand: There is rest from our labours, peace from our enemies, freedom from our sins. How many clouds of discontentment darken the Sunshine of our joy while we are here below? *Vae nobis qui vivimus plangere quæ pertulimus, dolere quæ sentimus, timere quæ expectamus!* Complaint of evils past, sense of present, fear of future, have shared our lives amongst them. Then shall we be *semper leti, semper satiati*, always joyfull, always satisfied with the vision of that God, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.* Shall we see that heathen *Cleombrotus* abandoning his life, and casting himself down from the rock, upon an uncertain noise of immortality; and shall not we Christians abandon the wicked superfluities of life, the pleasures of sin, for that life which we know more certainly then this? What stick we at, my beloved? Is there a Heaven? or is there none? have we a Saviour there? or have we none? We know there is a Heaven, as sure as that there is an earth below us; we know we have a Saviour there, as sure as there are men that we converse with upon earth; we know there is happiness, as sure as we know there is misery and mutability upon earth. Oh our miserable sottishness and infidelity, if we do not contemn the best offers of the world, and, lifting up our eyes and hearts to Heaven, say, *Bonum est esse hic!*

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. To him that hath purchased and prepared this Glory for us, together with the Father and Blessed Spirit, one Incomprehensible God, be all praise for ever.—*Amen.*

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The Prosecution of the Transfiguration.

BEfore, the Disciples eyes were dazzled with Glory ; now, the brightness of that Glory is shaded with a *Cloud*. Frail and feeble eyes of mortality cannot look upon an Heavenly luster. That *Cloud* imports both Majesty and obscuration. Majesty ; for it was the testimony of God's presence of old : the *Cloud* covered the Mountain, the *Tabernacle*, the *Oracle*. He that makes the clouds his chariot, was in a cloud carried up into Heaven. Where have we mention of any Divine representation, but a *Cloud* is one part of it ? What comes nearer to Heaven, either in place or resemblance ? Obscuration : for as it shew'd there was a Majesty, and that Divine ; so it shew'd them that the view of that Majesty was not for bodily eyes. Like as when some great Prince walks under a *Canopy*, that veil shews there is a Great person under it, but withall restrains the eye from a free sight of his person. And if the cloud were clear, yet it shaded them. Why then was this cloud interposed betwixt that glorious Vision and them, but for a check of their bold eyes ?

Had they too long gazed upon this resplendent spectacle, as their eyes had been blinded, so their hearts had perhaps grown to an over-bold familiarity with that Heavenly Object : How seasonably doth the cloud intercept it ? The wise God knows our need of these vicissitudes and allays. If we have a light, we must have a cloud ; if a light to cheer us, we must have a cloud to humble us. It was so in *Sinai*, it was so in *Sion*, it was so in *Olivet* ; it shall never

be but so. The naturall day and night do not more duely interchange then this light and cloud. Above we shall have the light without the cloud, a clear vision and fruition of God without all dim and sad interpositions: below we cannot be free from these mists and clouds of sorrow and misapprehension.

But this was a *bright cloud*. There is difference betwixt the cloud in *Tabor*, and that in *Sinai*: This was clear, that darksome. There is darkness in the Law, there is light in the grace of the Gospel. *Moses* was there spoken to in darkness; here he was spoken with in light. In that dark cloud there was terrour; in this there was comfort. Though it were a Cloud then, yet it was bright; and though it were bright, yet it was a Cloud. With much light there was some shade. God would not speak to them concerning *Christ* out of darkness: neither yet would he manifest himself to them in an absolute brightness. All his appearances have this mixture. What need I other instance then in these two Saints? *Moses* spake oft to God mouth to mouth: yet not so immediately, but that there was ever somewhat drawn as a curtain betwixt God and him; either fire in *Horeb*, or smoak in *Sinai*: so as his face was not more veiled from the people, then God's from him. *Elias* shall be spoken to by God, but in the rock, and under a mantle. In vain shall we hope for any revelation from God, but in a cloud. Worldly hearts are in utter darkness, they see not so much as the least glimpse of these Divine beams, not a beam of that inaccessible light: The best of his Saints see him here but in a cloud, or in a glass. Happy are we, if God have honoured us with these Divine representations of himself. Once, *in his light we shall see light*.

I can easily think with what amazedness these three Disciples stood compassed in that bright Cloud, expecting some miraculous event of so Heavenly a Vision; when suddenly they might hear a voice sounding out of that
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Cloud saying, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; hear him.* They need not be told whose that voice was ; the place, the matter evinced it. No Angel in Heaven could, or durst have said so. How gladly doth *Peter* afterwards recount it ? *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, &c.*

It was onely the ear that was here taught, not the eye. As of *Horeb*, so of *Sinai*, so of *Tabor* might God say, *Ye saw no shape nor image in that day that the Lord spake unto you.* He that knows our proneness to idolatry, avoids those occasions which we might take to abuse our own fancies.

Twice hath God spoken these words to his own Son from Heaven ; once in his Baptism, and now again in his Transfiguration. Here not without some oppositive comparison ; Not *Moses*, not *Elias*, but *This*. *Moses* and *Elias* were Servants ; this a *Son*. *Moses* and *Elias* were sons, but of grace and choice ; this is *that Son*, the Son by nature. Other sons are *beloved* as of favour, and free election ; this is *The Beloved*, as in the unity of his essence. Others are so beloved, that he is pleased with themselves ; this so beloved, that *in* and for *him* he is *pleased* with mankind. As the relation betwixt the Father and the Son is infinite, so is the Love. We measure the intension of Love by the extension : The love that rests in the person affected alone, is but streight ; true Love descends (like *Aaron's Ointment*) from the head to the skirts, to children, friends, allies. O incomprehensibly-large love of God the Father to the Son, that for his sake he is pleased with the world ! O perfect and happy complacence ! Out of *Christ* there is nothing but enmity betwixt God and the Soul ; in him there can be nothing but peace. When the beams are met in one center, they do not onely heat, but burn. Our weak love is diffused to many ; God hath some, the world more ; and therein wives, children, friends :

but this infinite love of God hath all the beams of it united in one onely Object, the Son of his Love. Neither doth he love any thing but in the participation of his Love, in the derivation from it. O God, let me be found in *Christ*, and how canst thou but be pleased with me ?

This one voice proclaims *Christ* at once the Son of God, the Reconciler of the world, the Doctour and Law-giver of his Church. As the Son of God, he is essentially interestted in his Love : as he is the Reconciler of the world in whom God is well pleased, he doth most justly challenge our love and adherence : as he is the Doctour and Law-giver, he doth justly challenge our audience, our obedience. Even so, Lord, teach us to hear and obey thee as our Teacher ; to love thee and believe in thee as our Reconciler ; and as the eternall Son of thy Father to adore thee.

The light caused wonder in the Disciples ; but the voice astonishment : They are all fallen down upon their faces. Who can blame a mortall man to be thus affected with the voice of his Maker ? Yet this word was but plausible and hortatory. O God, how shall flesh and bloud be other then swallowed up with the horror of thy dreadfull sentence of death ? *The Lion shall roar, who shall not be afraid ?* How shall those who have slighted the sweet voice of thine invitations, call to the rocks to hide them from the terrour of thy Judgments ?

The God of mercies pities our infirmities. I do not hear our Saviour say, Ye lay sleeping one while upon the earth ; now ye lie astonished : Ye could neither wake to see, nor stand to hear ; now lie still and tremble. But he graciously touches and comforts them ; *Arise, fear not.* That voice which shall once raise them up out of the earth, might well raise them up from it. That hand which by the least touch restored sight, lims, life, might well restore the spirits of the dismaied. O Saviour, let that sovereign hand of thine touch us when we lie in the trances of our griefs, in the bed of our securities, in the grave of our sins, and we shall arise.

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They looking up saw no man save Jesus alone: and that doubtless in his wonted form. All was now gone, *Moses, Elias,* the Cloud, the Voice, the Glory : *Tabor* it self cannot be long blessed with that Divine light and those shining guests. Heaven will not allow to earth any long continuance of Glory. Onely above is constant Happiness to be look'd for and enjoyed, where we shall ever see our Saviour in his unchangeable brightness; where the light shall never be either clouded or varied.

Moses and *Elias* are gone, onely *Christ* is left. The glory of the Law and the Prophets was but temporary, yea momentany ; that onely *Christ* may remain to us intire and conspicuous. They came but to give testimony to *Christ* ; when that is done, they are vanished.

Neither could these raised Disciples find any miss of *Moses* and *Elias*, when they had *Christ* still with them. Had *Jesus* been gone, and left either *Moses* or *Elias*, or both, in the Mount with his Disciples, that presence (though glorious) could not have comforted them. Now that they are gone, and he is left, they cannot be capable of discomfort. O Saviour, it matters not who is away, whilst thou art with us. Thou art God all-sufficient ; what can we want when we want not thee ? Thy presence shall make *Tabor* it self an Heaven : yea, Hell it self cannot make us miserable with the fruition of thee.

XXXII.

The Woman taken in Adultery.

WHat a busie life was this of *Christ's* ? He spent the night in the mount of Olives, the day in the Temple : whereas the night is for a retired repose, the day for company. His retiredness was for prayer ; his companiableness was for preaching. All night he watches in the

Mount ; all the morning he preaches in the Temple. It was not for pleasure that he was here upon earth ; his whole time was penall and toilsome. How do we resemble him, if his life were all pain and labour, ours all pastime ?

He found no such fair success the day before : *The multitude was divided in their opinion of him* ; messengers were sent and suborned to apprehend him : yet he returns to the Temple. It is for the sluggard or the coward to plead *a Lion in the way* : upon the calling of God, we must overlook and contemn all the spight and opposition of men. Even after an ill harvest we must sow ; and after denials we must woe for God.

This Sun of Righteousness prevents that other, and shines early with wholsome doctrines upon the Souls of his hearers. The Auditory is both thronged, and attentive. Yet not all with the same intentions : If the people came to learn, the Scribes and Pharisees came to cavill and carp at his teaching. With what a pretence of zeal and justice yet do they put themselves into *Christ's* presence ? As lovers of Chastity and Sanctimony, and haters of Uncleaness, *they bring to him a Woman taken in the flagrance of her Adultery.*

And why the Woman rather ? since the Man's offence was equall, if not more ; because he should have had more strength of resistence, more grace not to tempt. Was it out of necessity ? Perhaps, the man, knowing his danger, made use of his strength to shift away, and violently brake from his apprehenders. Or was it out of cunning ? in that they hoped for more likely matter to accuse *Christ* in the case of the woman, then of the man : for that they supposed his mercifull disposition might more probably incline to compassionate her weaknes, rather then the stronger vessell.

Or was it rather out of partiality ? Was it not then, as now, that the weakest soonest suffers ; and impotency lays

us open to the malice of an enemy? Small flies hang in the webs, whilst wasps break through without controll. The wand and the sheet are for poor offenders; the great either out-face or out-buy their shame. A beggarly drunkard is haled to the Stocks, whilst the rich is chambered up to sleep out his surfeit.

Out of these grounds is the woman brought to *Christ*: Not to the mount of Olives, not to the way, not to his private lodging; but to the Temple: and that not to some obscure angle; but into the face of the assembly.

They pleaded for her death; the punishment which they would onwards inflict was her shame: which must needs be so much more, as there were more eyes to be witnesses of her guiltiness. All the brood of sin affects darkness and secrecy, but this more properly; the twilight, the night is for the adulterer. It cannot be better fitted then to be dragged out into the light of the Sun, and to be proclaimed with hootings and basins. Oh the impudence of those men who can make merry professions of their own beastliness, and boast of the shamefull trophees of their Lust!

Methinks I see this miserable Adulteress how she stands confounded amidst that gazing and disdainfull multitude; how she hides her head, how she wipes her blubbered face and weeping eyes. In the mean time it is no dumb show that is here acted by these Scribes and Pharisees; they step forth boldly to her accusation. *Master, this Woman was taken in adultery in the very act.* How plausibly do they begin? Had I stood by and heard them, should I not have said, What holy, honest, conscionable men are these? what devout clients of *Christ*? with what reverence they come to him? with what zeal of justice? When he that made and ransacks their bosom tells me, *All this is done but to tempt him.* Even the falsest hearts will have the plausiblest mouths: like to *Solomon's* Curtizan, *their lips drop as an hony-comb, and their mouth is smoother then oyl; but their end is bitter as wormwood.*

False and hollow Pharisees, he is your Master whom ye serve, not he whom ye tempt : onely in this shall he be approved your Master, that he shall pay your wages, and give you your portion with hypocrites.

The act of Adultery was her crime : to be taken in the very act, was no part of her sin, but the proof of her just conviction : yet her deprehension is made an aggravation of her shame. Such is the corrupt judgement of the world : To doe ill troubles not men, but to be taken in doing it : unknown filchinesse passeth away with ease ; it is the notice that perplexes them , not the guilt. But, O foolish sinners, all your packing and secrecy cannot so contrive it, but that ye shall be taken in the manner ; your Conscience takes you so ; the God of Heaven takes you so : and ye shall once find that your Conscience is more then a thousand witnesses, and God more then a thousand Consciences.

They that complain of the act, urge the punishment ; *Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such should be stoned.* Where did *Moses* bid so ? Surely the particularity of this execution was without the book. Tradition and custome enacted it, not the Law.

Indeed *Moses* commanded death to both the offenders, not the manner of death to either : By analogy it holds thus. It is flatly commanded in the case of a Damsell betrothed to an Husband, and found not to be a Virgin ; in the case of a Damsell betrothed, who, being defiled in the city, cried not : Tradition and custome made up the rest ; obtaining, out of this ground , that all Adulterers should be executed by lapidation. The ancients punishment was burning ; death always, though in divers forms. I shame to think that Christians should slight that sin which both *Jews* and *Pagans* held ever deadly.

What a mis-citation is this? *Moses commanded.* The Law, was God's, not *Moses's*. If *Moses* were employed to mediate betwixt God and *Israel*, the Law is never the more his :

his : He was the hand of God to reach the Law to *Israel*, the hand of *Israel* to take it from God. We do not name the water from the pipes, but from the spring. It is not for a true *Israelite* to rest in the second means, but to mount up to the supreme originall of justice. How reverent soever an opinion was had of *Moses*, he cannot be thus named without a shamefull undervaluing of the royall Law of his Maker. There is no mortall man whose authority may not grow into contempt : that of the ever-living God cannot but be ever sacred and inviolable. It is now with the Gospel, as it was then with the Law : the word is no other then *Christ's*, though delivered by our weakness ; whosoever be the Crier, the Proclamation is the King's of Heaven. Whilst it goes for ours, it is no marvell if it lie open to despiht.

How captious a word is this? *Moses* said thus, *what saiest thou?* If they be not sure that *Moses* said so, why do they affirm it? and if they be sure, why do they question that which they know decided? They would not have desired a better advantage, then a contradiction to that received Law-giver. It is their profession, *We are Moses's disciples;* and, *We know that God spake to Moses.* It had been quarrel enough to oppose so known a Prophet. Still I find it the drift of the enemies of truth, to set *Christ* and *Moses* together by the ears; in the matter of the Sabbath, of Circumcision, of Marriage and Divorce, of the use of the Law, of Justification by the Law, of the sense and extent of the Law, and where not? But they shall never be able to effect it : they two are fast and indissoluble friends on both parts for ever; each speaks for other, each establishes other; they are subordinate, they cannot be opposite; *Moses* faithfull as a servant, *Christ* as a Son. A faithfull servant cannot but be officious to the Son. The true use we make of *Moses* is, to be our Schoolmaster to teach us, to whip us unto *Christ*; the true use we make of *Christ* is, to supply *Moses*. *By him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

Thus must we hold in with both, if we will have our part in either : So shall *Moses* bring us to *Christ*, and *Christ* to glory.

Had these Pharisees out of simplicity, and desire of resolution in a case of doubt, moved this question to our Saviour, it had been no less commendable then now it is blameworthy.

O Saviour, whither should we have recourse but to thine Oracle? Thou art the Word of the Father, the Doctour of the Church. Whilst we hear from others, What say Fathers? what say Councils? let them hear from us, *What sayest thou?*

But here it was far otherwise : they came not to learn, but to tempt ; and to tempt that they might accuse. Like their Father the Devil, who solicits to sin, that he may plead against us for yeldance. Fain would these colloquing adversaries draw *Christ* to contradict *Moses*, that they might take advantage of his contradiction.

On the one side, they saw his readiness to tax the false glosses which their presumptuous Doctours had put upon the Law, with an *I say unto you* : on the other, they saw his inclination to mercy and commiseration in all his courses, so far as to neglect even some circumstances of the Law ; as, to touch the Leper, to heal on the Sabbath, to eat with known sinners, to dismiss an infamous (but penitent) offender, to select and countenance two noted Publicans : and hereupon they might perhaps think that his compassion might draw him to cross this Mosaical institution.

What a crafty bait is here laid for our Saviour? Such as he cannot bite at, and not be taken. It seems to them impossible he should avoid a deep prejudice either to his justice or mercy. For thus they imagine ; Either *Christ* will second *Moses* in sentencing this woman to death, or else he will cross *Moses* in dismissing her unpunished. If he command her to be stoned, he loses the honour of his clemency and Mercy ; if he appoint her dismissal, he loses the honour of his Justice. Indeed, strip him of either of these, and he can be no Saviour. O the

O the cunning folly of vain men, that hope to beguile Wisdom it self!

Silence and neglect shall first confound those men, whom after his answer will send away convicted. In stead of opening his mouth, our Saviour bows his body; and in stead of returning words from his lips, writes characters on the ground with his finger. O Saviour, I had rather silently wonder at thy gesture, then inquire curiously into the words thou wrotest, or the mysteries of thus writing: one-ly herein I see thou meanteest to shew a disregard to these malicious and busy cavillers. Sometimes taciturnity and contempt are the best answers. Thou that hast bidden us *Be wise as serpents*, givest us this noble example of thy prudence. It was most safe that these tempters should be thus kept fasting with a silent disrespect, that their eagerness might justly draw upon them an insuing shame.

The more unwillingness they saw in *Christ* to give his answer, the more pressive and importunate they were to draw it from him. Now, as forced by their so zealous irritation, our Saviour rouseth up himself, and gives it them home, with a reprehensory and stinging satisfaction; *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* As if his very action had said, "I was loth to have shamed you; and therefore could have been willing not to have heard your ill-meant motion: but since you will needs have it, and by your vehemence force my justice, I must tell you, there is not one of you but is as faulty as she whom ye accuse; there is no difference, but that your sin is smothered in secrecy, hers is brought forth into the light. Ye had more need to make your own peace by an humble repentance, then to urge severity against another. I deny not but *Moses* hath justly from God imposed the penalty of death upon such hainous offences: but what then would become of you? If death be her due, yet not by those your unclean hands: your hearts know you are not honest enough to accuse.

Lo, not the bird, but the fouler is taken. He says not, Let her be stoned ; this had been against the course of his Mercy : he says not, Let her not be stoned ; this had been against the Law of *Moses*. Now he so answers, that both his Justice and Mercy are entire ; she dismissed, they shamed.

It was the manner of the *Jews*, in those hainous crimes that were punished with Lapidation, that the witnesses and accusers should be the first that should lay hands upon the guilty : well doth our Saviour therefore choak these accusers with the conscience of their so foul incompetency. With what face, with what heart could they stone their own sin in another person ?

Honesty is too mean a term. These Scribes and Pharisees were noted for extraordinary and admired Holiness : the outside of their lives was not onely inoffensive, but Saint-like and exemplary. Yet that all-seeing eye of the Son of God., which *found folly in the Angels*, hath much more found wickedness in these glorious Professours. It is not for nothing that *his eyes are like a flame of fire*. What secret is there which he searches not ? Retire your selves, O ye foolish sinners, into your inmost closets, yea (if ye can) into the center of the earth ; his eye follows you, and observes all your carriages : no bolt, no bar, no darkness can keep him out. No thief was ever so impudent as to steal in the very face of the Judge. O God, let me see my self seen by thee, and I shall not dare to offend.

Besides notice, here is exprobration. These mens sins, as they had been secret, so they were forgotten. It is long since they were done ; neither did they think to have heard any more news of them. And now when time and security had quite worn them out of thought, he that shall once be their Judge, calls them to a back-reckoning.

One time or other shall that just God lay our sins in our dish, and make us possess the sins of our youth. *These things thou didst, and I kept silence ; and thou thoughtest I was like unto thy self: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee.*

thee. The penitent man's sin lies before him for his humiliation ; the impenitent's, for his shame and confusion.

The act of sin is transient, not so the guilt ; that will stick by us, and return upon us, either in the height of our security, or the depth of our misery, when we shall be least able to bear it. How just may it be with God to take us at advantages, and then to lay his arrest upon us when we are laid up upon a former suit ?

It is but just there should be a requisition of innocence in them that prosecute the vices of others. The offender is worthy of stoning, but who shall cast them ? How ill would they become hands as guilty as her own ? What do they but smite themselves, who punish their own offences in other men ? Nothing is more unjust or absurd, than for the beam to censure the moat, the oven to upbraid the kiln. It is a false and vagrant zeal that begins not first at home.

Well did our Saviour know how bitter and strong a pill he had given to these false Justiciaries ; and now he will take leisure to see how it wrought : whilst therefore he gives time to them to swallow it, and put it over, he returns to his old gesture of a seeming inadvertency. How sped the receipt ?

I do not see any one of them stand out with *Christ*, and plead his own innocency ; and yet these men (which is very remarkable) placed the fulfilling or violation of the Law onely in the outward act. Their hearts misgave them, that if they should have stood out in contestation with *Christ*, he would have utterly shamed them, by displaying their old and secret sins ; and have so convinced them by undeniable circumstances, that they should never have clawed off the reproach : *And therefore when they heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.*

There might seem to be some kind of mannerly order in this guilty departure. Not all at once ; lest they should

seem violently chased away by this charge of *Christ* : now their flinking away *one by one* may seem to carry a shew of a deliberate and voluntary discession. *The eldest* first. The ancients are fitter to give than take example ; and the younger could think it no shame to follow the steps of a grave fore-man.

O wonderfull power of conscience ! Man can no more stand out against it, then it can stand out against God. The Almighty, whose substitute is set in our bosome, sets it on work to accuse. It is no denying, when that says we are guilty ; when that condemns us, in vain are we acquitted by the world. With what bravery did these Hypocrites come to set upon *Christ* ? with what triumph did they insult upon that guilty Soul ? Now they are thunder-struck with their own Conscience, and drop away confounded ; and well is he that can run away farthest from his own shame. No wicked man needs to seek out of himself for a Judge, Accuser, Witness, Tormentour.

No sooner do these Hypocrites hear of their sins from the mouth of *Christ*, then they are gone. Had they been sincerely touched with a true remorse, they would have rather come to him upon their knees, and have said, " Lord, we know and find that thou knowest our secret sins ; this argues thy Divine Omniscience. Thou that art able to know our sins, art able to remit them. O pardon the iniquities of thy servants. Thou that accusest us, do thou also acquit us. But now in stead hereof, they turn their back upon their Saviour, and haste away.

An impenitent man cares not how little he hath either of the presence of God, or of the mention of his sins. O fools ! if ye could run away from God, it were somewhat ; but whilst ye move in him, what doe ye ? whither go ye ? Ye may run from his Mercy, ye cannot but run upon his Judgement.

Christ is left alone. Alone in respect of these complainants ; not alone in respect of the multitude : there yet stands the mournfull Adulteress. She might have gone forth with

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with them ; no body constrained her stay : but that which sent them away, stayed her, Conscience. She knew her guiltiness was publickly accused, and durst not be by herself denied : as one that was therefore fastened there by her own guilty heart, she stirs not till she may receive a dismissal.

Our Saviour was not so busie in writing, but that he read the while the guilt and absence of those accusers ; he that knew what they had done, knew no less what they did, what they would doe. Yet, as if the matter had been strange to him, *he lifts up himself, and says, Woman, where are thy accusers ?*

How well was this sinner to be left there ? Could she be in a safer place then before the Tribunall of a Saviour ? Might she have chosen her refuge, whither should she rather have fled ? O happy we, if when we are convinced in our selves of our sins, we can set our selves before that Judge who is our Surety, our Advocate, our Redeemer, our ransome, our peace !

Doubtless, she stood doubtfull betwixt hope and fear ; Hope, in that she saw her accusers gone ; Fear, in that she knew what she had deserved : and now whilst she trembles in expectation of a sentence, she hears, *Woman, where are thy accusers ?*

Wherein our Saviour intends the satisfaction of all the hearers, of all the beholders : that they might apprehend the guiltiness, and therefore the unfitness, of the accusers ; and might well see there was no warrantable ground of his farther proceeding against her.

Two things are necessary for the execution of a Malefactor, Evidence, Sentence ; the one from Witnesses, the other from the Judge. Our Saviour asks for both. The accusation and proof must draw on the sentence ; the sentence must proceed upon the evidence of the proof. *Where are thy accusers ? hath no man condemned thee ?* Had sentence passed legally upon the Adulterers, doubtless our Saviour.

Saviour would not have acquitted her : For as he would not intrude upon others offices, so he would not cross or violate the justice done by others. But now, finding the coast clear, he says, *Neither do I condemn thee.*

What, Lord ? dost thou then shew favour to foul offenders ? Art thou rather pleased that gross sins should be blanch'd, and sent away with a gentle connivency ? Far, far be this from the perfection of thy Justice. He that hence argues Adulteries not punishable by death, let him argue the unlawfulness of dividing of inheritances, because in the case of the two wrangling brethren thou saidst, *Who made me a divider of inheritances ?* Thou declinedst the office, thou didst not dislike the act, either of parting lands, or punishing offenders. Neither was here any absolution of the woman from a sentence of death, but a dismissal of her from thy sentence, which thou knewest not proper for thee to pronounce. Herein hadst thou respect to thy calling, and to the main purpose of thy coming into the world ; which was neither to be an arbiter of Civil Causes, nor a judge of Criminal, but a Saviour of mankind ; not to destroy the Body, but to save the Soul. And this was thy care in this miserable Offender ; *Goe, and sin no more.* How much more doth it concern us to keep within the bounds of our vocation, and not to dare to trench upon the functions of others ? How can we ever enough magnifie thy Mercy, who takest no pleasure in the death of a sinner ? who so camest to save, that thou challengest us of unkindness for being miserable, *Why will ye die, O house of Israel ?*

But, O Son of God, though thou wouldst not then be a Judge, yet thou wilt once be : Thou wouldst not in thy first coming judge the sins of men, thou wilt come to judge them in thy second. The time shall come when upon that just and glorious Tribunall thou shalt judge every man according to his works. That we may not one day hear thee say, *Goe, ye cursed,* let us now hear thee say, *Goe, sin no more.*

XXXIII.

The Thankfull Penitent.

ONE while I find *Christ* invited by a Publican, now by a Pharisee. Where-ever he went, he made better cheer then he found, in an happy exchange of spirituall rest for bodily.

Who knows not the Pharisees to have been the proud enemies of *Christ*; men over-conceited of themselves, contemptuous of others; severe in shew, Hypocrites in deed, strict Sectaries, insolent Justiciaries? Yet here one of them invites *Christ*; and that in good earnest. The man was not (like his fellows) captious, not ceremonious: had he been of their stamp, the omission of washing the feet had been mortall. No profession hath not yielded some good: *Nicodemus* and *Gamaliel* were of the same strain. Neither is it for nothing, that the Evangelist having branded this Sect for despising the counsell of God against themselves, presently subjoyns this history of *Simon* the Pharisee, as an exempt man. O Saviour, thou canst find out good Pharisees, good Publicans, yea a good Thief upon the Cross; and that thou maist find, thou canst make them so.

At the best, yet he was a Pharisee, whose table thou here refusedst not. So didst thou in wisdom and mercy attemper thy self, as to *become all things to all men, that thou mightest win some*. Thy Harbenger was rough, as in cloaths, so in disposition; professedly harsh and austere: thy self wert milde and sociable. So it was fit for both. He was a preacher of Penance; thou the authour of comfort and Salvation: He made way for Grace; thou gavest it. Thou hast bidden us to follow thy self, not thy Fore-runner. That then which Politicks and time-servers doe for earthly advantages, we will doe for spirituall; frame our selves to all companies, not in

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evil,

evil, but in good, yea in indifferent things. What wonder is it that thou, who camest down from Heaven to frame thy self to our nature, shouldst, whilst thou wert on earth, frame thy self to the severall dispositions of men? Catch not at this, O ye licentious Hypocrites, men of all hours, that can eat with gluttons, drink with drunkards, sing with ribalds, scoffe with profane scorers, and yet talk holily with the religious, as if ye had hence any colour for your changeable conformity to all fashions. Our Saviour never sinn'd for any man's sake, though for our sakes he was sociable, that he might keep us from sinning. Can ye so converse with leud good-fellows, as that ye repress their sins, redress their exorbitances, win them to God? now ye walk in the steps of him that stuck not to sit down in the Pharisee's house.

There sate the Saviour, and, *Behold, a woman in the City that was a sinner.* I marvell not that she is led in with a note of wonder; wonder, both on her part, and on *Christ's*. That any sinner, that a sensuall sinner obdured in a notorious trade of evil, should voluntarily, out of a true remorse for her leudness, seek to a Saviour, it is worthy of an accent of admiration. The noise of the Gospel is common; but where is the power of it? it hath store of hearers, but few converts. Yet were there no wonder in her, if it were not with reference to the power and mercy of *Christ*; his power that thus drew the sinner, his mercy that received her. O Saviour, I wonder at her, but I blest thee for her; by whose onely Grace she was both moved, and accepted.

A sinner? Alas, who was not? who is not so? Not onely in many things we sin all; but in all things we all let fall many sins. Had there been a woman not a sinner, it had been beyond wonder. One man there was that was not a sinner; even he that was more then man, that God and Man, who was the refuge of this sinner: but never woman that sinned not. Yet he said not, a Woman that had sinned, but, *that was a sinner.* An action doth not give denomination, but a trade.

a trade. Even the wise Charity of Christians (much more the mercy of God) can distinguish between sins of infirmity, and practice of sin; and esteem us not by a transient act, but by a permanent condition.

The woman was noted for a luxurious and incontinent life. What a deal of variety there is of sins? That which faileth cannot be numbred. Every sin continued deserves to brand the Soul with this style. Here one is pickt out from the rest: she is not noted for Murther, for Theft, for Idolatry; onely her Lust makes her a woman that was a sinner. Other Vices use not to give the owner this title, although they should be more hainous then it.

Wantons may flatter themselves in the indifferency or slightness of this offence; their Souls shall need no other conveyance to Hell then this: which cannot be so pleasing to Nature as it is hatefull to God, who so speaks of it as if there were no sins but it, *a Woman that was a sinner.*

She was a sinner, now she is not; her very presence argues her change. Had she been still in her old trade, she would no more have endured the sight of *Christ*, then that Devil did which cried out, *Art thou come to torment me?* Her eyes had been lamps and fires of Lust, not fountains of tears; her hairs had been nets to catch foolish lovers, not a towell for her Saviour's feet: yet still she carries the name of what she was; a scar still remains after the wound healed. *Simon* will be ever the Leper, and *Matthew* the Publican. How carefully should we avoid those actions which may ever stain us?

What a difference there is betwixt the carriage and proceedings of God and men? The mercy of God, as it *calleth those things that are not as if they were*, so it calleth those things that were as if they were not; *I will remember your iniquities no more.* As some skilfull Chirurghion so sets the bone, or heals the sore, that it cannot be seen where the complaint was. Man's word is, that which is done cannot be undone: but the omnipotent goodness of God doth (as it

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were) undoe our once-committed sins. *Take away my iniquity, and thou shalt find none.* What we were in our selves, we are not to him, since he hath changed us from our selves.

O God, why should we be niggardly, where thou art liberal? why should we be reading those lines which thou hast not onely crossed, but quite blotted, yea wiped out?

It is a good word; *She was a sinner.* To be wicked, is odious to God, Angels, Saints, men; to have been so, is blessed and glorious. I rejoyce to look back, and see my *Egyptians* lying dead upon the shore, that I may praise the Authour of my deliverance and victory. Else, it matters not what they were, what I was. O God, thou whose title is, *I am,* regardest the present. He befriends and honours us that says, *Such ye were, but ye are washed.*

The Place adds to the hainoufness of the sin; *In the City.* The more publick the fact is, the greater is the scandall. Sin is sin, though in a desert. Others eyes do not make the act more vile in it self; but the offence is multiplied by the number of beholders.

I hear no Name of either the City or the Woman; she was too well known in her time. How much better is it to be obscure, then infamous? Herein, I doubt not, God meant to spare the reputation of a penitent Convert. He who hates not the person, but the sin, cares onely to mention the sin, not the person. It is justice to prosecute the Vice, it is mercy to spare the Offender. How injurious a presumption is it for any man to name her whom God would have concealed? and to cast this aspersion on those whom God hath noted for holiness?

The worst of this woman is past, *She was a sinner;* the best is to come, She sought out *Jesus.* Where? In the house of a Pharisee. It was the most inconvenient place in the world for a noted sinner to seek *Christ* in.

No men stood so much upon the terms of their own Righteousness; no men so scornfully disdained an infamous person. The touch of an ordinary (though honest) *Jew*
was

was their pollution; how much more the presence of a Strumpet? What a sight was a known sinner to him, to whom his holiest neighbour was a sinner? How doth he (though a better Pharisee) look awry to see such a piece in his house, whilst he dares think, *If this man were a Prophet, he would surely know what manner of woman this is?* Neither could she fore-imagine less, when she ventured to press over the threshold of a Pharisee. Yet not the known austerities of the man, and her mis-welcome to the place, could affright her from seeking her Saviour even there. No disadvantage can defer the Penitent Soul from a speedy recourse to *Christ*. She says not, "If *Jesus* were in the street, or in the field, or in the house of some humble Publican, or any-where save with a Pharisee, I would come to him; now I will rather defer my access, then seek him where I shall find scorn and censure: but, as not fearing the frowns of that overly Host, she thrusts her self into *Simon's* house to find *Jesus*. It is not for the distressed to be bashfull; it is not for a believer to be timorous. O Saviour, if thy Spouse miss thee, she will seek thee through the streets; the blows of the watch shall not daunt her. If thou be on the other side of the water, a *Peter* will leap into the Sea, and swim to thee: if on the other side of the fire, thy blessed Martyrs will run through those flames to thee. We are not worthy of the comfort of thy presence, if wheresoever we know thou art, whether in prison, or in exile, or at the stake, we do not hasten thither to enjoy thee.

The Place was not more unfit then the Time: a Pharisee's house was not more unproper for a sinner, then a Feast was for humiliation. Tears at a Banquet are as Jiggs at a Funeral. There is a season for all things. Musick had been more apt for a Feast then mourning.

The heart that hath once felt the sting of sin, and the sweetness of remission, hath no power to delay the expressions of what it feels, and cannot be confined to terms of circumstance.

Whence then was this zeal of her access? Doubtless, she had heard from the mouth of *Christ*, in those heavenly Sermons of his, many gracious invitations of all troubled and labouring Souls; she had observed how he vouchsafed to come under the roofs of despised Publicans, of professed enemies; she had noted all the passages of his power and mercy; and now deep remorse wrought upon her heart for her former viciousness. The pool of her Conscience was troubled by the descending Angel, and now she steps in for a cure. The arrow stuck fast in her Soul, which she could not shake out; and now she comes to this sovereign Dittany, to expell it. Had not the Spirit of God wrought upon her ere she came, and wrought her to come, she had never either sought or found *Christ*. Now she comes in, and finds that Saviour whom she sought: she comes in, but not empty-handed: though debauched, she was a *Jewess*. She could not but have heard that she ought *not* to appear before the Lord empty. What then brings she? It was not possible she could bring to *Christ* a better present than her own Penitent Soul: yet, to testify that, she brings another, delicate both for the vessell and the contents, a *box of Alabaster*; a solid, hard, pure, clear marble, fit for the receipt of so precious an ointment: the ointment pleasant and costly; a composition of many fragrant Odours, not for medicine, but delight.

The Soul that is truly touched with the sense of its own sin can think nothing too good, too dear for *Christ*. The remorseful sinner begins first with the tender of *burnt-offerings and calves of a year old*; thence he ascends to *Hecatombs, thousands of rams*; and above that yet, to *ten thousand rivers of oyl*; and yet higher, could be content to give the *first-fruit of his body* to expiate the *sin of his Soul*. Any thing, every thing is too small a price for peace. O Saviour, since we have tasted how sweet thou art, lo, we bring thee the daintiest and costliest perfumes of our humble Obediences: yea, if so much of our blood, as this woman

woman brought oyntment, may be usefull or pleasing to thy name, we do most chearfully consecrate it unto thee. If we would not have thee think Heaven too good for us, why should we stick at any earthly retribution to thee in lieu of thy great mercies?

Yet here I see more then the price. This odoriferous perfume was that wherewith she had wont to make her self pleasing to her wanton Lovers; and now she comes purposely to offer it up to her Saviour.

As her Love was turned another way from sensuall to Divine, so shall her Ointment also be altered in the use: that which was abused to Luxury, shall now be consecrated to Devotion. There is no other effect in whatsoever true Conversion. *As we have given our members servants to iniquity to commit iniquity, so shall we now give our members servants unto righteousness in holiness.* If the dames of Israel, that thought nothing more worth looking on then their own faces, have spent too much time in their glasses; now they shall cast in those metalls to make a Laver for the washing of their uncleanneses. If I have spent the prime of my strength, the strength of my wit, upon my self and vanity; I have bestowed my Alabaſter-box amiss: O now teach me, my God and Saviour, to improve all my time, all my abilities to thy glory. This is all the poor recompence can be made thee for those shamefull dishonours thou hast received from me.

The Woman is come in; and now she doth not boldly face *Christ*, but, as unworthy of his presence, she stands behind. How could she in that site wash his feet with her tears? Was it that our Saviour did not sit at the Feast, (after our fashion,) but, according to the then-*Jewish* and *Roman* fashion, lay on the one side? Or was it that this phrase doth not so much import posture as presence? Doubtless, it was bashfulness and shame arising from the conscience of her own former wickedness that placed her thus. How well is the case altered? She had wont to look boldly in
thee

the face of her Lovers: now she dares not behold the awful countenance of her Saviour. She had wont to send her alluring beams forth into the eyes of her wanton paramours: now she casts her dejected eyes to the earth, and dares not so much as raise them up to see those eyes from which she desired commiseration. It was a true inference of the Prophet, *Thou hast an whore's forehead, thou canst not blush*: there cannot be a greater sign of whorishness than impudence. This woman can now blush; she hath put off the Harlot, and is turned true Penitent. Bashfulness is both a sign, and effect of Grace. O God, could we but bethink how wretched we are in nature, how vile through our sins, how glorious, holy and powerfull a God thou art, (before whom the brightest Angels hide their faces,) we could not come but with a trembling awfulness into thy presence.

Together with shame, here is sorrow: a sorrow testified by tears; and tears in such abundance, that she washes the feet of our Saviour with those streams of penitence; *She began to wash his feet with tears*. We hear when she began, we hear not when she ended. When the grapes are pressed, the juice runs forth: so when the mind is pressed, tears distill; the true juice of penitence and sorrow. These eyes were not used to such clouds, or to such shows; there was nothing in them formerly but sun-shine of pleasure, beams of Lust: Now they are resolved into the drops of grief and contrition. Whence was this change, but from the secret working of God's Spirit? *He caused his wind to blow, and the waters flowed; he smote the rock, and the waters gushed out*. O God, smite thou this rocky Heart of mine, and the waters of Repentance shall burst forth in abundance.

Never were thy feet, O Saviour, bedewed with more precious liquour than this of remorsefull tears. These cannot be so spent, but that thou keepest them in thy bottle; yea thou returnest them back with interest of true comfort:

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They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Blessed are they that mourn. Lo, this wet seed-time shall be followed with an harvest of happiness and glory.

That this service might be complete, as her Eyes were the Ewre, so her Hair was the Towell for the feet of *Christ*. Doubtless at a Feast there was no want of the most curious linen for this purpose. All this was nothing to her: to approve her sincere Humility, and hearty devotion to *Christ*, her hair shall be put to this glorious office. The hair is the chief ornament of womanhood: the feet, as they are the lowest part of the body, so the meanest for account, and homeliest for employment: and lo, this Penitent bestows the chief ornament of her head on the meanest office to the feet of her Saviour. That hair which she was wont to spread as a net to catch her amorous companions, is honoured with the employment of wiping the beautiful feet of him that brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation: and, might it have been any service to him to have licked the dust under those feet of his, how gladly would she have done it? Nothing can be mean that is done to the honour of a Saviour.

Never was any hair so preferred as this. How I envy those locks that were graced with the touch of those sacred feet; but much more those lips that kissed them? Those lips that had been formerly inured to the wanton touches of her lascivious Lovers, now sanctifie themselves with the testimony of her humble homage and dear respects to the Son of God. Thus her oyntment, hands, eyes, hair, lips are now consecrated to the service of *Christ* her Saviour, whom she had offended. If our satisfaction be not in some kind proportionable to our offence, we are no true Penitents.

All this while I hear not one word fall from the mouth of this woman. What need her tongue speak, when her eyes spake, her hands spake, her gesture, her countenance, her whole carriage was vocall? I like this silent

speaking well, when our actions talk, and our tongues hold their peace. The common practice is contrary; Mens tongues are busie, but their hands are still. All their Religion lies in their tongue; their hands either doe nothing, or ill; so as their profession is but wind, as their words. Wherefore are words but for expression of the mind? If that could be known by the eye or by the hand, the language of both were alike. There are no words amongst Spirits; yet they perfectly understand each other. *The Heavens declare the glory of God.* All tongues cannot speak so loud as they that have none. Give me the Christian that is seen, and not heard. The noise that our tongue makes in a formality of profession shall (in the silence of our hands) condemn us for Hypocrites.

The Pharisee saw all this, but with an evil eye. Had he not had some Grace, he had never invited such a Guest as *Jesus*: and if he had had Grace enough, he had never entertained such a thought as this of the guest he invited; *If this man were a Prophet, he would have known what manner of woman it is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.*

How many errors in one breath? Justly (O *Simon*) hath this one thought lost thee the thank of thy Feast. Belike, at the highest, thou judgedst thy guest but a Prophet; and now thou doubtst whether he were so much. Besides this undervaluation, how unjust is the ground of this doubt? Every Prophet knew not every thing; yea no Prophet ever knew all things. *Elisha* knew the very secrets of the *Affyrrian* privy-chamber: yet he knew not the calamity of his worthy Hostess. The finite knowledge of the ablest Seer reaches but so far as it will please God to extend it. Well might he therefore have been a Prophet, and in the knowledge of greater matters not have known this.

Unto this, how weakly didst thou, because of *Christ's* silent admission of the woman, suppose him ignorant of her quality? As if knowledge should be measured always by the noise of expression. Stay but a while, and thou shalt find that

that he well knew both her life and thy heart. Besides, how injuriously dost thou take this woman for what she was? not conceiving, (as well thou mightest) were not this woman a Convert, she would never have offered herself into this presence. Her modesty and her tears bewray her change: and if she be changed, why is she censured for what she is not?

Lastly, how strong did it favour of the leaven of thy profession, that thou supposest (were she what she was) that it could not stand with the knowledge and holiness of a Prophet to admit of her least touch, yea of her presence? Whereas on the one side, outward conversation in it self makes no man unclean or holy, but according to the disposition of the patient; on the other, such was the purity and perfection of this thy glorious guest, that it was not possibly infectible, nor any way obnoxious to the danger of others sin. He that said once, *Who touched me?* in regard of virtue issuing from him, never said, Whom have I touched? in regard of any contagion incident to him. We sinful creatures, in whom the Prince of this world finds too much, may easily be tainted with other mens sins; He, who came to take away the sins of the world, was incapable of pollution by sin. Had the woman then been still a sinner, thy censure of *Christ* was proud and unjust.

The Pharisee spake; but it was within himself: and now, behold, *Jesus answering, said.*

What we think, we speak to our hearts, and we speak to God; and he equally hears, as if it came out of our mouths. Thoughts are not free. Could men know and convince them, they would be no less liable to censure then if they came forth cloathed with words. God, who hears them, judges of them accordingly. So here, the heart of *Simon* speaks, *Jesus answers.*

Jesus answers him, but with a Parable. He answers many a thought with Judgment; the blasphemy of the heart, the murder of the heart, the adultery of the heart are answered

by him with reall vengeance. For *Simon*, our Saviour saw his errour was either out of simple ignorance or weak mistaking : where he saw no malice then, it is enough to answer with a gentle conviction. The convictive answer of *Christ* is by way of Parable. The wisdom of God knows how to circumvent us for our gain ; and can speak that pleasingly by a prudent circumlocution , which right-down would not be digested. Had our Saviour said in plain terms, *Simon*, whether dost thou or this sinner love me more ? the Pharisee could not for shame but have stood upon his reputation, and in a scorn of the comparison have protested his exceeding respects to *Christ*. Now, ere he is aware, he is fetch'd in to give sentence against himself for her whom he condemned. O Saviour, thou hast made us fishers of men ; how should we learn of thee, so to bait our hooks, that they may be most likely to take ? Thou the great Housholder of thy Church hast provided victuals for thy family, thou hast appointed us to dress them : if we do not so cook them as that they may fit the palats to which they are intended , we do both lose our labour and thy cost. The Parable is of two Debtours to one Creditour ; the one owed a lesser sum, the other a greater ; both are forgiven. It was not the purpose of him that propounded it, that we should stick in the bark. God is our Creditour, our sins our Debts ; we are all Debtours, but one more deep then another. No man can pay this Debt alone ; satisfaction is not possible : onely remission can discharge us. God doth in mercy forgive as well the greatest as the least sins. Our love to God is proportionable to the sense of our remission. So then the Pharisee cannot chuse but confess, that the more and greater the sin is, the greater mercy in the forgiveness ; and the more mercy in the forgiver, the greater obligation and more love in the forgiven.

Truth, from whose mouth soever it falls, is worth taking up. Our Saviour praises the true judgment of a Pharisee. It is an injurious indiscretion in those who are so prejudiced

judiced against the persons, that they reject the truth. He that would not quench the smoaking flax, encourages even the least good. As the carefull Chirurgion stroaks the arm ere he strikes the vein; so did *Christ* here, ere he convinces the Pharisee of his want of love, he graceth him with a fair approbation of his judgment. Yet the while turning both his face and his speech to the poor Penitent; as one that cared more for a true humiliation for sin, then for a false pretence of respect and innocence.

With what a dejected and abashed countenance, with what earth-fixed eyes do we imagine the poor woman stood, when she saw her Saviour direct his face and words to her?

She that durst but stand behind him, and steal the falling of some tears upon his feet, with what a blushing astonishment doth she behold his sidereall countenance cast upon her? Whilst his eye was turned towards this Penitent, his speech was turned to the Pharisee concerning that Penitent, by him mistaken; *Seest thou this Woman?* He who before had said, *If this man were a Prophet, he would have known what manner of Woman this is,* now hears, *Seest thou this Woman?* *Simon* saw but her outside: *Jesus* lets him see that he saw her heart; and will thus convince the Pharisee that he is more then a Prophet, who knew not her conversation onely, but her Soul. The Pharisee, that went all by appearance, shall by her deportment see the proof of her good disposition: it shall happily shame him to hear the comparison of the wants of his own entertainments with the abundance of hers.

It is strange that any of this formall Sect should be defective in their Lotions. *Simon* had not given water to so great a Guest; she walnes his feet with her tears. By how much the water of the eye was more precious then the water of the earth, so much was the respect and courtesie of this Penitent above the neglected office of the Pharisee. What use was there of a Towell, where was no water?

She that made a fountain of her eyes, made precious napyry of her hair : that better flax shamed the linen in the Pharisee's chest.

A kiss of the cheek had wont to be pledge of the welcome of their guests. *Simon* neglects to make himself thus happy : she redoubles the kisses of her humble thankfulness upon the blessed feet of her Saviour. The Pharisee omits ordinary oyl for the head : she supplies the most precious and fragrant oyl to his feet.

Now the Pharisee reads his own taxation in her praise ; and begins to envy where he had scorned.

It is our fault, O Saviour, if we mistake thee. We are ready to think, so thou have the substance of good usage, thou regardest not the complements and ceremonies ; whereas now we see thee to have both meat and welcome in the Pharisee's house, and yet hear thee glance at his neglect of washing, kissing, anointing. Doubtless, omission of due circumstances in thy Entertainment may deserve to lose our thanks. Do we pray to thee ? do we hear thee preach to us ? now we make thee good chear in our house : but if we perform not these things with the fit decency of our outward carriages, we give thee not thy water, thy kisses, thy oyl. Even meet ritual observances are requisite for thy full welcome.

Yet how little had these things been regarded, if they had not argued the woman's thankfull love to thee, and the ground of that love, sense of her remission, and the Pharisee's default in both ?

Love and action do necessarily evince each other. True love cannot lurk long unexpressed : it will be looking out at the eyes, creeping out of the mouth, breaking out at the fingers ends, in some actions of dearness ; especially those wherein there is pain and difficulty to the agent, profit or pleasure to the affected. O Lord, in vain shall we profess to love thee, if we doe nothing for thee. Since our goodness cannot reach up unto thee, who art our glorious Head ;

Head ; O let us bestow upon thy Feet (thy poor Members here below) our tears, our hands, our oyntment, and whatever our gifts or endeavours may testifie our thankfulness and love to thee in them.

O happy word ! *Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her.* Methinks I see how this poor Penitent revived with this breath ; how new life comes into her eyes, new bloud into her cheeks, new spirits into her countenance : like unto our Mother Earth ; when, in that first confusion, *God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that beareth seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit,* all runs out into flowers, and blossoms, and leaves, and fruit. Her former tears said, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Now her chearfull smiles say, *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.*

Seldome ever do we meet with so perfect a Penitent ; seldome do we find so gracious a dismissal. What can be wished of any mortall creature but Remission, Safety, Faith, Peace ? All these are here met to make a contrite Soul happy. Remission, the ground of her Safety ; Faith, the ground of her Peace ; Safety and Salvation, the issue of her Remission ; Peace, the blessed fruit of her Faith.

O Woman, the perfume that thou broughtest is poor and base in comparison of those sweet savours of rest and happiness that are returned to thee. Well was that ointment bestowed, wherewith thy Soul is sweetned to all Eternity.

XXXIV.

Martha and Mary.

WE may reade long enough ere we find *Christ* in an house of his own. *The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests* : he that had all, possessed nothing. One while I see him in a *Publican's* house, then in a *Pharisee's* ; now I find him at *Martha's*. His last entertainment was with some neglect, this with too much solicitude. Our Saviour was now in his way ; the Sun might as soon stand still as he.

The more we move, the liker we are to Heaven, and to this God that made it. His progress was to *Jerusalem*, for some holy Feast. He whose Devotion neglected not any of those sacred Solemnities, will not neglect the due opportunities of his bodily refreshing : as not thinking it meet to travell and preach harbourless, he diverts (where he knew his welcome) to the village of *Bethany*. There dwelt the two devout Sisters, with their Brother, his Friend *Lazarus* ; their roof receives him. O happy house into which the Son of God vouchsafed to set his foot ! O blessed women, that had the grace to be the Hostesses to the God of Heaven ! How should I envy your felicity herein, if I did not see the same favour (if I be not wanting to my self) lying open to me ? I have two ways to entertain my Saviour, in his Members, and in himself. In his Members, by Charity and Hospitableness ; *what I doe to one of those his little ones, I doe to him* : In himself, by Faith ; *If any man open, he will come in and sup with him*.

O Saviour, thou standest at the door of our hearts, and knockest by the solicitations of thy Messengers, by the sense of thy Chastisements, by the motions of thy Spirit : if

we open to thee by a willing admission and faithfull welcome, thou wilt be sure to take up our Souls with thy gracious presence; and not to sit with us for a momentary meal, but to dwell with us for ever. Lo, thou didst but call in at *Bethany*; but here shall be thy rest for everlasting.

Martha (it seems) as being the elder Sister, bore the name of the House-keeper; *Mary* was her assistent in the charge. A Blessed pair; Sisters not more in Nature than Grace, in spirit no less than in flesh. How happy a thing it is when all the parties in a family are joyntly agreed to entertain *Christ*?

No sooner is *Jesus* entred into the house then he falls to preaching: that no time may be lost, he stays not so much as till his meat be made ready; but whilst his bodily repast was in hand, provides spiritual food for his Hosts. It was his *meat and drink to doe the will of his Father*: he fed more upon his own diet then he could possibly upon theirs; his best cheer was to see them spiritually fed. How should we, whom he hath called to this sacred Function, *be instant in season and out of season*? We are, by his sacred ordination, the Lights of the world. No sooner is the candle lighted, then it gives that light which it hath, and never intermits till it be wasted to the snuff.

Both the Sisters for a time sate attentively listening to the words of *Christ*. Household occasions call *Martha* away: *Mary* sits still at his feet, and hears. Whether shall we more praise her Humility, or her Docility? I do not see her take a stool and sit by him, or a chair and sit above him; but, as desiring to shew her heart was as low as her knees, she sits at his feet. She was lowly set, richly warmed with those Heavenly beams. The greater submission, the more Grace. If there be one hollow in the valley lower then another, thither the waters gather.

Martha's house is become a Divinity-school: *Jesus*, as the Doctour, sits in the chair; *Martha*, *Mary*, and the rest, sit as Disciples at his feet. Standing implies a readiness

for motion ; Sitting, a settled composedness to this holy attendance.

Had these two Sisters provided our Saviour never such delicates, and waited on his trencher never so officiously, yet had they not listened to his instruction, they had not bidden him welcome ; neither had he so well liked his entertainment.

This was the way to feast him ; to feed their ears by his Heavenly Doctrine : His best cheer is our proficiency ; our best cheer is his Word. O Saviour, let my Soul be thus feasted by thee, do thou thus feast thy self by feeding me ; this mutual diet shall be thy praise and my happiness.

Though *Martha* was for the time an attentive hearer, yet now her care of *Christ's* entertainment carries her into the Kitchen ; *Mary* sits still. Neither was *Mary* more devout than *Martha* busie : *Martha* cares to feast *Jesus* ; *Mary*, to be feasted of him. There was more solicitude in *Martha's* active part ; more piety in *Mary's* sedentary attendance : I know not in whether more zeal. Good *Martha* was desirous to express her joy and thankfulness for the presence of so blessed a Guest, by the actions of her carefull and plentiful entertainment. I know not how to censure the Holy woman for her excess of care to welcome her Saviour. Sure she her self thought she did well ; and out of that confidence fears not to complain to *Christ* of her Sister.

I do not see her come to her Sister, and whisper in her ear the great need of her aid ; but she comes to *Jesus*, and, in a kind of unkind expostulation of her neglect, makes her moan to him ; *Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ?* Why did she not rather make her first address to her Sister ? Was it for that she knew *Mary* was so tied by the ears, with those adamantine chains that came from the mouth of *Christ*, that untill his silence and dismissal she had no power to stir ? Or was it
out

out of an honour and respect to *Christ*, that in his presence she would not presume to call off her Sister without his leave ?

Howsoever, I cannot excuse the Holy woman from some weakneses. It was a fault to measure her Sister by her self, and, apprehending her own act to be good, to think her Sister could not doe well if she did not so too. Whereas Goodness hath much latitude. Ill is opposed to Good, not Good to Good. Neither in things lawfull or indifferent are others bound to our examples. *Mary* might hear, *Martha* might serve, and both doe well. *Mary* did not censure *Martha* for her rising from the feet of *Christ*, to prepare his meal : neither should *Martha* have censured *Mary* for sitting at *Christ*'s feet, to feed her Soul. It was a fault, that she thought an excessive care of a liberal outward entertainment of *Christ* was to be preferred to a diligent attention to *Christ*'s spirituall entertainment of them. It was a fault, that she durst presume to question our Saviour of some kind of unrespect to her toil, *Lord, dost thou not care ?* What saiest thou, *Martha ?* Dost thou challenge the Lord of Heaven and earth of incogitancy and neglect ? Dost thou take upon thee to prescribe unto that infinite Wisdom, in stead of receiving directions from him ? It is well thou mettest with a Saviour, whose gracious mildness knows how to pardon and pity the errors of our zeal.

Yet I must needs say here wanted not fair pretences for the ground of this thy expostulation. Thou, the elder Sister, workest ; *Mary*, the younger, sits still. And what work was thine but the hospitall receipt of thy Saviour and his train ? Had it been for thine own paunch, or for some carnal friends, it had been less excusable ; now it was for *Christ* himself, to whom thou couldst never be too obsequious.

But all this cannot deliver thee from the just blame of this bold subincusation, *Lord, dost thou not care ?* How ready is our weakness upon every slight discontentment

to quarrell with our best friend, yea with our good God ; and the more we are put to it, to think our selves the more neglected, and to challenge God for our neglect ? Do we groan on the bed of our sickness, and languishing in pain complain of long hours and weary sides ? straight we think, Lord, dost thou not care that we suffer ? Doth God's poor Church goe to wreck, whilst *the ploughers ploughing on her back make long furrows ?* Lord, dost thou not care ? But know thou, O thou feeble and distrustfull Soul, the more thou doest, the more thou sufferest, the more thou art cared for : neither is God ever so tender over his Church as when it is most exercised. Every pang and stich and gird is first felt of him that sends it. O God, thou knowest our works, and our labour, and our patience : we may be ignorant and diffident ; thou canst not but be gracious.

It could not but trouble devout *Mary* to hear her Sister's impatient complaint ; a complaint of her self to *Christ*, with such vehemence of passion, as if there had been such strangeness betwixt the two Sisters, that the one would doe nothing for the other without an externall compulsion from a Superiour. How can she chuse but think, " If I have offended, why was I not secretly taxed " for it in a sifterly familiarity ? What if there have been " some little omission ? must the whole house ring of it be- " fore my Lord and all his Disciples ? Is this carriage be- " seeming a Sister ? Is my Devotion worthy of a quarrell ? " Lord, dost thou not care that I am injuriously censured ? Yet I hear not a word of reply from that modest mouth. O holy *Mary*, I admire thy patient silence. Thy Sister blames thee for thy Piety ; the Disciples (afterwards) blame thee for thy Bounty and cost : not a word falls from thee in a just vindication of thine honour and innocence, but in an humble taciturnity thou leavest thine answer to thy Saviour.

How should we learn of thee, when we are complained of
for

for well-doing, to seal up our lips, and to expect our righting from above ?

And how sure, how ready art thou, O Saviour, to speak in the cause of the dumb ? *Martha, Martha, thou art carefull and troubled about many things ; but one thing is needfull, and Mary hath chosen the better part.*

What needed *Mary* to speak for her self, when she had such an Advocate ? Doubtless *Martha* was, as it were, divided from her self with the multiplicity of her carefull thoughts : our Saviour therefore doubles her name in his compellation ; that in such distraction he may both find and fix her heart. The good woman made full account that *Christ* would have sent away her Sister with a check, and her self with thanks : but now her hopes fail her ; and though she be not directly reprov'd, yet she hears her Sister more approved than she ; *Martha, Martha, thou art carefull and troubled about many things.* Our Saviour received courtesie from her in her diligent and costly entertainment ; yet he would not blanch her errour, and smoothe her up in her weak misprision. No obligations may so enthral us, as that our tongues should not be free to reprove faults where we find them. They are base and servile spirits that will have their tongue tied to their teeth.

This glance towards a reproof implies an opposition of the condition of the two Sisters. Themselves were not more near in Nature, then their present humour and estate differed. *One* is opposed to many, *necessary* to superfluous, *solicitude* to quietness : *Thou art carefull and troubled about many things ; one thing is necessary.* How far then may our care reach to these earthly things ? On the one side, O Saviour, thou hast charged us to *take no thought what to eat, drink, put on* ; on the other, thy chosen Vessel hath told us, that *he that provides not for his family hath denied the faith, and is worse then an Infidel.* We may, we must care for many things ; so that our care be for good, and well-

For good, both in kind and measure; well, so as our care be free from distraction, from distrust. From distraction, that it hinder us not from the necessary duties of our general Calling: from distrust, that we misdoubt not God's Providence whilst we imploy our own. We cannot care for thee, unless we thus care for our selves, for ours.

Alas! how much care do I see every-where? but how few *Martha's*? Her care was for her Saviour's entertainment, ours for our selves. One finds perplexities in his Estate, which he desires to extricate; another beats his brains for the raising of his House: One busies his thoughts about the doubtfull condition (as he thinks) of the Times, and casts in his anxious head the imaginary events of all things, opposing his hopes to his fears; another studies how to avoid the cross blows of an Adversary. *Martha, Martha, thou art carefull and troubled about many things.* Foolish men! why do we set our hearts upon the rack, and need not? why will we endure to bend under that burthen, which more able shouldrs have offered to undertake for our ease?

Thou hast bidden us, O God, to cast our cares upon thee, with promise to care for us: We do gladly unload our selves upon thee. O let our care be to depend on thee, as thine is to provide for us.

Whether *Martha* be pitied or taxed for her sedulity, I am sure *Mary* is praised for her devotion. *One thing is necessary.* Not by way of negation, as if nothing were necessary but this: but by way of comparison, as that nothing is so necessary as this. Earthly occasions must vail to spiritual. Of those three main grounds of all our actions, Necessity, Convenience, Pleasure, each transcends other: Convenience carries it away from Pleasure, Necessity from Convenience, and one degree of Necessity from another. The degrees are according to the conditions of the things necessary. The condition of these earthly necessities is, that without them we cannot live temporally; the

the condition of the spiritual, that without them we cannot live eternally. So much difference then as there is betwixt temporary and eternal, so much there must needs be betwixt the necessity of these bodily actions and those spiritual: Both are necessary in their kinds; neither must here be an opposition, but a subordination. The Body and Soul must be friends, not rivals: we may not so plie the Christian, that we neglect the man.

Oh the vanity of those men who, neglecting that one thing necessary, affect many things superfluous! Nothing is needless with worldly minds but this one which is only necessary, the care of their Souls. How justly do they lose that they care not for, whilst they over-care for that which is neither worthy nor possible to be kept?

Neither is *Mary's* business more allowed then her self: *She hath chosen the good part.* It was not forced upon her, but taken up by her election. *Martha* might have fate still as well as she: She might have stir'd about as well as *Martha.* *Mary's* will made this choice, not without the inclination of him who both gave this will and commends it. That will was before renewed; no marvel if it chose the good: though this were not in a case of good and evil, but of good and better. We have still this holy freedome, through the inoperation of him that hath freed us. Happy are we if we can improve this liberty to the best advantage of our Souls.

The stability or perpetuity of good addes much to the praise of it. *Martha's* part was soon gone; the thank and use of a little outward Hospitality cannot long last: but *Mary's* shall not be taken away from her. The act of her hearing was transient, the fruit permanent; she now hears that which shall stick by her for ever.

What couldst thou hear, O Holy *Mary*, from those Sacred lips, which we hear not still? That Heavenly Doctrine is never but the same, not more subject to change then the Authour of it. It is not impossible that the exercise

of the Gospel should be taken from us ; but the benefit and virtue of it is as inseparable from our Souls as their Being. In the hardest times that shall stick closest to us ; and till death, in death, after death shall make us happy.

XXXV.

The Beggar that was born blind, cured.

THE man was *born blind* : This Cure requires not Art, but Power ; a Power no less then infinite and Divine. Nature presupposeth a matter, though formless ; Art looks for matter formed to our hands : God stands not upon either. Where there was not an Eye to be healed, what could an Oculist doe ? It is onely a God that can create. Such are we, O God, to all spiritual things : we want not sight, but eyes : it must be thou onely that canst make us capable of illumination.

The blind man *sate begging*. Those that have eyes and hands and feet of their own may be able to help themselves ; those that want these helps must be beholden to the eyes, hands, feet of others. The impotent are cast upon our mercy : Happy are we, if we can lend lims and senses to the needy. Affected beggary is odious : that which is of God's making justly challengeth relief.

Where should this blind man sit begging, but near the Temple ? At one gate sits a Cripple, a Blind man at another. Well might these miserable Souls suppose that Piety and Charity dwelt close together : the two Tables were both of one quarry. Then are we best disposed to mercy towards our brethren, when we have either craved or acknowledged God's mercy towards our selves. If we go
thither

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thither to beg of God, how can we deny mites, when we hope for talents?

Never did *Jesus* move one foot but to purpose. He passed by; but so as that his Virtue stayed: so did he pass by, that his eye was fixed. The blind man could not see him; he sees the blind man. His goodness prevents us, and yields better supplies to our wants. He saw compassionately; not shutting his eyes, not turning them aside, but bending them upon that dark and disconsolate Object. That which was said of the Sun, is much more true of him that made it, *Nothing is hid from his light*: but of all other things Miseries (especially of his own) are most intentively eyed of him. Could we be miserable unseen, we had reason to be heartless. O Saviour, why should we not imitate thee in this mercifull improvement of our Senses? We be to those eyes that care onely to gaze upon their own beauty, bravery, wealth; not abiding to glance upon the sores of *Lazarus*, the sorrows of *Joseph*, the dungeon of *Jeremy*, the blind Beggar at the gate of the Temple.

The Disciples see the blind man too, but with different eyes: our Saviour for pity and cure, they for expostulation; *Master, who did sin? this man, or his Parents, that he is born blind?* I like well that whatsoever doubt troubled them, they straight vent it into the ear of their Master. O Saviour, whilst thou art in Heaven, thy school is upon earth. Wherefore serve thy *Priests lips*, but to *preserve knowledge*? What use is there of the tongue of the learned, but to speak a word in season? Thou teachest us still; and still we doubt, and ask, and learn.

In one short question I find two Truths and two Falshoods; the Truths implied, the Falshoods expressed. It is true, that commonly man's suffering is for sin; that we may justly, and do often, suffer even for the sins of our Parents. It is false, that there is no other reason of our suffering but sin; that a man could sin actually before he was, or was before his being, or could before-hand suffer for

his after-sins. In all likelihood that absurd conceit of the Transmigration of Souls possessed the very Disciples. How easily and how far may the best be miscarried with a common error? We are not thankfull for our own illumination, if we do not look with charity and pity upon the gross mis-opinions of our brethren.

Our Saviour sees, and yet will wink at so foul a misprision of his Disciples. I hear neither chiding nor conviction. He that could have inlightned their minds (as he did the world) at once, will doe it by due leisure; and onely contents himself here with a mild solution; *Neither this man, nor his Parents.* We learn nothing of thee, O Saviour, if not meekness. What a sweet temper should be in our carriage towards the weakneses of others judgments? how should we instruct them without bitterness, and without violence of Passion expect the meet seasons of their better information? The tender Mother or Nurse doth not rate her little one for that he goes not well; but gives him her hand, that he may goe better. It is the spirit of lenity that must restore and confirm the lapsd.

The answer is direct and punctuall; neither the sin of the man nor of his Parents bereaved him of his eyes: there was an higher cause of this privation, the glory that God meant to win unto himself by redressing it. The Parents had sinned in themselves; the man had sinned in his first Parents: it is not the guilt of either that is guilty of this blindness. All God's afflictive acts are not punishments; some are for the benefit of the creature, whether for probation, or prevention, or reformation; all are for the praise, whether of his Divine Power, or Justice, or Mercy.

It was fit so great a work should be usher'd in with a preface. A sudden and abrupt appearance would not have seem'd so glorious a demonstration of Omnipotence. The way is made; our Saviour addressses himself to the Miracle: a Miracle not more in the thing done, then in the form of doing it.

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The matter used was Clay. Could there be a meaner? could there be ought more unfit? O Saviour, how oft hadst thou cured blindnesses by thy word alone? how oft by thy touch? How easily couldst thou have done so here? Was this to shew thy liberty, or thy power? Liberty, in that thou canst at pleasure use variety of means, not being tied to any; Power, in that thou couldst make use of contraries? Hadst thou pull'd out a box and applied some medicinall ointment to the eyes, something had been ascribed to thy skill, more to the naturall power of thy receipt: now thou mad'st use of clay, which had been enough to stop up the eyes of the seeing, the virtue must be all in thee, none in the means. The utter disproportion of this help to the Cure adds glory to the worker.

How clearly didst thou hence evince to the world, that thou, who of clay couldst make eyes, wert the same who of clay hadst made man; since there is no part of the body that hath so little analogy to clay as the eye; this clearness is contrary to that opacity? Had not the *Jews* been more blind then the man whom thou curedst, and more hard and stiff then the clay which thou mollifiedst, they had, in this one work, both seen and acknowledged thy Deity.

What could the clay have done without thy tempering? It was thy spittle that made the clay effectuell; it was that Sacred mouth of thine that made the spittle medicinall: the water of *Siloe* shall but wash off that clay which this inward moisture made powerfull. The clay thus tempered, must be applied by the hand that made it, else it avails nothing.

What must the blind man needs think, when he felt the cold clay upon the holes of his eyes? or (since he could not conceive what an eye was) what must the beholders needs think, to see that hollowness thus filled up? Is this the way to give either eyes or sight? Why did not the earth see with this clay as well as the man? What is there to hinder the sight, if this make it?

Yet with these contrarities must the Faith be exercised, where God intends the blessing of a Cure.

It was never meant that this clay should dwell upon those pits of the eyes: it is onely put on to be washed off, and that not by every water; none shall doe it but that of *Siloam*, which signifies *Sent*; and if the man had not been sent to *Siloam*, he had been still blind. All things receive their virtue from Divine institution. How else should a piece of wheaten bread nourish the Soul? How should spring-water wash off spirituall filthiness? How should the foolishness of preaching save Souls? How should the absolution of God's Minister be more effectually then the breath of an ordinary Christian? Thou, O God, hast set apart these Ordinances; thy Blessing is annexed to them; hence is the ground of all our use, and their efficacy. Hadst thou so instituted, *Jordan* would as well have healed Blindness, and *Siloam* Leprosy.

That the man might be capable of such a Miracle, his Faith is set on work; he must be led with his eyes daubed up to the pool of *Siloam*. He washes, and sees. Lord, what did this man think when his eyes were now first given him? what a new world did he find himself now come into? how did he wonder at Heaven and earth, and the faces and shapes of all creatures, the goodly varieties of colours, the cheerfulness of the light, the lively beams of the Sun, the vast expansion of the air, the pleasant transparence of the water; at the glorious piles of the Temple, and stately palaces of *Jerusalem*? Every thing did not more please then astonish him. Lo, thus shall we be affected, and more, when, the scales of our mortality being done away, we shall see as we are seen; when we shall behold the blessedness of that other world, the glory of the Saints and Angels, the infinite Majesty of the Son of God, the incomprehensible brightness of the all-glorious Deity. O my Soul, that thou couldst be taken up before-hand with the admiration of that which thou canst not as yet be capable of fore-seeing.

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It could not be but that many eyes had been witnesses of this man's want of eyes. He sat begging at one of the Temple-gates: not onely all the City, but all the Country must needs know him; thrice a year did they come up to *Jerusalem*; neither could they come to the Temple and not see him. His very blindness made him noted. Deformities and infirmities of body do more easily both draw and fix the eye then an ordinary symmetry of parts.

Besides his Blindness, his Trade made him remarkable; the importunity of his begging drew the eyes of the passengers. But of all other, the Place most notified him. Had he sat in some obscure village of *Judea*, or in some blind lane of *Jerusalem*, perhaps he had not been heeded of many; but now that he took up his seat in the heart, in the head of the chief City, whither all resorted from all parts, what *Jew* can there be that knows not the blind beggar at the Temple-gate? Purposely did our Saviour make choice of such a Subject for his Miracle; a man so poor, and so publick: the glory of the work could not have reach'd so far, if it had been done to the wealthiest Citizen of *Jerusalem*. Neither was it for nothing that the act and the man is doubted of and inquired into by the beholders; *Is not this he that sat begging? Some said, It is he; others said, It is like him.* No truths have received so full proofs as those that have been questioned. The want or the sudden presence of an eye (much more of both) must needs make a great change in the face; those little balls of light (which no doubt were more clear then Nature could have made them) could not but give a new life to the countenance. I marvell not if the neighbours, who had wont to see this dark visage led by a guide, and guided by a staffe, seeing him now walking confidently alone out of his own inward light, and looking them chearfully in the face, doubted whether this were he. The miraculous cures of God work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension,

then in the judgement of others. Thus in the redress of the Spiritual blindness, the whole habit of the man is changed. Where before his Face looked dull and earthly; now there is a sprightfull chearfulness in it, through the comfortable knowledge of God and Heavenly things. Whereas before his Heart was set upon worldly things; now he uses them, but enjoys them not: and that use is because he must, not because he would. Where before his fears and griefs were onely for pains of body, or loss of estate or reputation; now they are onely spent upon the displeasure of his God, and the peril of his Soul. So as now the neighbours can say, *Is this the man? others, It is like him, it is not he.*

The late-blind man hears, and now sees himself questioned; and soon resolves the doubt, *I am he.* He that now saw the light of the Sun, would not hide the light of Truth from others. It is an unthankfull silence, to smother the works of God in an affected secrecy. To make God a loser by his bounty to us, were a shamefull injustice. We our selves abide not those sponges that suck up good turns unknown. O God, we are not worthy of our spiritual eye-sight, if we do not publish thy mercies on the house top, and praise thee in the great congregation.

Man is naturally inquisitive: we search studiously into the secret works of Nature; we pry into the reasons of the witty inventions of Art; but if there be any thing that transcends Art and Nature, the more high and abstruse it is, the more busie we are to seek into it. This thirst after hidden, yea forbidden, Knowledge did once cost us dear: but where it is good and lawfull to know, inquiry is commendable; as here in these *Jews*, *How were thine eyes opened?* The first improvement of humane Reason is inquisition, the next is information and resolution: and if the meanest events pass us not without a question, how much less those that carry in them wonder and advantage?

He that was so ready to profess himself the subject of the
Cure,

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Cure, is no niggard of proclaiming the Authour of it ; *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and sent me to Siloam to wash, and now I see.* The blind man knew no more then he said, and he said what he apprehended, *A man.* He heard *Jesus* speak, he felt his hand ; as yet he could look no farther : upon his next meeting he saw God in this man. In matter of Knowledge, we must be content to creep ere we can goe. As that other recovered blind man saw first men walk like trees, after like men ; so no marvell if this man saw first this God onely as man, after this man as God also. Onwards he thinks him a wonderfull man, a mighty Prophet. In vain shall we either expect a sudder perfection in the understanding of Divine matters, or censure those that want it.

How did this man know what *Jesus* did ? He was then stone-blind ; what distinction could he yet make of persons, of actions ? True ; but yet the blind man never wanted the assistance of others eyes ; their relation hath assur'd him of the manner of his Cure , besides the contribution of his other Senses : his Ear might perceive the spittle to fall, and hear the injoynd command ; his Feeling perceived the cold and moist clay upon his lips. All these conjoynd gave sufficient warrant thus to believe, thus to report. Our ear is our best guide to a full apprehension of the works of *Christ*. The works of God the Father, his Creation and Government, are best known by the Eye. The works of God the Son, his Redemption and Mediation, are best known by the Ear. O Saviour , we cannot personally see what thou hast done here. What are the monuments of thine Apostles and Evangelists, but the relations of the blind man's guide, what and how thou hast wrought for us ? On these we strongly rely, these we do no less confidently believe then if our very eyes had been witnesses of what thou didst and sufferedst upon earth. There were no place for Faith, if the Ear were not worthy of as much credit as the Eye.

How.

How could the neighbours doe less then ask where he was that had done so strange a Cure? I doubt yet with what mind; I fear, not out-of favour. Had they been but indifferent, they could not but have been full of silent wonder, and inclined to believe in so Omnipotent an Agent. Now, as prejudiced to *Christ*, and partiall to the Pharisees, they bring the late-blind man before those professed enemies unto *Christ*.

It is the preposterous Religion of the Vulgar sort, to claw and adore those which have tyrannically usurped upon their Souls, though with neglect, yea with contempt, of God in his word, in his works. Even unjust authority will never want soothing up in whatsoever courses, though with disgrace and opposition to the Truth. Base minds, where they find possession, never look after right.

Our Saviour had pick'd out the Sabbath for this Cure. It is hard to find out any time wherein Charity is unseasonable. As Mercy is an excellent Grace, so the works of it are fittest for the best day. We are all born blind: the Font is our *Siloam*: no day can come amiss, but yet God's day is the properest for our washing and recovery.

This alone is quarrell enough to these scrupulous wranglers, that an act of Mercy was done on that day wherein their envy was but seasonable.

I do not see the man beg any more when he once had his eyes; no Burger in *Jerusalem* was richer then he. I hear him stoutly defending that gracious authour of his Cure against the cavills of the malicious Pharisees: I see him as a resolute Confessour suffering Excommunication for the name of *Christ*, and maintaining the innocence and honour of so Blessed a Benefactor: I hear him reade a Divinity-Lecture to them that sat in *Moses* his chair, and convincing them of blindness, who punish'd him for seeing.

How can I but envy thee, O happy man, who, of a Patient,

tient, proveſt an Advocate for thy Saviour; whoſe gain of bodily fight made way for thy Spirituall eyes; who haſt loſt a Synagogue, and haſt found Heaven; who, being abandoned of Sinners, art received of the Lord of Glory?

X X X V I.

The stubborn Devil ejected.

HOW different, how contrary are our conditions here upon earth? Whilſt our Saviour is tranſ-
figured on the Mount, his Diſciples are perplex-
ed in the valley. Three of his choice Followers
were with him above, raviſhed with the miraculous proofs
of his Godhead: nine other were troubled with the buſi-
neſs of a ſtubborn Devil below.

Matth. 17. 14.
compared with
Mark 9. 14.

Much people was met to attend *Chriſt*, and there they will ſtay till he come down from *Tabor*. Their zeal and devotion brought them thither; their patient perfeverance held them there. We are not worthy the name of his clients, if we cannot painfully ſeek him, and ſubmiſſly wait his leiſure.

He that was now awhile retired into the Mount, to confer with his Father, and to receive the attendence of *Mofes* and *Elias*, returns into the valley to the multitude. He was ſingled out awhile for prayer and contemplation; now he was joyned with the multitude for their miraculous cure and Heavenly inſtruction. We that are his ſpirituall agents muſt be either preparing in the mount, or exerciſing in the valley; one while in the mount of Meditation, in the valley of Action another; alone to ſtudy, in the aſſembly to preach: here is much variety, but all is work.

Mofes, when he came down from the hill, heard Muſick in the valley; *Chriſt*, when he came down from the hill, heard

discord. The Scribes (it seems) were setting hard upon the Disciples: they saw *Christ* absent, nine of his train left in the valley, those they fly upon. As the Devil, so his Imps watch close for all advantages. No subtle enemy but will be sure to attempt that part where is likelihood of least defence, most weakness. When the Spouse misses him whom her Soul loveth, every watchman hath a buffet for her. O Saviour, if thou be never so little stept aside, we are sure to be assaulted with powerfull Temptations.

They that durst say nothing to the Master, so soon as his back is turned fall foul upon his weakest Disciples. Even at the first hatching the Serpent was thus crafty, to begin at the weaker vessell: experience and time hath not abated his wit. If he still work upon *silly Women laden with divers lusts*, upon rude and ungrounded Ignorants, it is no other then his old wont.

Our Saviour upon the skirts of the hill knew well what was done in the plain; and therefore hasts down to the rescue of his Disciples. The clouds and vapours do not sooner scatter upon the Sun's breaking forth, then these cavils vanish at the presence of *Christ*: in stead of opposition they are straight upon their knees; here are now no quarrels, but humble salutations; and if *Christ's* question did not force theirs, the Scribes had found no tongue.

Doubtless there were many eager Patients in this throng; none made so much noise as the father of the *Demoniack*. Belike upon his occasion it was that the Scribes held contestation with the Disciples. If they wrangled, he sues, and that from his knees. Whom will not need make both humble and eloquent? The case was wofull, and accordingly expressed. A son is a dear name; but this was his onely son. Were his grief ordinary yet, the sorrow were the less; but he is a fearfull spectacle of judgment, for he is Lunatick. Were this Lunacy yet merely from a naturall distemper, it were more tolerable; but this is aggravated by the possession of a cruell spirit, that handles him in a most grievous manner.

manner. Yet were he but in the rank of other Demoniacks, the discomfort were more easy; but lo, this spirit is worse than all other his fellows; others are usually dispossessed by the Disciples, this is beyond their power. *I besought thy Disciples to cast him out, but they could not: therefore, Lord, have thou mercy on my Son.* The despair of all other helps sends us importunately to the God of power. Here was his refuge; the strong man had gotten possession, it was onely the stronger then he that can eject him. O God, spirituall wickednesses have naturally seized upon our Souls: all humane helps are too weak; onely thy Mercy shall improve thy Power to our deliverance.

What bowels could chuse but yearn at the distress of this poor young man? Frenzy had taken his brain: that Disease was but health in comparison of the tyrannicall possession of that evill spirit, wherewith it was seconded. Out of Hell there could not be a greater misery: his senses are either bereft, or else left to torment him; he is torn and racked, so as he foams and gnashes, he pines and languishes; he is cast sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water. How that malicious Tyrant rejoices in the mischief done to the creature of God? Had earth had any thing more pernicious then fire and water, thither had he been thrown; though rather for torture, then dispatch. It was too much favour to die at once. O God, with how deadly enemies hast thou matched us? Abate thou their power, since their malice will not be abated.

How many think of this case with pity and horreur, and in the mean time are insensible of their own fearfuller condition?

It is but oftentimes that the Devil would cast this young man into a temporary fire; he would cast the sinner into an eternall fire, whose everlasting burnings have no intermissions. No fire comes amis to him; the fire of Affliction, the fire of Lust, the fire of Hell. O God, make us apprehensive of the danger of our sin, and secure from the fearfull issue of sin.

All these very same effects follow his spiritual possession. How doth he tear and rack them whom he vexes and distracts with inordinate cares and sorrows? How do they foam and gnash whom he hath drawn to an impatient repining at God's afflictive hand? How do they pine away who hourly decay and languish in Grace?

Oh the lamentable condition of sinfull souls, so much more dangerous, by how much less felt!

But all this while what part hath the Moon in this man's misery? How comes the name of that goodly Planet in question? Certainly these diseases of the brain follow much the course of this queen of moisture. That power which she hath in humours is drawn to the advantage of the malicious spirit; her predominancy is abused to his despight: whether it were for the better opportunity of his vexation, or whether for the drawing of envy and discredit upon so noble a creature. It is no news with that subtle enemy to fasten his effects upon those secondary causes which he usurps to his own purposes. What-ever be the means, he is the tormentour. Much wisdom needs to distinguish betwixt the evil spirit abusing the good creature, and the good creature abused by the evil spirit.

He that knew all things, asks questions; *How long hath he been so?* Not to inform himself; (That Devil could have done nothing without the knowledge, without the leave of the God of Spirits;) but that by the confession of the Parent he might lay forth the wofull condition of the Child; that the thank and glory of the Cure might be so much greater, as the complaint was more grievous. *He answered, From a child.*

O God, how I adore the depth of thy wise and just and powerfull dispensation? Thou that couldst say, *I have loved Jacob, and Esau have I hated, ere the children had done good or evil,* thoughtest also good, ere this Child could be capable of good or evil, to yield him over to the power of that Evil one. What need I ask for any other reason then that which is
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the rule of all Justice, thy Will? Yet even these weak eyes can see the just grounds of thine actions. That child, though an *Israelite*, was conceived and born in that sin which both could and did give Satan an interest in him. Besides, the actual sins of the Parents deserved this revenge upon that piece of themselves. Rather, O God, let me magnifie thy Mercy, that we and ours escape this Judgment, then question thy Justice, that some escape not. How just might it have been with thee, that we, who have given way to Satan in our sins, should have way and scope given to Satan over us in our punishments? It is thy praise that any of us are free; it is no quarrell that some suffer.

Do I wonder to see Satan's bodily possession of this young man from a child; when I see his spiritual possession of every son of *Adam* from a longer date; not from a child, but from the womb, yea in it? Why should not Satan possess his own? we are all by nature the sons of wrath. It is time for us to renounce him in Baptism, whose we are till we be regenerate. He hath right to us in our first birth; our new birth acquits us from him, and cuts off all his claim. How miserable are they that have nothing but Nature? Better had it been to have been unborn, then not to be born again.

And if this poor soul from an infant were thus miserably handled, having done none actual evil; how just cause have we to fear the like Judgments, who by many foul offences have deserved to draw this executioner upon us? O my Soul, thou hast not room enough for thankfulness to that good God, who hath not delivered thee up to that malignant Spirit.

The distressed Father sits not still, neglects not means: *I brought him to thy Disciples*. Doubtless the man came first to seek for *Christ* himself; finding him absent, he makes suit to the Disciples. To whom should we have recourse in all our spiritual complaints but to the agents and messengers of God? The noise of the like cures had surely brought

this man with much confidence to crave their succour; and now how cold was he at the heart, when he found that his hopes were frustrate? *They could not cast him out.* No doubt the Disciples tried their best, they laid their wonted charge upon this dumb spirit; but all in vain. They that could come with joy and triumph to their Master, and say, *The Devils are subject to us,* find now themselves matched with a stubborn and refractory spirit. Their way was hitherto smooth and fair; they met with no rub till now. And now surely the father of the Demoniac was not more troubled at this event then themselves. How could they chuse but fear lest their Master had, with himself, withdrawn that spiritual power which they had formerly exercised? Needs must their heart fail them with their success.

The man complained not of their impotence: it were fondly injurious to accuse them for that which they could not doe: had the want been in their will, they had well deserved a querulous language; it was no fault to want power. Onely he complains of the stubbornness, and laments the invincibleness of that evil spirit.

I should wrong you, O ye blessed Followers of *Christ*, if I should say that, as *Israel*, when *Moses* was gone up into the Mount, lost their belief with their guide; so that ye, missing your Master, (who was now ascended up to his *Tabor*,) were to seek for your Faith. Rather the Wisdom of God saw reason to check your over-assured forwardness; and both to pull down your hearts by a just humiliation in the sense of your own weakness, and to raise up your hearts to new acts of dependence upon that sovereign power from which your limited virtue was derived.

What was more familiar to the Disciples then ejecting of Devils? In this onely it is denied them. Our good God sometimes finds it requisite to hold us short in those abilities whereof we make least doubt, that we may feel whence we had them. God will be no less glorified in what we cannot

cannot doe, then in what we can doe. If his Graces were alwaies at our command, and ever alike, they would seem naturall, and soon run into contempt: now we are justly held in an awfull dependence upon that gracious hand, which so gives as not to cloy us, and so denies as not to discourage us.

Who could now but expect that our Saviour should have pitied and bemoaned the condition of this sad father and miserable son, and have let fall some words of comfort upon them? In stead whereof I hear him chiding and complaining, *O faithles and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* Complaining, not of that wofull father and more wofull son; it was not his fashion to adde affliction to the distressed, to break such bruised reeds; but of those Scribes, who, upon the failing of the success of this suit, had insulted upon the disability of the Followers of *Christ*, and depraved his power: although perhaps this impatient father, seduced by their suggestion, might slip into some thoughts of distrust.

There could not be a greater crimination then *faithles and perverse: faithles*, in not believing; *perverse*, in being obstinately set in their unbelief. Doubtless these men were not free from other notorious crimes: all were drowned in their Infidelity. Morall uncleanneses or violences may seem more hainous to men; none are so odious to God as these intellectuall wickedneses.

What an happy change is here in one breath of *Christ*? *How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.* The one is a word of anger, the other of favour. His just indignation doth not exceed or impeach his Goodness. What a sweet mixture there is in the perfect simplicity of the Divine Nature? *In the midst of judgment he remembers mercy*, yea he acts it. His Sun shines in the midst of this storm. Whether he frown or whether he smile, it is all to one purpose, that he may win the incredulous and disobedient. Whither should the rigour of all our censures tend but to edifica-

edification, and not to destruction? We are Physicians, we are not executioners; we give purges to cure, and not poisons to kill. It is for the just Judge to say one day to reprobate Souls, *Depart from me*: in the mean time it is for us to invite all that are spiritually possessed to the participation of mercy. *Bring him hither to me.*

O Saviour, distance was no hindrance to thy work: why should the Demoniack be brought to thee? Was it that this deliverance might be the better evicted, and that the beholders might see it was not for nothing that the Disciples were opposed with so refractory a spirit? Or was it that the Scribes might be witnesses of that strong hostility that was betwixt thee and that foul spirit, and be ashamed of their blasphemous slander? or was it that the father of the Demoniack might be quickened in that Faith which now, through the suggestion of the Scribes, begun to droop; when he should hear and see *Christ* so cheerfully to undertake and perform that whereof they had bidden him despair?

The possessed is brought; the Devil is rebuked and ejected. That stiffe spirit, which stood out boldly against the commands of the Disciples, cannot but stoop to the voice of the Master: that power which did at first cast him out of Heaven, easily dispossesses him of an house of clay. *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan*, and then thou canst not but flee.

The Disciples, who were not used to these affronts, cannot but be troubled at their mis-succes: *Master, why could not we cast him out?* Had they been conscious of any defect in themselves, they had never ask'd the question. Little did they think to hear of their Unbelief. Had they not had great Faith, they could not have cast out any Devils; had they not had some want of Faith, they had cast out this. It is possible for us to be defective in some Graces, and not to feel it.

Although not so much their weakness is guilty of this unprevailing, as the strength of that evil spirit. *This kind goes*

not out but by prayer and fasting. Weaker spirits were wont to be ejected by a command; this Devil was more sturdy and boisterous. As there are degrees of statures in men, so there are degrees of strength and rebellion in spirituall wickednesses. Here bidding will not serve, they must pray; and praying will not serve without fasting. They must pray to God that they may prevail; they must fast to make their prayer more fervent, more effectually. We cannot now command, we can fast and pray. How good is our God to us, that whilst he hath not thought fit to continue to us those means which are less powerfull for the dispossessing of the powers of darkness, yet he hath given us the greater? Whilst we can fast and pray, God will command for us; Satan cannot prevail against us.

XXXVII.

The Widow's Mites.

THE sacred wealth of the Temple was either in stuff, or in coin. For the one the *Jews* had an house, for the other a chest. At the concourse of all the males to the Temple thrice a year upon occasion of the solemn Feasts, the oblations of both kinds were liberall. Our Saviour, as taking pleasure in the prospect, sets himself to view those Offerings, whether for holy uses or charitable.

Those things we delight in, we love to behold: The eye and the heart will goe together. And can we think, O Saviour, that thy Glory hath diminished ought of thy gracious respects to our beneficence? or that thine acceptance of our Charity was confined to the earth?

Even now that thou fitteſt at the right hand of thy Father's glory, thou ſeeſt every hand that is ſtretched out to the relief of thy poor Saints here below. And if vanity have power to ſtir up our Liberality out of a conceit to be ſeen of men, how ſhall Faith encourage our Bounty in knowing that we are ſeen of thee, and accepted by thee? Alas! what are we the better for the notice of thoſe perishing and impotent eyes, which can onely view the outside of our actions; or for that waſte wind of applauſe which vaniſheth in the lips of the ſpeaker? Thine eye, O Lord, is piercing and retributive. As to ſee thee is perfect Happineſs, ſo to be ſeen of thee is true contentment and glory.

And doſt thou, O God, ſee what we give thee, and not ſee what we take away from thee? Are our Offerings more noted then our Sacrileges? Surely thy Mercy is not more quick-ſighted then thy Juſtice. In both kinds our actions are viewed, our account is kept; and we are ſure to receive Rewards for what we have given, and Vengeance for what we have defalked. With thine eye of Knowledge thou ſeeſt all we doe; but what we doe well, thou ſeeſt with thine eye of Approbation. So didſt thou now behold theſe pious and charitable Oblations. How well wert thou pleaſed with this variety? Thou ſaweſt many rich men give much; and one poor Widow give more then they in leſſer room.

The *Jews* were now under the *Roman* preſſure; they were all tributaries, yet many of them rich; and thoſe rich men were liberal to the common cheſt. Hadſt thou ſeen thoſe many rich give little, we had heard of thy cenſure: thou expecteſt a proportion betwixt the giver and the gift, betwixt the gift and the receipt: where that fails, the blame is juſt. That Nation (though otherwiſe faulty enough) was in this commendable. How bounteouſly open were their hands to the houſe of God? Time was when their liberality was ſain to be reſtrained by Proclamation; and now it needed no incitement: the rich gave much, the pooreſt gave
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more. *He saw a poor Widow casting in two mites.* It was misery enough that she was a Widow. The married woman is under the carefull provision of an Husband; if she spend, he earns: in that estate four hands work for her; in her widowity but two. Poverty added to the sorrow of her widowhood. The loss of some Husbands is supplied by a rich joynture; it is some allay to the grief that the hand is left full, though the bed be empty: this woman was not more desolate then needy. Yet this poor widow gives. And what gives she? An offering like her self, *two mites*; or, in our language; two half-farthing-tokens. Alas, good woman! who was poorer then thy self? wherefore was that Corban, but for the relief of such as thou? who should receive, if such give? Thy mites were something to thee, nothing to the Treasury. How ill is that gift bestowed, which dis-furnisheth thee, and adds nothing to the common stock? Some thrifty neighbour might perhaps have suggested this probable discouragement. *Jesus* publishes and applauds her bounty: *He called his Disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, this woman hath cast in more then they all.* Whilst the rich put in their offerings, I see no Disciples called; it was enough that *Christ* noted their gifts alone: but when the Widow comes with her two mites, now the domesticks of *Christ* are summoned to assemble, and taught to admire this munificence; a solemn preface makes way to her praise, and her Mites are made more precious then the others Talents. *She gave more then they all.* More, not onely in respect of the Mind of the giver, but of the proportion of the gift, as hers. A mite to her was more then pounds to them: Pounds were little to them, two mites were all to her: They gave out of their abundance, she out of her necessity. That which they gave, left the heap less, yet an heap still; she gives all at once, and leaves her self nothing. So as she gave, not more then any, but *more then they all.* God doth not so much regard what is taken out, as what is left. O Father of mercies,

thou lookeſt at once into the bottom of her heart and the bottom of her purſe ; and eſteemeſt her gift according to both. As thou ſeeſt not as man, ſo thou valueſt not as man : Man judgeth by the worth of the gift, thou judgeth by the mind of the giver and the proportion of the remainder. It were wide with us if thou ſhouldeſt goe by quantities. Alas ! what have we but mites, and thoſe of thine own lending ? It is the comfort of our meaneſs, that our affections are valued, and not our preſents : neither haſt thou ſaid, *God loves a liberal giver*, but a *cheerfull*. If I had more, O God, thou ſhouldeſt have it ; had I leſs, thou wouldeſt not deſpiſe it, who *accepteſt the gift according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*.

Yea, Lord, what have I but two mites, a Soul, and a Body ? mere mites, yea, not ſo much, to thine Infiniteness. Oh that I could perfectly offer them up unto thee, according to thine own right in them, and not according to mine. How graciously wouldeſt thou be ſure to accept them ? how happy ſhall I be in thine acceptation ?

XXXVIII.

The Ambition of the two Sons of Zebedee.

HE who had his own time and ours in his hand, foreknew and foretold the approach of his diſſolution. When men are near their end, and ready to make their Will, then is it ſeaſonable to ſue for Legacies. Thus did the Mother of the two *Zebedees* ; therein well approving both her Wiſedom and her Faith : Wiſedom, in the fit choice of her opportunity ; Faith, in taking ſuch an opportunity.

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The fruit is half obtained that is seasonably made. To have made this motion at the entry into their attendance, had been absurd, and had justly seemed to challenge a denial. It was at the parting of the Angel, that *Jacob* would be blessed. The double spirit of *Elijah* is not sued for till his ascending.

But, O the admirable Faith of this good woman ! When she heard the discourse of *Christ's* Sufferings and Death, she talks of his Glory ; when she hears of his Cross, she speaks of his Crown. If she had seen *Herod* come and tender his Scepter unto *Christ*, or the Elders of the *Jews* come upon their knees with a submissive profer of their allegiance, she might have had some reason to entertain the thoughts of a Kingdom : but now whilst the sound of betraying, suffering, dying, was in her ear, to make account of and suit for a room in his Kingdome, it argues a belief able to triumph over all discouragements.

It was nothing for the Disciples, when they saw him after his conquest of death and rising from the grave, to ask him, *Master, wilt thou now restore the kingdom unto Israel ?* but for a silly woman to look through his future Death and Passion, at his Resurrection and Glory, it is no less worthy of wonder than praise.

To hear a man in his best health and vigour to talk of his confidence in God, and assurance of Divine favour, cannot be much worth : but if in extremities we can believe above hope, against hope, our Faith is so much more noble as our difficulties are greater.

Never sweeter perfume arose from any altar, then that which ascended from *Job's* dunghill, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

What a strange style is this that is given to this woman ? It had been as easie to have said, the wife of *Zebedee*, or the sister of *Mary* or of *Joseph*, or (as her name was) plain *Salome* : but now, by an unusual description, she is styled *The Mother of Zebedee's children.* *Zebedee* was an obscure

man ; she, as his wife, was no better : the greatest honour she ever had or could have, was to have two such sons as *James* and *John* ; these give a title to both their Parents. Honour ascends as well as descends. Holy Children dignifie the loyns and womb from whence they proceed, no less then their Parents traduce honour unto them. *Salome* might be a good wife, a good huswife, a good woman, a good neighbour : all these cannot ennoble her so much as *the mother of Zebedee's children*.

What a world of pain, toil, care, cost, there is in the birth and education of Children? Their good proof requites all with advantage. Next to happiness in our selves, is to be happy in a gracious Issue.

The suit was the sons, but by the mouth of their mother : it was their best policy to speak by her lips. Even these Fishermen had already learned craftily to fish for promotion. Ambition was not so bold in them as to shew her own face : the envy of the suit shall thus be avoided, which could not but follow upon their personall request. If it were granted, they had what they would ; if not, it was but the repulse of a woman's motion : which must needs be so much more pardonable, because it was of a mother for her sons.

It is not discommendable in parents to seek the preferment of their children. Why may not *Abraham* sue for an *Ismael* ? So it be by lawfull means, in a moderate measure, in due order, this endeavour cannot be amiss. It is the neglect of circumstances that makes these desires sinfull. Oh the madness of those Parents, that care not which way they raise an house ; that desire rather to leave their children great, then good ; that are more ambitious to have their sons Lords on earth, then Kings in Heaven ! Yet I commend thee, *Salome*, that thy first plot was to have thy sons Disciples of *Christ*, then after to prefer them to the best places of that attendance. It is the true method of Divine prudence, O God, first to make our children happy with

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with the honour of thy service, and then to endeavour their meet advancement upon earth.

The mother is put upon this suit by her sons ; their heart was in her lips. They were not so mortified by their continual conversation with *Christ*, hearing his Heavenly doctrine, seeing his Divine carriage, but that their minds were yet roving after temporal Honours. Pride is the inmost coat, which we put off last, and which we put on first. Who can wonder to see some sparks of weak and worldly desires in their holiest teachers, when the blessed Apostles were not free from some ambitious thoughts whilst they sate at the feet, yea in the bosome of their Saviour ?

The near kindred this woman could challenge of *Christ* might seem to give her just colour of more familiarity ; yet now that she comes upon a suit, she submits her self to the lowest gesture of suppliants. We need not be taught, that it is fit for petitioners to the Great, to present their humble supplications upon their knees. O Saviour, if this woman, so nearly allied to thee according to the flesh, coming but upon a temporal occasion to thee, being as then compassed about with humane infirmities, adored thee ere she durst sue to thee ; what reverence is enough for us that come to thee upon spiritual suits, sitting now in the height of Heavenly Glory and Majesty ? Say then, thou wife of *Zebedee*, what is it that thou cravest of thine Omnipotent kinsman ? *A certain thing*. Speak out, woman ; what is this certain thing that thou cravest ? How poor and weak is this supplicatory anticipation to him that knew thy thoughts ere thou utterest them, ere thou entertainedst them ? We are all in this tune ; every one would have something ; such perhaps as we are ashamed to utter. The Proud man would have a certain thing ; Honour in the world : the Covetous would have a certain thing too ; Wealth and abundance : the Malicious would have a certain thing ; Revenge on his enemies : the Epicure would have Pleasure and Long life ; the Barren, Children ; the Wanton, Beauty.

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Each one would be humoured in his own desire ; though in variety, yea contradiction to other ; though in opposition not more to God's will, then our own good.

How this suit sticks in her teeth, and dares not freely come forth, because it is guilty of its own faultiness ? What a difference there is betwixt the prayers of Faith, and the motions of Self-love and Infidelity ? Those come forth with boldness, as knowing their own welcome, and being well assured both of their warrant and acceptation : these stand blushing at the door, not daring to appear ; like to some baffled suit, conscious to its own unworthiness and just repulse. Our inordinate desires are worthy of a check : when we know that our requests are holy, we cannot come with too much confidence to the throne of Grace.

He that knew all their thoughts afar off, yet, as if he had been a stranger to their purposes, asks, *What wouldst thou ?* Our infirmities do then best shame us, when they are fetcht out of our own mouths : Like as our prayers also serve not to acquaint God with our wants, but to make us the more capable of his mercies.

The suit is drawn from her ; now she must speak. *Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, the other on thy left, in thy Kingdom.*

It is hard to say, whether out of more pride or ignorance. It was as received as erroneous a conceit amongst the very Disciples of *Christ*, that he should raise up a Temporal Kingdom over the now-tributary and be-laved people of *Israel*. The *Romans* were now their masters ; their fancy was, that their *Messias* should shake off this yoke, and reduce them to their former Liberty. So grounded was this opinion, that the two Disciples in their walk to *Emmaus* could say, *We trusted it had been he, that should have delivered Israel ;* and when, after his Resurrection, he was walking up mount *Olivet* towards Heaven, his very Apostles could ask him, if he would now restore that long-expected Kingdom. How should we mitigate our censures
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of our Christian brethren, if either they mistake, or know not some secondary truths of Religion, when the domestick attendants of *Christ*, who heard him every day till the very point of his Ascension, misapprehended the chief cause of his coming into the world, and the state of his Kingdom? If our Charity may not bear with small faults, what doe we under his name that conniv'd at greater? Truth is as the Sun; bright in it self, yet there are many close corners into which it never shined. O God, if thou open our hearts, we shall take in those beams: till thou doe so, teach us to attend patiently for our selves, charitably for others.

These Fishermen had so much Courtship to know, that the right hand and the left of any Prince were the chief places of Honour. Our Saviour had said that his twelve Followers should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve Tribes of *Israel*. This good woman would have her two sons next to his person, the prime Peers of his Kingdom. Every one is apt to wish the best to his own. Worldly Honour is neither worth our suit, nor unworthy our acceptance. Yea, *Salome*, had thy mind been in Heaven, hadst thou intended this desired preeminence of that celestiall state of Glory, yet I know not how to justifie thine ambition. Wouldst thou have thy sons preferred to the *Father of the faithfull*, to the blessed Mother of thy Saviour? That very wish were presumptuous. For me, O God, my ambition shall go so high as to be a Saint in Heaven, and to live as holily on earth as the best; but for precedency of Heavenly honour, I do not, I dare not affect it. It is enough for me, if I may lift up my head amongst the heels of thy Blessed ones.

The mother asks, the sons have the answer. She was but their tongue, they shall be her ears. God ever imputes the acts to the first mover, rather then to the instrument.

It was a sore check, *Ye know not what ye ask*. In our ordinary communication to speak idly, is sin; but in our

suits to *Christ* to be so inconsiderate, as not to understand our own petitions, must needs be a foul offence.

As Faith is the ground of our Prayers, so Knowledge is the ground of our Faith. If we come with indigested requests; we profane that Name we invoke.

To convince their unfitnes for Glory, they are sent to their impotency in suffering; *Are ye able to drink of the cup whereof I shall drink, and to be baptized with the Baptism wherewith I am baptized?* O Saviour, even thou, who wert one with thy Father, hast a cup of thine own: never Potion was so bitter as that which was mixed for thee. Yea, even thy draught is stinted; it is not enough for thee to sip of this Cup, thou must drink it up to the very dregs. When the vinegar and gall were tendred to thee by men, thou didst but kiss the cup; but when thy Father gave into thine hands a potion infinitely more distastfull, thou (for our health) didst drink deep of it even to the bottom, and saidst, *It is finished.* And can we repine at those unpleasing draughts of Affliction that are tempered for us sinfull men, when we see thee, the Son of thy Father's love, thus dieted? We pledge thee, O Blessed Saviour, we pledge thee, according to our weakness, who hast begun to us in thy powerfull sufferings. Onely do thou enable us (after some sour faces made in our reluctance, yet) at last willingly to pledge thee in our constant Sufferings for thee.

As thou must be drenched within, so must thou be baptized without. Thy Baptism is not of water, but of blood; both these came from thee in thy Passion: we cannot be thine, if we partake not of both. If thou hast not grudged thy precious blood to us, well maist thou challenge some worthless drops from us.

When they talk of thy Kingdome, thou speakest of thy bitter Cup, of thy bloody Baptism. Suffering is the way to reigning. *Through many tribulations must we enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.* There was never wedge of gold that did not first pass the fire; there was never pure grain
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that did not undergoe the flail. In vain shall we dream of our immediate passage from the pleasures and jollity of earth to the glory of Heaven. Let who will hope to walk upon Roses and Violets to the throne of Heaven; O Saviour, let me trace thee by the track of thy Bloud, and by thy red steps follow thee to thine eternall rest and Happiness.

I know this is no easy task; else thou hadst never said, *Are ye able?* Who should be able if not they that had been so long blessed with thy presence, informed by thy doctrine, and (as it were) beforehand possessed of their Heaven in thee? Thou hadst never made them judges of their power, if thou couldst not have convinced them of their weakness. Alas! how full of febleness is our body, and our mind of impatience! If but a Bee sting our flesh, it swells; and if but a tooth ake, the head and heart complain. How small trifles make us weary of our selves? What can we do without thee? without thee what can we suffer? If thou be not, O Lord, strong in my weakness, I cannot be so much as weak; I cannot so much as be. Oh, do thou prepare me for my day, and enable me to my trialls: *I can do all things through thee that strengthenest me.*

The motion of the two Disciples was not more full of infirmity then their answer; *We are able.* Out of an eager desire of the Honour, they are apt to undertake the condition. The best men may be mistaken in their own powers. Alas, poor men! when it came to the issue, they ran away, and I know not whither one without his coat. It is one thing to suffer in speculation, another in practice. There cannot be a worse sign then for a man in a carnall presumption to vaunt of his own abilities. How justly doth God suffer that man to be foiled purposely, that he may be ashamed of his own vain self-confidence? O God, let me ever be humbly dejected in the sense of mine own insufficiency; let me give all the Glory to thee, and take nothing to my self but my infirmities.

Oh the wonderfull mildness of the Son of God ! He doth not rate the two Disciples, either for their ambition in suing, or presumption in undertaking : but leaving the worst, he takes the best of their answer ; and omitting their errors, encourages their good intentions : *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with my baptism : but to sit on my right hand and my left, is not mine to give, but to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.* I know not whether there be more mercy in the concession, or satisfaction in the deniall. Were it not an high honour to drink of thy Cup, O Saviour, thou hadst not fore-promised it as a favour. I am deceived if what thou grantedst were much less then that which thou deniedst. To pledge thee in thine own Cup, is not much less dignity and familiarity then to sit by thee. *If we suffer with thee, we shall also reign together with thee.* What greater promotion can flesh and blood be capable of, then a conformity to the Lord of Glory ? Enable thou me to drink of thy Cup, and then set me where thou wilt.

But, O Saviour, whilst thou dignifiest them in thy grant, dost thou disparage thy self in thy denial ? *Not mine to give ?* Whose is it, if not thine ? If it be thy Father's, it is thine : Thou, who art Truth, hast said, *I and my Father are one.* Yea, because thou art one with the Father, it is not thine to give to any save those for whom it is prepared of the Father. The Father's preparation was thine, his gift is thine ; the Decree of both is one. That eternal counsel is not alterable upon our vain desires. The Father gives these Heavenly honours to none but by thee ; thou givest them to none but according to the Decree of thy Father. Many degrees there are of celestiall Happiness. Those supernall mansions are not all of an height. That Providence which hath varied our stations upon earth, hath pre-ordered our seats above. O God, admit me within the walls of thy new *Jerusalem*, and place me wheresoever thou pleasest.

XXXIX.

The Tribute-money pay'd.

ALL these other Histories report the Power of *Christ*; this shews both his Power and Obedience: his Power over the creature; his Obedience to civil powers. *Capernaum* was one of his own Cities; there he made his chief abode, in *Peter's* house: to that Host of his therefore do the Toll-gatherers repair for the Tribute. When that great Disciple said, *We have left all*, he did not say, *We have abandoned all*, or *fold*, or *given away all*; but, *we have left*, in respect of managing, not of possession; not in respect of right, but of use and present fruition; so left, that upon just occasion we may resume; so left, that it is our due, though not our business. Doubtless he was too wise to give away his own, that he might borrow of a stranger. His own roof gave him shelter for the time, and his Master with him. Of him, as the Housholder, is the Tribute required; and by and for him is it also pay'd. I inquire not either into the occasion, or the sum. What need we make this exaction sacrilegious? as if that half-shekel which was appointed by God to be pay'd by every *Israelite* to the use of the Tabernacle and Temple, were now diverted to the *Roman* Exchequer. There was no necessity that the *Roman* Lords should be tied to the *Jewish* reckonings; it was free for them to impose what payments they pleased upon a subdued people: when great *Augustus* commanded the world to be taxed, this rate was set. The mannerly Collectours demand it first of him, with whom they might be more bold; *Doth not your Master pay tribute?* All *Capernaum* knew *Christ* for a great Prophet; his Doctrine had

ravish'd them, his Miracles had astonish'd them : yet when it comes to a money-matter, his share is as deep as the rest. Questions of profit admit no difference. Still the sacred Tribe challengeth reverence : who cares how little they receive, how much they pay ? Yet no man knows with what mind this demand was made ; whether in a churlish grudging at *Christ's* immunity, or in an awfull compellation of the servant rather than the Master.

Peter had it ready what to answer. I hear him not require their stay till he should goe in and know his Master's resolution ; but, as one well acquainted with the mind and practice of his Master, he answers, *Yes*.

There was no truer pay-master of the King's dues than he that was King of Kings. Well did *Peter* know that he did not onely give, but preach tribute. When the *Herodians* laid twigs for him, as supposing that so great a Prophet would be all for the liberty and exemption of God's chosen people, he choaks them with their own coin, and told them the stamp argued the right ; *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*.

O Saviour, how can thy servants challenge that freedom which thy self hadst not ? who that pretends from thee can claim homage from those to whom thou gavest it ? If thou by whom Kings reign forbarest not to pay tribute to an heathen Prince, what power under thee can deny it to those that rule for thee ?

That demand was made without doors. No sooner is *Peter* come in, then he is prevented by his Master's question, *What thinkest thou, Simon ? of whom do the Kings of the earth receive tribute ? of their own children, or of strangers ?* This very interrogation was answer enough to that which *Peter* meant to move : he that could thus know the heart, was not in true right liable to humane exactions.

But, O Saviour, may I presume to ask what this is to thee ? Thou hast said, *My kingdom is not of this world* : how doth it concern thee what is done by the Kings of the

the earth, or imposed upon the sons of earthly Kings? Thou wouldst be the Son of an humble Virgin; and choicest not a Royall state, but a servile. I dispute not thy natural right to the throne, by thy lineal descent from the loins of *Juda* and *David*: what should I plead that which thou wavest? It is thy Divine Royalty and Sonship which thou here justly urgest; the argument is irrefragable and convictive. If the Kings of the earth do so privilege their children that they are free from all tributes and impositions; how much more shall the King of Heaven give this immunity to his onely and natural Son? so as in true reason I might challenge an exemption for me and my train. Thou mightest, O Saviour, and no less challenge a tribute of all the Kings of the earth to thee, by whom all powers are ordained. Reason cannot mutter against this claim: the creature owes it self and whatsoever it hath to the Maker; he owes nothing to it. *Then are the children free.* He that hath right to all needs not pay any thing; else there should be a subjection in Sovereignty, and men should be debtours to themselves. But this right was thine own peculiar, and admits no partners; why dost thou speak of children, as of more, and, extending this privilege to *Peter*, say, *Lest we scandalize them?* Was it for that thy Disciples, being of thy robe, might justly seem interess'd in the liberties of their Master? Surely no otherwise were they children, no otherwise free. Away with that fanatical conceit, which challenges an immunity from secular commands and taxes to a spiritual and adoptative Sonship: no earthly Saintship can exempt us from tribute to whom tribute belongeth. There is a freedom, O Saviour, which our Christianity calls us to affect; a freedom from the yoke of Sin and Satan, from the servitude of our corrupt affections: we cannot be Sons if we be not thus free. Oh free thou us by thy free Spirit from the miserable bondage of our Nature, so shall the children be free: but as to these secular duties, no man is less free then the children.

O Saviour, thou wert free, and wouldst not be so ; thou wert free by natural right, wouldst not be free by voluntary dispensation, *Lest an offence might be taken.* Surely had there followed an offence, it had been taken onely, and not given. *Woe be to the man by whom the offence cometh.* It cometh by him that gives it ; it cometh by him that takes it when it is not given : no part of this blame could have cleaved unto thee either way.

Yet such was thy goodnes, that thou wouldst not suffer an offence unjustly taken at that which thou mightest justly have denied. How jealous should we be even of others perils ? how carefull so to moderate our power in the use of lawfull things, that our Charity may prevent others scandalls ? to remit of our own right for another's safety ? Oh the deplorable condition of those wilfull men, who care not what blocks they lay in the way to Heaven, not forbearing by a known leudness to draw others into their own damnation !

To avoid the unjust offence even of very Publicans, *Jesus* will work a Miracle. *Peter* is sent to the sea ; and that not with a net, but with an hook. The Disciple was now in his own trade. He knew a net might inclose many fishes, an hook could take but one : with that hook must he go angle for the Tribute-money. A fish shall bring him a *stater* in her mouth ; and that fish that bites first. What an unusal bearer is here ? what an unlikely element to yield a piece of ready coin ?

Oh that Omnipotent power which could command the fish to be both his treasurer to keep his silver, and his purveyour to bring it ! Now whether, O Saviour, thou causedst this fish to take up that shekel out of the bottom of the sea, or whether by thine Almighty word thou mad'st it in an instant in the mouth of that fish, it is neither possible to determine, nor necessary to inquire. I rather adore thine infinite Knowledge and Power, that couldst make use of unlikeliest means ; that couldst serve thy self of the very fishes

fishes of the sea, in a business of earthly and civil employment. It was not out of need that thou didst this : (though I do not find that thou ever affectedst a full purse.) What veins of Gold or mines of Silver did not lie open to thy command ? But out of a desire to teach *Peter*, that whilst he would be tributary to *Cæsar*, the very fish of the sea was tributary to him. How should this incourage our dependence upon that Omnipotent hand of thine, which hath Heaven, earth, sea at thy disposing ? Still thou art the same for thy Members, which thou wert for thy self the Head. Rather then offence shall be given to the world by a seeming neglect of thy dear children, thou wilt cause the very fowls of Heaven to bring them meat, and the fish of the sea to bring them money. O let us look up ever to thee by the eye of our Faith ; and not be wanting in our dependence upon thee, who canst not be wanting in thy Providence over us.

X L.

Lazarus *Dead.*

OH the Wisedom of God in penning his own story ! The Disciple whom *Jesus* loved comes after his fellow-Evangelists, that he might glean up those rich ears of history which the rest had passed over. That Eagle soars high, and towrs up by degrees. It was much to turn water into wine ; but it was more to feed five thousand with five loaves. It was much to restore the Ruler's son ; it was more to cure him that had been 38 years a cripple. It was much to cure him that was born blind ; it was more to raise up *Lazarus* that had been so long

dead. As a stream runs still the stronger and wider, the nearer it comes to the Ocean whence it was derived; so didst thou, O Saviour, work the more powerfully, the nearer thou drewest to thy Glory. This was, as one of thy last, so of thy greatest Miracles; when thou wert ready to die thy self, thou raisedst him to life who smelt strong of the grave. None of all the sacred Histories is so full and punctuall as this, in the report of all circumstances. Other Miracles do not more transcend Nature, then this transcends other Miracles.

This alone was a sufficient eviſion of thy Godhead, O Blessed Saviour: none but an infinite power could so far goe beyond Nature, as to recall a man four days dead from, not a mere privation, but a settled corruption. Earth must needs be thine, from which thou raisedst his body; Heaven must needs be thine, from whence thou fetchest his Spirit. None but he that created man, could thus make him new.

Sickness is the common preface to death; no mortall nature is exempted from this complaint; even *Lazarus*, whom *Jesus* loved, is sick. What can strength of Grace or dearness of respect prevail against disease, against dissolution?

It was a stirring message that *Mary* sent to *Jesus*, *He whom thou lovest is sick*: as if she would imply, that his part was no less deep in *Lazarus* then hers. Neither doth she say, *He that loves thee is sick*; but, *He whom thou lovest*: not pleading the merit of *Lazarus* his affection to *Christ*, but the mercy and favour of *Christ* to him. Even that other reflexion of love had been no weak motive; for, O Lord, thou hast said, *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him*. Thy goodness will not be behind us for love, who professest to love them that love thee. But yet the argument is more forcible from thy love to us; since thou hast just reason to respect every thing of thine own, more then ought that can proceed from us.

Even

Even we weak men, what can we stick at where we love? Thou, O infinite God, art Love it self. Whatever thou hast done for us is out of thy love: the ground and motive of all thy mercies is within thy self, not in us; and if there be ought in us worthy of thy love, it is thine own, not ours; thou givest what thou acceptest. *Jesus* well heard the first groan of his dear *Lazarus*; every short breath that he drew, every sigh that he gave was upon account: yet this Lord of Life lets his *Lazarus* sicken, and languish, and die; not out of neglect or impotence, but out of power and resolution. *This sickness is not to death.* He to whom the issues of death belong, knows the way both into it and out of it. He meant that sickness should be to death in respect of the present condition, not to death in respect of the event; to death in the process of Nature, not to death in the success of his Divine power, *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* O Saviour, thy usuall style is, the Son of man; thou that wouldst take up our infirmities, wert willing thus to hide thy Godhead under the course weeds of our Humanity: but here thou saist, *That the Son of God might be glorified.* Though thou wouldst hide thy Divine glory, yet thou wouldst not smother it. Sometimes thou wouldst have thy Sun break forth in bright gleams, to shew that it hath no less light even whilst it seems kept in by the clouds. Thou wert now near thy Passion; it was most seasonable for thee at this time to set forth thy just title. Neither was this an act that thy Humanity could challenge to it self, but far transcending all finite powers. To die, was an act of the Son of man; to raise from death, was an act of the Son of God.

Neither didst thou say merely, that God, but, *that the Son of God might be glorified.* God cannot be glorified unless the Son be so. In very naturall Relations, the wrong or disrespect offered to the child reflects upon the father, as contrarily the parent's upon the child; how much more where the love and respect is infinite? where the

whole essence is communicated with the intireness of relation?

O God, in vain shall we tender our Devotions to thee indefinitely, as to a glorious and incomprehensible Majesty, if we kiss not the Son, who hath most justly said, *Ye believe in the Father, believe also in me.*

What an happy family was this? I find none upon earth, so much honoured; *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.* It is no standing upon terms of precedency: the Spirit of God is not curious in marshalling of places. Time was when *Mary* was confessed to have chosen the better part; here *Martha* is named first, as most interested in *Christ's* love: for ought appears all of them were equally dear. *Christ* had familiarly lodged under their roof. How fit was that to receive him, whose in-dwellers were hospital, pious, unanimous? Hospital, in the glad entertainment of *Jesus* and his train; Pious, in their Devotions; Unanimous, in their mutual Concord? As contrarily he balks and hates that house which is taken up with uncharitableness, profaneness, contention.

But, O Saviour, how doth this agree? thou lovedst this Family; yet hearing of their distress, thou heldest off two days more from them? Canst thou love those thou regardest not? canst thou regard them from whom thou willingly absentest thy self in their necessity? Behold, thy love, as it is above ours, so it is oft against ours. Even out of very affection art thou not seldom absent. None of thine but have sometimes cried, *How long, Lord?* What need we instance, when thine eternal Father did purposely estrange his face from thee, so as thou criedst out of forsaking?

Here thou wouldst knowingly delay, whether for the greatning of the Miracle, or for the strengthening of thy Disciples Faith.

Hadst thou gone sooner, and prevented the death, who had known whether strength of Nature, and not thy
mira-

miraculous power, had done it? Hadst thou overtaken his death by this quickning visitation, who had known whether this had been onely some qualm or ecstasie, and not a perfect dissolution? Now this large gap of time makes thy work both certain and glorious.

And what a clear proof was this beforehand to thy Disciples, that thou wert able to accomplish thine own Resurrection on the third day, who wert able to raise up *Lazarus* on the fourth? The more difficult the work should be, the more need it had of an Omnipotent confirmation.

He that was Lord of our times and his own, can now; when he found it seasonable, say, *Let us go into Judea again*. Why left he it before? was it not upon the heady violence of his enemies? Lo, the stones of the *Jews* drove him thence: the love of *Lazarus* and the care of his Divine glory drew him back thither. Vide Chap. 10. ver. 31. 39.

We may, we must be wise as serpents, for our own preservation; we must be careless of danger, when God calls us to the hazzard. It is far from God's purpose to give us leave so far to respect our selves, as that we should neglect him. Let *Judea* be all snares, all crosses; O Saviour, when thou callest us, we must put our lives into our hands, and follow thee thither.

This journey thou hast purposed and contrived; but what neededst thou to acquaint thy Disciples with thine intent? Where didst thou ever (besides this) make them of counsell with thy voiajes? Neither didst thou say, How think you if I go? but, *Let us go*. Was it for that thou, who knewest thine own strength, knewest also their weakness? Thou wert resolute, they were timorous: they were sensible enough of their late perill, and fearfull of more; there was need to fore-arm them with an expectation of the worst, and preparation for it. Surprisall with evils may indanger the best constancy. The heart is

apt to fail, when it finds it self intrapped in a sudden mischief.

The Disciples were dearly affected to *Lazarus*; they had learned to love where their Master loved: yet now, when our Saviour speaks of returning to that region of perill, they pull him by the sleeve, and put him in mind of the violence offered unto him; *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?*

No less then thrice in the fore-going Chapter did the *Jews* lift up their hands to murder him by a cruel lapidation. Whence was this rage and bloody attempt of theirs? Onely for that he taught them the truth concerning his Divine nature, and gave himself the just style of the Son of God. How subject carnal hearts are to be impatient of Heavenly verities? Nothing can so much fret that malignant spirit which rules in those breasts, as that *Christ* should have his own. If we be persecuted for his Truth, we do but *suffer with him with whom we shall once reign.*

However the Disciples pleaded for their Master's safety, yet they aimed at their own; they well knew their danger was inwrapped in his. It is but a cleanly colour that they put upon their own fear. This is held but a weak and base Passion; each one would be glad to put off the opinion of it from himself, and to set the best face upon his own impotency.

Thus white-livered men, that shrink and shift from the Cross, will not want fair pretences to evade it. One pleads the perill of many dependents; another the disfurnishing the Church of succeeding abettours: each will have some plausible excuse for his sound skin. What errour did not our Saviour rectifie in his followers? Even that fear which they would have dissembled is graciously dispelled by the just consideration of a sure and inevitable Providence. *Are there not twelve hours in the day, which are duely set and proceed regularly for the direction of all the motions*
and

and actions of men? So in this courte of mine which I must run on earth, there is a set and determined time wherein I must work, and doe my Father's will. The Sun that guides these hours is the determinate counsell of my Father, and his calling to the execution of my charge: whilst I follow that, I cannot miscarry, no more then a man can miss his known way at high noon: this while, in vain are either your dissuasions or the attempts of enemies; they cannot hurt, ye cannot divert me.

The journey then holds to *Judea*; his attendents shall be made acquainted with the occasion. He that had formerly denied the deadlines of *Lazarus* his sickness, would not suddenly confesse his death; neither yet would he altogether conceal it: so will he therefore confesse it, as that he will shadow it out in a borrowed expression; *Lazarus our friend sleepeth*. What a sweet title is here both of death, and of *Lazarus*? Death is a sleep; *Lazarus* is our friend. Lo, he says not, my friend, but, *ours*; to draw them first into a gracious familiarity and communion of friendship with himself: for what doth this import but, Ye are my friends, and *Lazarus* is both my friend and yours? *Our friend*.

O meek and mercifull Saviour, that disdainest not to stoop so low, as that, whilst thou *thoughtest it no robbery to be equall unto God*, thou thoughtest it no disparagement to match thy self with weak and wretched men! *Our friend Lazarus*. There is a kind of parity in Friendship. There may be Love where is the most inequality; but friendship supposes pairs: yet the Son of God says of the sons of men, *Our friend Lazarus*. Oh what an high and happy condition is this for mortal men to aspire unto, that the God of Heaven should not be ashamed to own them for friends! Neither saith he now abruptly, *Lazarus our friend is dead*; but, *Lazarus our friend sleepeth*.

O Saviour, none can know the estate of life or death so well as thou that art the Lord of both. It is enough that thou

thou tellest us death is no other then sleep : that which was wont to pass for the cousin of death, is now it self. All this while we have mistaken the case of our dissolution : we took it for an enemy, it proves a friend ; there is pleasure in that wherein we supposed horror.

Who is afraid, after the weary toils of the day, to take his rest by night ? or what is more refreshing to the spent traveller then a sweet sleep ? It is our infidelity, our im-preparation that makes death any other then advantage. Even so, Lord, when thou seest I have toiled enough, let me sleep in peace : and when thou seest I have slept enough, awake me, as thou didst thy *Lazarus* ; *But I go to awake him.* Thou saidst not, Let us go to awake him : those whom thou wilt allow companions of thy way, thou wilt not allow partners of thy work ; they may be witnesses, they cannot be actours. None can awake *Lazarus* out of this sleep, but he that made *Lazarus*. Every mouse or gnat can raise us up from that other sleep ; none but an Omnipotent power from this. This sleep is not without a dissolution. Who can command the Soul to come down and meet the body, or command the body to piece with it self and rise up to the Soul, but the God that created both ? It is our comfort and assurance (O Lord) against the terrours of death and tenacity of the grave, that our Resurrection depends upon none but thine Omnipotence.

Who can blame the Disciples if they were loth to return to *Judea* ? Their last entertainment was such as might justly dishearten them. Were this (as literally taken) all the reason of our Saviour's purpose of so perillous a voiage, they argued not amiss, *If he sleep, he shall doe well.* Sleep in sickness is a good sign of recovery. For extremity of pain bars our rest : when Nature therefore finds so much respiration, she justly hopes for better terms. Yet it doth not always follow, *If he sleep, he shall doe well* : How many have died in lethargies ? how many have lost in sleep what they would not have forgone waking ? *Adam* slept and lost his
rib;

rib ; *Sampson* slept and lost his strength ; *Saul* slept and lost his weapon ; *Ishobeth* and *Holofernes* slept and lost their heads. In ordinary course it holds well ; here they mistook and erred. The misconstruction of the words of *Christ* led them into an unseasonable and erroneous suggestion. Nothing can be more dangerous then to take the speeches of *Christ* according to the sound of the letter : one error will be sure to draw on more ; and if the first be never so slight, the last may be important.

Wherefore are words but to express meanings ? why do we speak but to be understood ? Since then our Saviour saw himself not rightly construed, he delivers himself plainly, *Lazarus is dead*. Such is thy manner, O thou eternal Word of thy Father, in all thy sacred expressions. Thine own mouth is thy best commentary : what thou hast more obscurely said in one passage, thou interpretest more clearly in another. Thou art the Sun, which givest us that light whereby we see thy self.

But how modestly dost thou discover thy Deity to thy Disciples ? Not upon the first mention of *Lazarus* his death, instantly professing thy Power and will of his resurrection ; but contenting thy self onely to intimate thy Omniscience, in that thou couldst in that absence and distance know and report his departure, they shall gather the rest, and cannot chuse but think, we serve a Master that knows all things, and he that knows all things can doe all things.

The absence of our Saviour from the death-bed of *Lazarus* was not casual, but voluntary ; yea, he is not onely willing with it, but glad of it ; *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there*. How contrary may the affections of *Christ* and ours be, and yet be both good ? The two worthy Sisters were much grieved at our Saviour's absence, as doubting it might favour of some neglect ; *Christ* was glad of it, for the advantage of his Disciples Faith. I cannot blame them that they were thus sorry ; I cannot but bless him that he was thus glad. The gain of their Faith in so Divine a Miracle was

more then could be countervailed by their momentary sorrow. God and we are not alike affected with the same events; He laughs where we mourn, he is angry where we are pleased.

The difference of the affections arises from the difference of the Objects, which *Christ* and they apprehend in the same occurrence. Why are the Sisters sorrowfull? because upon *Christ's* absence *Lazarus* died. Why was *Jesus* glad he was not there? for the benefit which he saw would accrue to their Faith. There is much variety of prospect in every act, according to the severall intentions and issues thereof, yea even in the very same eyes. The father sees his son combating in a Duell for his Country; he sees blows and wounds on the one side, he sees renown and victory on the other: he grieves at the wounds, he rejoyces in the Honour. Thus doeth God in all our Afflictions: he sees our tears, and hears our groans, and pities us; but withall he looks upon our Patience, our Faith, our Crown, and is glad that we are afflicted.

O God, why should not we conform our diet unto thine? When we lie in pain and extremity, we cannot but droop under it; but do we find our selves increased in true Mortification, in Patience, in Hope, in a constant reliance on thy Mercies? Why are we not more joyed in this then dejected with the other; since the least grain of the increase of Grace is more worth then can be equalled with whole pounds of bodily vexation?

O strange consequence! *Lazarus is dead*; nevertheless, *Let us goe unto him*. Must they not needs think, What should we doe with a dead man? What should separate, if death cannot? Even those whom we loved dearest, we avoid once dead; now we lay them aside under the board, and thence send them out of our houses to their grave. Neither hath Death more horreur in it then noisomeness; and if we could intreat our eyes to endure the horrid aspect of Death in the face we loved, yet can we perswade our sent

to like that smell that arises up from its corruption? O love stronger than Death! Behold here a friend whom the very Grave cannot sever.

Even those that write the longest and most passionate dates of their amity, subscribe but, *Your friend till death*; and if the ordinary strain of humane friendship will stretch yet a little farther, it is but to the brim of the grave: thither a friend may follow us, and see us bestowed in this house of our Age; but there he leaves us to our worms and dust. But for thee, O Saviour, the grave-stone, the earth, the coffin are no bounders of thy dear respects; even after death, and buriall, and corruption, thou art graciously affected to those thou lovest. Besides the Soul (whereof thou saiest not, Let us goe to it, but, Let it come to us,) there is still a gracious regard to that dust which was and shall be a part of an undoubted member of that mysticall body whereof thou art the Head. Heaven and earth yield no such friend but thy self. O make me ever ambitious of this Love of thine, and ever unquiet till I feel my self possessed of thee.

In the mouth of a mere man this word had been incongruous, *Lazarus is dead, yet let us goe to him*; in thine, O Almighty Saviour, it was not more loving then seasonable; since I may justly say of thee, thou hast more to doe with the dead then with the living: for, both they are infinitely more, and have more inward communion with thee, and thou with them. Death cannot hinder either our passage to thee, or thy return to us. I joy to think the time is coming, when thou shalt come to every of our graves, and call us up out of our dust, and we shall hear thy voice, and live.

X L I.

Lazarus Raised.

Great was the opinion that these devout Sisters had of the Power of *Christ* : as if Death durst not shew her face to him, they suppose his presence had prevented their Brother's dissolution : And now the news of his approach begins to quicken some late hopes in them. *Martha* was ever the more active. She that was before so busily stirring in her house to entertain *Jesus*, was now as nimble to goe forth of her house to meet him : She in whose face joy had wont to smile upon so Blessed a Guest, now salutes him with the sighs and tears and blubbers and wrings of a disconsolate mourner. I know not whether the speeches of her greeting had in them more sorrow or Religion. She had been well catechized before ; even she also had sate at *Jesus* his feet, and can now give good account of her Faith in the Power and Godhead of *Christ*, in the certainty of a future Resurrection. This Conference hath yet taught her more, and raised her heart to an expectation of some wonderfull effect. And now she stands not still, but halts back into the Village to her Sister ; carried thither by the two wings of her own hopes, and her Saviour's commands. The time was, when she would have called off her Sister from the feet of that Divine Master, to attend the household occasions ; now she runs to fetch her out of the house to the feet of *Christ*.

Doubtless *Martha* was much affected with the presence of *Christ* ; and as she was over-joyed with it her self, so she knew how equally welcome it would be to her Sister : yet she doth not ring it out aloud in the open Hall, but secretly

secretly whispers this pleasing tidings in her Sister's ear, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee.* Whether out of modesty, or discretion. It is not fit for a woman to be loud and clamorous: nothing befits that Sex better then silence and bashfulness; as not to be too much seen, so not to be heard too far. Neither did Modesty more charm her tongue then Discretion; whether in respect to the guests, or to *Christ* himself. Had those guests heard of *Christ's* being there, they had either out of fear or prejudice withdrawn themselves from him; neither durst they have been witnesses of that wonderfull Miracle, as being over-awed with that *Jewish* edict which was out against him: or perhaps they had withheld the Sisters from going to him, against whom they knew how highly their Governours were incensed. Neither was she ignorant of the danger of his own person, so lately before assaulted violently by his enemies at *Jerusalem*: She knew they were within the smock of that bloody City, the nest of his enemies; she holds it not therefore fit to make open proclamation of *Christ's* presence, but rounds her Sister secretly in the ear. Christianity doth not bid us abate any thing of our wariness and honest policies; yea it requires us to have no less of the Serpent then of the Dove.

There is a time when we must preach *Christ* on the housetop; there is a time when we must speak him in the ear, and (as it were) with our lips shut. Secrecy hath no less use then divulgation. She said enough, *The Master is come, and calleth for thee.* What an happy word was this which was here spoken? what an high favour is this that is done, that the Lord of Life should personally come and call for *Mary*? yet such as is not appropriated to her. Thou comest to us still, O Saviour, if not in thy bodily presence, yet in thy spiritual; thou callest us still, if not in thy personal voice, yet in thine Ordinances. It is our fault, if we doe not as this good woman, arise quickly, and come to thee. Her friends were there about her, who came pur-

posely to condole with her; her heart was full of heaviness: yet so soon as she hears mention of *Christ*, she forgets friends, Brother, grief, cares, thoughts, and hastes to his presence.

Still was *Jesus* standing in the place where *Martha* left him. Whether it be noted to express *Mary's* speed, or his own wise and gracious resolutions; his presence in the Village had perhaps invited danger, and set off the intended witnesses of the work: or it may be to set forth his zealous desire to dispatch the errand he came for; that as *Abraham's* faithfull servant would not receive any courtesie from the house of *Bethuel*, till he had done his Master's business concerning *Rebeccah*, so thou, O Saviour, wouldst not so much as enter into the house of these two Sisters in *Bethany*, till thou hadst effected this glorious work which occasioned thee thither. It was thy *meat and drink to doe the will of thy Father*; thy best entertainment was within thy self. How do we follow thee, if we suffer either pleasures or profits to take the wall of thy services?

So good women were well worthy of kind friends. No doubt *Bethany*, being not two miles distant from *Jerusalem*, could not but be furnished with good acquaintance from the City: these knowing the dearness, and hearing of the death of *Lazarus*, came over to comfort the sad Sisters. Charity together with the common practice of that Nation calls them to this duty. All our distresses expect these good offices from those that love us; but of all others Death, as that which is the extremest of evils, and makes the most fearfull havock in families, cities, kingdoms, worlds. The complaint was grievous, *I look'd for some to comfort me, but there was none*. It is some kind of ease to sorrow, to have partners; as a burthen is lightened by many shoulders; or as clouds, scattered into many drops, easily vent their moisture into air. Yea the very presence of friends abates grief. The perill that arises to the heart from Passion is the fixedness of it, when, like a corrosiving plaister, it eats in into
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the fore : Some kind of remedy it is, that it may breath out in good society.

These friendly neighbours seeing *Mary* hasten forth, make haste to follow her. *Martha* went forth before ; I saw none goe after her : *Mary* stirs ; they are at her heels. Was it for that *Martha*, being the elder Sister, and the hufwife of the family, might stir about with less observation ? or was it that *Mary* was the more passionate, and needed the more heedy attendance ? However, their care and intensiveness is truly commendable ; they came to comfort her, they doe what they came for. It contents them not to sit still and chat within doors, but they wait on her at all turns. Perturbations of Mind are diseases : good keepers do not onely tend the Patient in bed, but when he sits up, when he tries to walk ; all his motions have their carefull assistance. We are no true friends, if our endeavours of the redress of distempers in them we love be not assiduous and unwearable.

It was but a loving suspicion, *She is gone to the grave to weep there.* They well knew how apt passionate minds are to take all occasions to renew their sorrow ; every Object affects them. When she saw but the Chamber of her dead Brother, straight she thinks, There was *Lazarus* wont to lie, and then she wept afresh ; when the Table, There *Lazarus* was wont to sit, and then new tears arise ; when the Garden, There *Lazarus* had wont to walk, and now again she weeps. How much more do these friends suppose the Passions would be stirred with the sight of the Grave, when she must needs think, There is *Lazarus* ? O Saviour, if the place of the very dead corps of our friend have power to draw our hearts thither, and to affect us more deeply ; how should our hearts be drawn to and affected with Heaven, where thou sittest at the right hand of thy Father ? There (O thou which wert dead, and art alive,) is thy Body and thy Soul present, and united to thy glorious Deity. Thither, O thither let our ac-

cess.

cess be ; not to mourn there, (where is no place for sorrow) but to rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious, and more and more to long for that thy beatificall presence.

Their indulgent love mistook *Mary's* errand ; their thoughts (how kind soever) were much too low : whilst they supposed she went to a dead Brother, she went to a living Saviour. The world hath other conceits of the actions and carriage of the regenerate then are truly intended, setting such constructions upon them as their own carnall reason suggests : they think them dying, when behold they live ; sorrowfull, when they are alwaies rejoycing ; poor, whilst they make many rich. How justly do we appeal from them as incompetent Judges, and pity those misinterpretations which we cannot avoid ?

Both the Sisters met *Christ* ; not both in one posture : *Mary* is still noted, as for more Passion, so for more Devotion ; she that before sat at the feet of *Jesus*, now falls at his feet. That presence had wont to be familiar to her, and not without some outward homeliness ; now it fetches her upon her knees, in an awfull veneration : whether out of a reverent acknowledgment of the secret excellency and power of *Christ* ; or out of a dumb intimation of that suit concerning her dead Brother, which she was afraid to utter. The very gesture it self was supplicatory. What position of body can be so fit for us, when we make our address to our Saviour ? It is an irreligious unmannerliness for us to goe less. Where the heart is affected with an awfull acknowledgment of Majesty, the body cannot but bow.

Even before all her neighbours of *Jerusalem* doth *Mary* thus fall down at the feet of *Jesus* ; so many witnesses as she had, so many spies she had of that forbidden observance. It was no less then Excommunication for any body to confess him : yet good *Mary*, not fearing the informations that might be given by those *Jewish* Gossips, adores him ; and in her silent gesture says, as much as her Sister had

had spoken before, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.* Those that would give *Christ* his right must not stand upon scrupulous fears. Are we naturally timorous? Why do we not fear the deniall, the exclusion of the Almighty? *Without shall be the fearfull.*

Her humble prostration is seconded by a lamentable complaint; *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* The Sisters are both in one mind, both in one speech; and both of them in one speech bewray both strength and infirmity: strength of Faith, in ascribing so much power to *Christ*, that his presence could preserve from death; Infirmity, in supposing the necessity of a presence for this purpose. Why, *Mary*, could not thine Omnipotent Saviour as well in absence have commanded *Lazarus* to live? Is his hand so short, that he can doe nothing but by contaction? If his Power were finite, how could he have forbidden the seizure of death? if infinite, how could it be limited to place, or hindred by distance? It is a weakness of Faith to measure success by means, and means by presence, and to tie effects to both, when we deal with an Almighty agent. Finite causes work within their own sphere; all places are equally near, and all effects equally easy to the infinite. O Saviour, whilst thou now sittest gloriously in Heaven, thou dost no less impart thy self unto us then if thou stoodest visibly by us, then if we stood locally by thee: no place can make difference of thy virtue and aid.

This was *Mary's* moan; no motion, no request sounded from her to her Saviour. Her silent suit is returned with a mute answer; no notice is taken of her error. Oh that marvellous mercy that connives at our faulty infirmities! All the reply that I hear of is, a compassionate groan within himself. O Blessed *Jesu*, thou that wert free from all sin, wouldst not be free even from strong affections. Wisdom and Holiness should want much work, if even vehement passions might not be quitted from offence. *Mary* wept; her tears drew on tears from her friends, all their

tears united drew groans from thee. Even in thine Heaven thou dost no less pity our sorrows : thy Glory is free from groans, but abounds with compassion and mercy : if we be not sparing of our tears, thou canst not be insensible of our sorrows. How shall we imitate thee, if, like our looking-glass, we do not answer tears, and weep on them that weep upon us ?

Lord, thou knewest (in absence) that *Lazarus* was dead, and dost thou not know where he was buried ? Surely thou wert farther off when thou sawest and reportedst his death, then thou wert from the grave thou inquiredst of : thou that knewest all things, yet askest what thou knowest, *Where have ye laid him ?* Not out of need, but out of will : that as in thy sorrow, so in thy question thou mightst depress thy self in the opinion of the beholders for the time, that the glory of thine instant Miracle might be the greater, the less it was expected. It had been all one to thy Omnipotence to have made a new *Lazarus* out of nothing ; or in that remoteness to have commanded *Lazarus*, wheresoever he was, to come forth : but thou wert neither willing to work more miracle then was requisite, nor yet unwilling to fix the minds of the people upon the expectation of some marvellous thing that thou meantest to work ; and therefore askest, *Where have you laid him ?*

They are not more glad of the question, then ready for the answer ; *Come and see.* It was the manner of the *Jews*, as likewise of those *Aegyptians* among whom they had sojourned, to lay up the dead bodies of their friends with great respect ; more cost was wont to be bestowed on some of their graves then on their houses : as neither ashamed then, nor unwilling to shew the decency of their sepulture, they say, *Come and see.* More was hoped for from *Christ* then a mere view ; they meant and expected that his eye should draw him on to some farther action. O Saviour, whilst we desire our spirituall resuscitation, how should we labour to bring thee to our grave ? how should we lay open our
deadness.

deadness before thee, and bewray to thee our impotence and senselesness? Come, Lord, and see what a miserable carcass I am; and by the power of thy mercy raise me from the state of my corruption.

Never was our Saviour more submissly dejected then now immediately before he would approve and exalt the majesty of his Godhead. To his groans and inward grief he adds his tears. Anon they shall confess him a God; these expressions of Passions shall onwards evince him to be a Man. The *Jews* construe this well; *See how he loved him.* Never did any thing but love fetch tears from *Christ*. But they do foully misconstrue *Christ* in the other; *Could not he that opened the eyes of him that was born blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?* Yes, know ye, O vain and importune questionists, that he could have done it with ease. To open the eyes of a man born blind was more then to keep a sick man from dying: this were but to uphold and maintain Nature from decaying; that were to create a new sense, and to restore a deficiency in Nature. To make an eye was no whit less difficult then to make a man: he that could doe the greater might well have done the less. Ye shall soon see this was not for want of power. Had ye said, Why would he not? Why did he not? the question had been fairer, and the answer no less easy; For his own greater glory. Little do ye know the drift whether of God's acts, or delays; and ye know as much as you are worthy. Let it be sufficient for you to understand, that he who can doe all things will doe that which shall be most for his own honour.

It is not improbable that *Jesus*, who before groaned in himself, for compassion of their tears, now groaned for their incredulity. Nothing could so much afflict the Saviour of men as the sins of men. Could their externall wrongs to his body have been separated from offence against his Divine person, their scornfull indignities had not so much affected him. No injury goes so deep as our spirituall

provocations of our God. Wretched men! why should we grieve the good Spirit of God in us? why should we make him groan for us that died to redeem us?

With these groans, O Saviour, thou camest to the grave of *Lazarus*. The door of that house of Death was strong and impenetrable. Thy first word was, *Take away the stone*. O weak beginning of a mighty Miracle! If thou meantest to raise the dead, how much more easy had it been for thee to remove the grave-stone? One grain of Faith in thy very Disciples was enough to remove mountains; and dost thou say, *Take away the stone*? I wis, there was a greater weight that lay upon the body of *Lazarus* than the stone of his Tomb, the weight of Death and Corruption; a thousand rocks and hills were not so heavy a load as this alone: why then dost thou stick at this shovel-full? Yea, how easy had it been for thee to have brought up the body of *Lazarus* through the stone, by causing that marble to give way by a sudden rarefaction? But thou thoughtest best to make use of their hands rather: whether for their own more full conviction; for had the stone been taken away by thy Followers, and *Lazarus* thereupon walked forth, this might have appeared to thy malignant enemies to have been a set match betwixt thee, the Disciples and *Lazarus*: or whether for the exercise of our Faith, that thou mightest teach us to trust thee under contrary appearances. Thy command to remove the stone seemed to argue an impotence; straight that seeming weakness breaks forth into an act of Omnipotent power. The homeliest shews of thine humane infirmity are ever seconded with some mighty proofs of thy Godhead; and thy Miracle is so much more wondred at, by how much it was less expected.

It was ever thy just will that we should doe what we may. To remove the stone or to untie the napkin was in their power; this they must doe: to raise the dead was out of their power; this therefore thou wilt doe alone. Our hands must doe their utmost, ere thou wilt put to thine.

O Saviour, we are all dead and buried in the grave of our sinfull Nature. The stone of obstination must be taken away from our hearts, ere we can hear thy reviving voice: we can no more remove this stone then dead *Lazarus* could remove his; we can adde more weight to our graves. O let thy faithfull agents, by the power of thy Law, and the grace of thy Gospell, take off the stone, that thy voice may enter into the grave of miserable corruption.

Was it a modest kind of mannerlines in *Martha*, that she would not have *Christ* annoyed with the ill sent of that stale carcase? or was it out of distrust of reparation, since her brother had passed all the degrees of corruption, that she says, *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days?* He that understood hearts, found somewhat amiss in that intimation; his answer had not endeavoured to rectifie that which was utterly faultless. I fear the good woman meant to object this as a likely obstacle to any farther purposes or proceedings of *Christ*. Weak faith is still apt to lay blocks of difficulties in the way of the great works of God.

Four days were enough to make any corps noisome. Death it self is not unfavoury; immediately upon dissolution the body retains the wonted sweetness: it is the continuance under death that is thus offensive. Neither is it otherwise in our Spiritual condition: the longer we lie under our sin, the more rotten and corrupt we are. He who upon the fresh commission of his sin recovers himself by a speedy repentance, yields no ill sent to the nostrills of the Almighty. The Candle that is presently blown in again offends not; it is the Snuffe which continues choaked with its own moisture that sends up unwholsome and odious fumes. O Saviour, thou wouldst yield to death, thou wouldst not yield to corruption: Ere the fourth day, thou wert risen again. I cannot but receive many deadly foils; but oh, do thou raise me up again ere I shall pass the degrees of rottenness in my sins and trespasses.

They that laid their hands to the stone, doubtless held now still awhile, and looked one while on *Christ*, another while upon *Martha*, to hear what issue of resolution would follow upon so important an objection: when they find a light touch of taxation to *Martha*, *Said not I to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* That holy woman had before professed her belief, as *Christ* had professed his great intentions; both were now forgotten: and now our Saviour is fain to revive both her memory and Faith; *Said not I to thee?* The best of all Saints are subject to fits of unbelief and oblivion; the only remedy whereof must be the inculcation of God's mercifull promises of their relief and supportation. O God, if thou have said it, I dare believe; I dare cast my Soul upon the belief of every word of thine. *Faithfull art thou which hast promised, who wilt also doe it.*

In spite of all the unjust discouragements of Nature we must obey *Christ's* command. What-ever *Martha* suggests, they remove the stone, and may now see and smell him dead, whom they shall soon see revived. The sent of the corps is not so unpleasing to them, as the perfume of their obedience is sweet to *Christ*. And now when all impediments are removed, and all hearts ready for the work, our Saviour addresseth to the Miracle.

His *Eyes* begin; they are *lift up* to Heaven. It was the malicious mis-suggestion of his enemies, that he look'd down to *Beelzebub*: the beholders shall now see whence he expects and derives his power; and shall by him learn whence to expect and hope for all success. The heart and the eye must go together: he that would have ought to doe with God, must be sequestred and lifted up from earth.

His Tongue seconds his Eye; *Father*. Nothing more stuck in the stomach of the *Jews*, then that *Christ* called himself the Son of God; this was imputed to him for a Blasphemy, worthy of stones. How seasonably is this word spoken

spoken in the hearing of these *Jews*, in whose sight he will be presently approved so? How can ye now, O ye cavillers, except at that title, which ye shall see irrefragably justified? Well may he call God Father, that can raise the dead out of the grave. In vain shall ye snarl at the style, when ye are convinced of the effect.

I hear of no Prayer, but a Thanks for hearing. Whilst thou saidst nothing, O Saviour, how doth thy Father hear thee? Was it not with thy Father and thee as it was with thee and *Moses*? Thou saidst, *Let me alone, Moses*, when he spake not. Thy will was thy prayer. Words express our hearts to men, thoughts to God. Well didst thou know, out of the self-sameness of thy will with thy Father's, that if thou didst but think in thine heart that *Lazarus* should rise, he was now raised. It was not for thee to pray vocally and audibly, lest those captious hearers should say, thou didst all by intreaty, nothing by power. Thy thanks overtake thy desires; ours require time and distance: our thanks arise from the Echo of our prayers resounding from Heaven to our hearts; Thou, because thou art at once in earth and Heaven, and knowest the grant to be of equal paces with the request, most justly thankest in praying.

Now ye cavilling *Jews* are thinking straight, Is there such distance betwixt the Father and the Son? is it so rare a thing for the Son to be heard, that he pours out his thanks for it as a blessing unusuall? Do ye not now see that he who made your heart, knows it, and anticipates your fond thoughts with the same breath? *I knew that thou hearest me always; but I said this for their sakes, that they might believe.*

Mercifull Saviour, how can we enough admire thy goodness, who makest our belief the scope and drift of thy doctrine and actions! Alas, what wert thou the better if they believed thee sent from God? what wert thou the worse if they believed it not? Thy perfection and glory stands not upon the slippery terms of our approbation or dislike;

dislike ; but is reall in thy self, and that infinite, without possibility of our increase or diminution. We, we onely are they that have either the gain or loss in thy receipt or rejection : yet so dost thou affect our belief, as if it were more thine advantage then ours.

O Saviour, whilst thou spok'st to thy Father, thou liftedst up thine eyes ; now thou wert to speak unto dead *Lazarus*, thou liftedst up thy voice, and *criedst aloud, Lazarus, come forth.* Was it that the strength of the voice might answer to the strength of the affection ? since we faintly require what we care not to obtain, and vehemently utter what we earnestly desire. Was it that the greatness of the voice might answer to the greatness of the work ? Was it that the hearers might be witnesses of what words were used in so miraculous an act ; no magicall incantations, but authoritative and Divine commands ? Was it to signifie that *Lazarus* his Soul was called from far ; the speech must be loud that shall be heard in another world ? Was it in relation to the estate of the body of *Lazarus*, whom thou hadst reported to sleep ; since those that are in a deep and dead sleep cannot be awaked without a loud call ? Or was it in a representation of that loud voice of the last Trumpet, which shall sound into all graves, and raise all flesh from their dust ?

Even so still, Lord, when thou wouldst raise a Soul from the death of sin, and grave of corruption, no easie voice will serve. Thy strongest commands, thy loudest denunciations of Judgments, the shrillest and sweetest promulgations of thy Mercies, are but enough.

How familiar a word is this, *Lazarus, come forth* ? no other then he was wont to use whilst they lived together. Neither doth he say, *Lazarus, revive* ; but, as if he supposed him already living, *Lazarus, come forth* : To let them know, that those who are dead to us, are to and with him alive ; yea in a more entire and feeling society, then whilst they carried their clay about them. Why do I fear that separation which shall more unite me to my Saviour ?

Neither

Neither was the word more familiar then commanding, *Lazarus, come forth.* Here is no suit to his Father, no adjuration to the deceased, but a flat and absolute injunction, *Come forth.* O Saviour, that is the voice that I shall once hear sounding into the bottom of my grave, and raising me up out of my dust; that is the voice that shall pierce the rocks, and divide the mountains, and fetch up the dead out of the lowest deeps. Thy word made all; thy word shall repair all. Hence, all ye diffident fears; he whom I trust is Omnipotent.

It was the *Jewish* fashion to enwrap the corps in linen, to tie the hands and feet, and to cover the face of the dead. The Fall of man (besides weakness) brought shame upon him; ever since, even whilst he lives, the whole Body is covered; but the Face, because some sparks of that extinct Majesty remain there, is wont to be left open. In death (all those poor remainders being gone, and leaving deformity and gaitliness in the room of them) the Face is covered also.

There lies *Lazarus* bound in double fetters: One Almighty word hath loosed both; and now *he that was bound came forth.* He whose power could not be hindred by the chains of death, cannot be hindred by linen bonds: He that gave life gave motion, gave direction: He that guided the Soul of *Lazarus* into the body, guided the body of *Lazarus* without his eyes, moved the feet without the full liberty of his regular paces. No doubt the same power slackned those swathing-bands of death, that the feet might have some little scope to move, though not with that freedom that followed after. Thou didst not onely, O Saviour, raise the body of *Lazarus*, but the Faith of the beholders. They cannot deny him dead, whom they saw rising; they see the signs of death, with the proofs of life. Those very swathes convinced him to be the man that was raised. Thy less Miracle confirms the greater; both confirm the Faith of the beholders. O clear and irrefragable

example of our refuscitation ! Say now, ye shameless *Sadducees*, with what face can ye deny the Resurrection of the body, when ye see *Lazarus* after four-days death rising up out of his grave ? And if *Lazarus* did thus start up at the bleating of this Lamb of God, that was now every day preparing for the slaughter-house ; how shall the dead be rouzed up out of their graves by the roaring of that glorious and immortall Lion, whose voice shall shake the powers of Heaven, and move the very foundations of the earth ?

With what strange amazedness do we think that *Martha* and *Mary*, the *Jews* and the Disciples, look'd to see *Lazarus* come forth in his winding-sheet, shackled with his linen fetters, and walk towards them ? Doubtless fear and horrour strove in them, whether should be for the time more predominant. We love our friends dearly ; but to see them again after their known death, and that in the very robes of the grave, must needs set up the hair in a kind of uncouth rigour. And now, though it had been most easy for him that brake the adamantine fetters of death, to have broke in pieces those linen ligaments wherewith his raised *Lazarus* was encumbred ; yet he will not doe it but by their hands. He that said, *Remove the stone*, said, *Loose Lazarus*. He will not have us expect his immediate help in that we can doe for our selves. It is both a laziness, and a presumptuous tempting of God, to look for an extraordinary and supernaturall help from God, where he hath enabled us with common aid.

What strange salutations do we think there were betwixt *Lazarus* and *Christ* that had raised him ; betwixt *Lazarus* and his Sisters and neighbours and friends ? what amazed looks ? what unusuall complements ? For *Lazarus* was himself at once : here was no leisure of degrees to reduce him to his wonted perfection ; neither did he stay to rub his eyes, and stretch his benumbed lims, nor take time to put off that dead sleep wherewith he had been seized ; but instantly he is both alive, and fresh, and vigorous : if they
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do but let him goe, he walks so as if he had ailed nothing, and receives and gives mutuall gratulations. I leave them entertaining each other with glad embraces, with discourfes of reciprocall admiration, with praises and adorations of that God and Saviour that had fetched him into life.

XLII.

CHRIST'S Procession to the Temple.

NEver did our Saviour take so much state upon him as now that he was going towards his Passion: other journies he measured on foot, without noise or train; this with a Princely equipage and loud acclamation. Wherein yet, O Saviour, whether shall I more wonder at thy Majesty, or thine Humility; that Divine Majesty which lay hid under so humble appearance, or that sincere Humility which veiled so great a glory? Thou, O Lord, whose *chariots are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels*, wouldst make choice of the silliest of beasts to carry thee in thy last and Royall progress. How well is thy birth suited with thy triumph? Even that very *As* whereon thou rodest was prophesied of; neither couldst thou have made up those vaticall Predictions without this conveyance. O glorious, and yet homely pomp!

Thou wouldst not lose ought of thy right; thou that wast a King, wouldst be proclaimed so: but that it might appear thy Kingdome was not of this world, thou that couldst have commanded all worldly magnificence, thoughtest fit to abandon it.

In stead of the Kings of the earth, who reigning by thee might have been employed in thine attendance, the people

are thine heralds ; their homely garments are thy foot-cloath and carpets ; their green boughs the strewings of thy way : those Palms which were wont to be born in the hands of them that triumph, are strewed under the feet of thy beast. It was thy greatness and honour to condemn those glories which worldly hearts were wont to admire.

Justly did thy Followers hold the best ornaments of the earth worthy of no better than thy treading upon ; neither could they ever account their garments so rich, as when they had been trampled upon, by thy carriage. How happily did they think their backs disrobed for thy way ? How gladly did they spend their breath in acclaiming thee ? *Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* Where now are the great Masters of the Synagogue, that had enacted the ejection of whosoever should confess *Jesus* to be the *Christ* ? Lo here bold and undaunted clients of the *Messiah*, that dare proclaim him in the publick road, in the open streets. In vain shall the impotent enemies of *Christ* hope to suppress his glory : as soon shall they with their hand hide the face of the Sun from shining to the world, as withhold the beams of his Divine truth from the eyes of men by their envious opposition. In spite of all *Jewish* malignity, his Kingdome is confessed, applauded, blessed.

O thou fairer then the children of men, in thy Majesty ride on prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness : and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

In this Princely (and yet poor and despicable) pomp doth our Saviour enter into the famous City of *Jerusalem* ; *Jerusalem* noted of old for the seat of Kings, Priests, Prophets : of Kings, for there was the throne of *David* ; of Priests, for there was the Temple ; of Prophets, for there they delivered their errands, and left their blood. Neither know I whether it were more wonder for a Prophet to perish

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perish out of *Jerusalem*, or to be safe there. Thither would *Jesus* come as a King, as a Priest, as a Prophet: acclaimed as a King; teaching the people, and foretelling the wofull vastation of it, as a Prophet; and as a Priest taking possession of his Temple, and vindicating it from the foul profanations of *Jewish* Sacrilege. Oft before had he come to *Jerusalem* without any remarkable change, because without any semblance of State; now that he gives some little glimpse of his Royalty, *the whole City was moved*. When the Sages of the East brought the first news of the King of the *Jews*, *Herod was troubled and all Jerusalem with him*; and now that the King of the *Jews* comes himself (though in so mean a port) there is a new commotion. The silence and obscurity of *Christ* never troubles the world; he may be an underling without any stir: but if he do but put forth himself never so little to bear the least sway amongst men, now their blood is up; the whole City is moved. Neither is it otherwise in the private œconomy of the Soul. O Saviour, whilst thou dost, as it were, hide thy self, and lie still in the heart, and takest all terms contentedly from us, we entertain thee with no other then a friendly welcome; but when thou once beginnest to ruffle with our Corruptions, and to exercise thy Spiritual power in the subjugation of our vile Affections, now all is in a secret uproar, all the angles of the heart are moved.

Although, doubtless, this commotion was not so much of tumult, as of wonder. As when some uncouth sight presents it self in a populous street, men run, and gaze, and throng, and inquire; the feet, the tongue, the eyes walk; one spectatour draws on another, one asks and presses another; the noise increases with the concourse, each helps to stir up others expectation: such was this of *Jerusalem*.

What means this strangeness? Was not *Jerusalem* the Spouse of *Christ*? Had he not chosen her out of all the earth? Had he not begotten many children of her, as the pledges of their love? How justly maist thou now, O Saviour,

complain with that mirrour of Patience, *My breath was grown strange to my own wife, though I intreated her for the childrens sake of my own body?* Even of thee is that fulfilled, which thy chosen Vessel said of thy Ministers, Thou art *made a gazing-stock to the world, to Angels, and to men.*

As all the world was bound to thee for thine Incarnation and residence upon the face of the earth, so especially *Judea*, to whose limits thou confinedst thy self; and therein, above all the rest, three Cities, *Nazareth, Capernaum, Jerusalem*, on whom thou bestowedst the most time, and cost of preaching, and miraculous works. Yet in all three thou receivedst not strange entertainment onely, but hostile. In *Nazareth* they would have cast thee down headlong from the Mount: In *Capernaum* they would have bound thee: In *Jerusalem* they crucified thee at last, and now are amazed at thy presence. Those places and persons that have the greatest helps and privileges afforded to them, are not always the most answerable in the return of their thankfulness. *Christ's* being amongst us doth not make us happy, but his welcome. Every day may we hear him in our streets, and yet be as new to seek as these Citizens of *Jerusalem*; *Who is this?*

Was it a question of applause, or of contempt, or of ignorance? Applause of his abettours, contempt of the Scribes and Pharisees, ignorance of the multitude? Surely his abettours had not been moved at this sight: the Scribes and Pharisees had rather envied then contemned: the multitude doubtless inquired seriously, out of a desire of information. Not that the Citizens of *Jerusalem* knew not *Christ*, who was so ordinary a guest, so noted a Prophet amongst them. Questionless this question was asked of that part of the train which went before this Triumph, whilst our Saviour was not yet in sight, which ere long his presence had resolved. It had been their duty to have known, to have attended *Christ*, yea to have publish'd him

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him to others: since this is not done, it is well yet that they spend their breath in an inquiry. No doubt there were many that would not so much as leave their shop-board, and step to their doors or their windows to say, *Who is this?* as not thinking it could concern them who passed by, whilst they might sit still. Those Greeks were in some way to good, that could say to *Philip, We would see Jesus.* O Saviour, thou hast been so long amongst us, that it is our just shame if we know thee not. If we have been slack hitherto, let our zealous inquiry make amends for our neglect. Let outward pomp and worldly glory draw the hearts and tongues of carnall men after them; O let it be my care and happiness to ask after nothing but thee.

The attending Disciples could not be to seek for an answer; which of the Prophets have not put it into their mouths? *Who is this?* Ask *Moses*, and he shall tell you, *The seed of the Woman that shall break the Serpent's head.* Ask our Father *Jacob*, and he shall tell you, *The Shiloh of the tribe of Judah.* Ask *David*, and he shall tell you, *The King of glory.* Ask *Esay*, and he shall tell you, *Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellour, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.* Ask *Jeremy*, and he shall tell you, *The righteous Branch.* Ask *Daniel*, he shall tell you, *The Messiah.* Ask *John the Baptist*, he shall tell you, *The Lamb of God.* If ye ask the God of the Prophets, he hath told you, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Yea, if all these be too good for you to consult with, the Devils themselves have been forced to say, *I know who thou art, even that Holy One of God.* On no side hath *Christ* left himself without a testimony; and accordingly the Multitude here have their answer ready, *This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee.*

Ye undervalue your Master, O ye well-meaning Followers of *Christ*: *A Prophet?* yea, more than a Prophet? *John Baptist* was so, yet was but the Harbinger of this *Messiah.* This was that God by whom the Prophets were
both

both sent and inspired. Of *Nazareth*, say you? ye mistake him: *Bethlehem* was the place of his Birth, the proof of his Tribe, the evidence of his *Messiah*ship. If *Nazareth* were honoured by his preaching, there was no reason he should be dishonoured by *Nazareth*. No doubt, he whom you confessed, pardoned the error of your confession. Ye spake but according to the common style: The two Disciples in their walk to *Emmaus*, after the Death and Resurrection of *Christ*, give him no other title. This belief passed current with the people; and thus high even the vulgar thoughts could then rise: and, no doubt, even thus much was for that time very acceptable to the Father of Mercies. If we make profession of the Truth according to our knowledge, though there be much imperfection in our apprehension and delivery, the mercy of our good God takes it well; not judging us for what we have not, but accepting us in what we have. Shouldst thou, O God, stand strictly upon the punctual degrees of knowledge, how wide would it goe with millions of Souls? for besides much error in many, there is more ignorance. But herein do we justly magnifie and adore thy Goodness, that where thou findest diligent endeavour of better information matched with an honest simplicity of heart, thou passest by our unwilling defects, and crownest our well-meant confessions.

But oh the wonderfull hand of God in the carriage of this whole business! The people proclaimed *Christ* first a King; and now they proclaim him a Prophet. Why did not the *Roman* bands run into arms upon the one? why did not the Scribes and Pharisees and the envious Priesthood mutiny upon the other? They had made Decrees against him, they had laid wait for him; yet now he passes in state through their streets, acclaimed both a King and Prophet, without their reluctance. What can we impute this unto, but to the powerfull and over-ruling arm of his Godhead? He that restrained the rage of *Herod* and his Courtiers

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Courtiers upon the first news of a King born, now restrains all the opposite powers of *Jerusalem* from lifting up a finger against this last and publick avouchment of the Regall and Propheticall Office of *Christ*. When flesh and blood have done their worst, they can be but such as he will make them: If the Legions of Hell combine with the Potentates of the earth, they cannot go beyond the reach of their tether: Whether they rise or sit still, they shall by an insensible ordination perform that will of the Almighty which they least think of, and most oppose.

With this humble pomp and just acclamation, O Saviour, dost thou pass through the streets of *Jerusalem* to the Temple. Thy first walk was not to *Herod's* palace, or to the Market-places or Burses of that populous City, but to the Temple; whether it were out of duty, or out of need: As a good Son when he comes from far, his first alighting is at his Father's house; neither would he think it other then preposterous, to visit strangers before his friends, or friends before his Father. Besides that the Temple had more use of thy presence: both there was the most disorder, and from thence, as from a corrupt spring, it issued forth into all the chanel of *Jerusalem*. A wise Physician inquires first into the state of the head, heart, liver, stomach, the vitall and chief parts, ere he asks after the petty symptoms of the meaner and less-concerning members. Surely all good or evil begins at the Temple. If God have there his own, if men find there nothing but wholesome instruction, holy example, the Commonwealth cannot want some happy tincture of Piety, Devotion, Sanctimony; as that fragrant perfume from *Aaron's* head sweetens his utmost skirts. Contrarily, the distempers of the Temple cannot but affect the Secular state. As therefore the good Husbandman, when he sees the leaves grow yellow, and the branches unthriving, looks presently to the root; so didst thou, O holy Saviour, upon sight of the disorders spered over

Jerusalem and *Judea*, address thy self to the rectifying of the Temple.

No sooner is *Christ* alighted at the gate of the outer Court of his Father's house, then he falls to work : Reformation was his errand ; that he roundly attempts. That holy ground was profaned by sacrilegious barterings : within the third court of that sacred place was a publick Mart held ; here was a throng of buiers and sellers, though not of all commodities, (the *Jews* were not so irreligious,) onely of those things which were for the use of Sacrifice. The *Israelites* came many of them from far ; it was no less from *Dan* to *Beersheba* then the space of an hundred and threescore miles ; neither could it be without much inconvenience for them to bring their Bullocks, Sheep, Goats, Lambs, meal, oyl, and such other holy provision with them up to *Jerusalem* : Order was taken by the Priests, that these might for money be had close by the Altar ; to the ease of the offerer, and the benefit of the seller, and perhaps no disprofit to themselves. The pretence was fair, the practice unsufferable. The great Owner of the Temple comes to vindicate the reputation and rights of his own house ; and in an indignation at that so foul abuse, lays fiercely about him, and with his three-stringed scourge whips out those sacrilegious chapmen, casts down their tables, throws away their baskets, scatters their heaps, and sends away their customers with smart and horreur.

With what fear and astonishment did the repining offenders look upon so unexpected a Justicer, whilst their conscience lashed them more then those cords, and the terror of that meek chastiser more affrighted them then his blows ? Is this that mild and gentle Saviour that came to *take upon him our stripes*, and to undergoe *the chastisements of our peace* ? Is this that quiet *Lamb*, which before his shearers openeth not his mouth ? See now how his eyes sparkle with holy anger, and dart forth beams of indignation in the faces of these guilty Collybists : see how his hands deal strokes.

strokes and ruine. Yea, thus, thus it became thee, O thou gracious Redeemer of men, to let the world see, thou hast not lost thy Justice in thy Mercy; that there is not more lenity in thy forbearances, then rigour in thy just severity; that thou canst thunder, as well as shine.

This was not thy first act of this kind; at the entrance of thy publick work thou beganst so as thou now shuttest up, with purging thine House. Once before had these offenders been whipt out of that holy place, which now they dare again defile. Shame and smart is not enough to reclaim obdur'd offenders. Gainfull sins are not easily checked, but less easily mastered. These bold flies, where they are beaten off, will alight again. *He that is filthy will be filthy still.*

Oft yet had our Saviour been (besides this) in the Temple, and often had seen the same disorder; he doth not think fit to be always whipping. It was enough thus twice to admonish and chastise them before their ruine. That God who hates sin always, will not chide always, and strikes more seldome; but he would have those few strokes perpetuall monitours; and if those prevail not, he smites but once. It is his uniform course, first the Whip, and if that speed not, then the Sword.

There is a reverence due to God's House for the Owner's sake, for the service's sake. Secular and profane actions are not for that Sacred roof, much less uncivil and beastly. What but Holiness can become that place which is *the Beauty of Holiness?*

The fairest pretences cannot bear out a sin with God. Never could there be more plausible colours cast upon any act; the convenience, the necessity of provisions for the Sacrifice: yet through all these do the fiery eyes of our Saviour see the foul Covetousness of the Priests, the Fraud of the Money-changers, the intolerable abuse of the Temple. Common eyes may be cheated with easy pretexts; but he that looks through the heart at the face, justly answers our Apologies with scourges.

None but the hand of publick Authority must reform the abuses of the Temple. If all be out of course there, no man is barred from sorrow; the grief may reach to all, the power of reformation onely to those whom it concerneth. It was but a just question, though ill propounded to *Moses*, *Who made thee a Judge or a Ruler?* We must all imitate the zeal of our Saviour; we may not imitate his correction. If we strike uncalled, we are justly stricken for our arrogation, for our presumption. A tumultuary remedy may prove a medicine worse then the disease.

But what shall I say of so sharp and imperious an act from so meek an Agent? Why did not the Priests and Levites (whose this gain partly was) abett these money-changers, and make head against *Christ*? why did not those multitudes of men stand upon their defence, and wrest that whip out of the hand of a seemingly-weak and unarmed Prophet; but in stead hereof run away like sheep from before him, not daring to abide his presence, though his hand had been still? Surely, had these men been so many armies, yea, so many Legions of Devils, when God will astonish and chase them, they cannot have the power to stand and resist. How easy is it for him that made the heart, to put either terrour or courage into it at pleasure? O Saviour, it was none of thy least Miracles, that thou didst thus drive out a world of able offenders in spite of their gain and stomachfull resolutions; their very profit had no power to stay them against thy frowns. *Who hath resisted thy will?* Mens hearts are not their own: they are, they must be such as their Maker will have them.

XLIII.

The Fig-tree cursed.

WHen in this State our Saviour had rid through the streets of *Jerusalem*, that evening he lodged not there. Whether he would not, that after so publick an acclamation of the people he might avoid all suspicion of plots or popularity: (Even unjust jealousies must be shunned; neither is there less wisdom in the prevention, then in the remedy of evils:) or whether he could not, for want of an invitation; *Hosanna* was better cheap then an entertainment; and perhaps the envy of so stomacked a Reformation discouraged his hosts. However, he goes that evening supperless out of *Jerusalem*. O unthankfull Citizens! Do ye thus part with your no less meek then glorious King? His title was not more proclaimed in your streets then your own ingratitude. If he have purged the Temple, yet your hearts are foul. There is no wonder in mens unworthiness; there is more then wonder in thy mercy, O thou Saviour of men, that wouldst yet return thither where thou wert so palpably disregarded. If they gave thee not thy Supper, thou givest them their Breakfast: If thou maist not spend the night with them, thou wilt with them spend the day. O love of unthankfull Souls, not discourageable by the most hatefull indignities, by the basest repulses! What burthen canst thou shrink under, who canst bear the weight of Ingratitude?

Thou that givest food to all things living, art thy self hungry. *Martha*, *Mary* and *Lazarus* kept not so poor an house, but that thou mightest have eaten something at *Bethany*. Whether thine haste out-ran thine appetite; or

whether on purpose thou forbarest repast, to give opportunity to thine insuing Miracle, I neither ask, nor resolve. This was not the first time that thou wast hungry. As thou wouldst be a man, so thou wouldst suffer those infirmities that belong to Humanity. Thou camest to be our High Priest; it was thy act and intention, not onely to intercede for thy people, but to transfer unto thy self, as their sins, so their weakneses and complaints. Thou knowest to pity what thou hast felt. Are we pinched with want? we endure but what thou didst, we have reason to be patient; thou enduredst what we do, we have reason to be thankfull.

But what shall we say to this thine early hunger? The morning, as it is privileged from excess, so from need; the stomach is not wont to rise with the body. Surely, as thine occasions were, no season was exempted from thy want: thou hadst spent the day before in the holy labour of thy Reformation; after a supperless departure thou spentest the night in Prayer; no meal refreshed thy toil. What do we think much to forbear a morsell, or to break a sleep for thee, who didst thus neglect thy self for us?

As if meat were no part of thy care, as if any thing would serve to stop the mouth of hunger, thy breakfast is expected from the next Tree. A Fig-tree grew by the way side, full grown, well spread, thick leaved, and such as might promise enough to a remote eye: thither thou camest to seek that which thou foundest not; and not finding what thou soughtest, as displeased with thy disappointment, cursedst that plant which deluded thy hopes. Thy breath instantly blasted that deceitfull tree; it did (no otherwise then the whole world must needs doe) wither and die with thy Curse.

O Saviour, I had rather wonder at thine actions then discuss them. If I should say that, as man, thou either knewest not or consideredst not of this fruitlesness, it could no way prejudice thy Divine Omniscience; this infirmity were

were no worse than thy weariness or hunger. It was no more disparagement to thee to grow in Knowledge, than in Stature ; neither was it any more disgrace to thy perfect Humanity, that thou (as man) knewest not all things at once, then that thou wert not in thy childhood at thy full growth. But herein I doubt not to say, it is more likely thou camest purposely to this Tree, knowing the barrenness of it answerable to the season, and fore-resolving the event ; that thou mightest hence ground the occasion of so instructive a Miracle : like as thou knewest *Lazarus* was dying, was dead, yet wouldst not seem to take notice of his dissolution, that thou mightest the more glorifie thy Power in his resuscitation. It was thy willing and determined disappointment for a greater purpose.

But why didst thou curse a poor Tree for the want of that fruit which the season yielded not ? If it pleased thee to call for that which it could not give, the Plant was innocent ; and if innocent, why cursed ? O Saviour, it is fitter for us to adore than to examine. We may be sawcy in inquiring after thee, and fond in answering for thee.

If that season were not for a ripe fruit, yet for some fruit it was. Who knows not the nature of the Fig-tree to be always bearing ? That plant (if not altogether barren) yields a continuall succession of increase ; whilst one fig is ripe, another is green ; the same bough can content both our taste and our hope. This tree was defective in both, yielding nothing but an empty shade to the mis-hoping traveller.

Besides that, I have learn'd that thou, O Saviour, wert wont not to speak onely, but to work Parables. And what was this other than a reall Parable of thine ? All this while hadst thou been in the world ; thou hadst given many proofs of thy Mercy, (the earth was full of thy Goodness,) none of thy Judgments : now, immediately before thy Passion, thou thoughtest fit to give this double demonstration of thy just austerity. How else should the world have

have seen thou canst be severe as well as meek and mercifull? And why mightest not thou, who madest all things, take liberty to destroy a plant for thine own Glory? Wherefore serve thy best creatures but for the praise of thy Mercy and Justice? What great matter was it if thou, who once saidst, *Let the earth bring forth the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding the fruit of its own kind,* shalt now say, *Let this fruitless tree wither?* All this yet was done in figure: In this act of thine I see both an Embleme, and a Prophecy. How didst thou herein mean to teach thy Disciples how much thou hatest an unfruitfull profession, and what judgments thou meantest to bring upon that barren generation? Once before hadst thou compared the *Jewish Nation* to a Fig-tree in the midst of thy vineyard, which, after three years expectation and culture yielding no fruit, was by thee, the Owner, doomed to a speedy excision: now thou adest what thou then saidst. No tree abounds more with leaf and shade; no Nation abounded more with Ceremoniall observations and semblances of Piety. Outward profession, where there is want of inward truth and reall practice, doth but help to draw on and aggravate judgment. Had this Fig-tree been utterly bare and leafless, it had perhaps escaped the Curse. Hear this, ye vain Hypocrites, that care onely to shew well, never caring for the sincere truth of a conscionable Obedience: your fair outside shall be sure to help you to a Curse.

That which was the fault of this Tree, is the punishment of it, *fruitlesnes*: *Let no fruit grow on thee hence-forward so ever.* Had the boughs been appointed to be torn down, and the body split in pieces, the doom had been more easie; that juicy plant might yet have recovered, and have lived to recompense this deficiency: now it shall be what it was, *fruitless*. Woe be to that Church or Soul that is punished with her own Sin. Outward plagues are but favours in comparison of Spirituall judgments.

That Curse might well have stood with a long continuance;

nance ; the Tree might have lived long, though fruitless : but no sooner is the word passed, then the leaves flag and turn yellow, the branches wrinkle and shrink, the bark discolours, the root dries, the plant withers.

O God, what creature is able to abide the blasting of the breath of thy displeasure ? Even the most great and glorious Angels of Heaven could not stand one moment before thine anger, but perish'd under thy wrath everlastingly. How irresistible is thy Power ? how dreadfull are thy Judgements ? Lord, chastise my fruitfulness, but punish it not ; at least, punish it, but curse it not, lest I wither and be consumed.

XLIV.

CHRIST *Betrayed.*

SUCH an eye-fore was *Christ* that raised *Lazarus*, and *Lazarus* whom *Christ* raised ; to the envious Priests, Scribes, Elders of the *Jews*, that they consult to murder both : Whilst either of them lives, neither can the glory of that Miracle die, nor the shame of the oppugners.

Those malicious heads are laid together in the Parlour of *Caiaphas*. Happy had it been for them, if they had spent but half those thoughts upon their own Salvation, which they misemployed upon the destruction of the innocent. At last this results, that Force is not their way ; Subtlety and Treachery must doe that which should be vainly attempted by Power.

Who is so fit to work this feat against *Christ* as one of his own ? There can be no Treason where is not some Trust.

Who so fit among the domesticks as he that bare the bag, and over-lov'd that which he bare? That heart which hath once enslaved it self to red and white earth, may be made any thing. Who can trust to the power of good means, when *Judas*, who heard *Christ* daily, whom others heard to preach *Christ* daily, who daily saw *Christ's* Miracles, and daily wrought Miracles in *Christ's* name, is (at his best) a Thief, and ere long a Traitour? That crafty and malignant Spirit which presided in that bloody counsel hath easily found out a fit instrument for this Hellish plot. As God knows, so Satan guesses, who are his, and will be sure to make use of his own. If *Judas* were *Christ's* domestick, yet he was Mammon's servant: he could not but hate that Master whom he formally professed to serve, whilst he really served that master which *Christ* professed to hate. He is but in his trade, whilst he is bartering even for his Master; *What will ye give me? and I will deliver him unto you.* Saidst thou not well, O Saviour, *I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* Thou that knewest to distinguish betwixt men and spirits, callest *Judas* by his right name. Loe, he is become a Tempter to the worst of evils.

Wretched *Judas*! whether shall I more abhor thy treachery, or wonder at thy folly? What will they, what can they give thee valuable to that head which thou profereest to sale? Were they able to pay, or thou capable to receive all those precious metalls that are laid up in the secret cabins of the whole earth, how were this price equivalent to the worth of him that made them? Had they been able to have fetch'd down those rich and glittering spangles of Heaven, and to have put them into thy fist, what had this been to weigh with a God? How basely therefore dost thou speak of chaffering for him whose the world was? *What will ye give me?* Alas! what were they? what had they, miserable men, to pay for such a purchase? The time was, when he that set thee on work could say, *All the Kingdoms of*
the

the earth, and the glory of them are mine; and I give them to whom I please: all these will I give thee. Had he now made that offer to thee in this wofull bargain, it might have carried some colour of a temptation: and even thus it had been a match ill made. But for thee to tender a trade of so invaluable a commodity to these pelting petty-chapmen for thirty poor silverlings, it was no less base then wicked.

How unequall is this rate? Thou that valuedst *Mary's* ointment which she bestowed upon the feet of *Christ* at three hundred pieces of silver, sellest thy Master, on whom that precious odour was spent, at thirty. Worldly hearts are peny-wise, and pound-foolish: they know how to set high prices upon the worthless trash of this world; but for Heavenly things, or the God that owns them, these they shamefully undervalue.

And I will deliver him unto you. False and presumptuous *Judas!* it was more then thou couldst doe; thy price was not more too low then thy undertaking was too high. Had all the powers of Hell combined with thee, they could not have delivered thy Master into the hands of men. The act was none but his own; all that he did, all that he suffered was perfectly voluntary. Had he pleased to resist, how easily had he with one breath blown thee and thy complices down into their Hell? It is no thank to thee that he would be delivered. O Saviour, all our safety, all our comfort depends not so much upon thine act as upon thy will: in vain should we have hoped for the benefit of a forced redemption.

The bargain is driven, the price paid. *Judas* returns, and looks no less smoothly upon his Master and his fellows then as if he had done no disservice. What cares he? his heart tells him he is rich, though it tell him he is false. He was not now first an Hypocrite. The Passover is at hand; no man is so busy to prepare for it, or more devoutly forward to receive it then *Judas*.

Oh the sottishness and obdureness of this son of Perdition!

tion ! How many proofs had he formerly of his Master's Omniscience ? There was no day wherein he saw not that thoughts and things absent came familiar under his cognisance : yet this Miscreant dares plot a secret villany against his person, and face it : if he cannot be honest, yet he will be close. That he may be notoriously impudent, he shall know he is descried : whilst he thinks fit to conceal his treachery, our Saviour thinks not fit to conceal the knowledge of that treacherous conspiracy ; *Verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me.* Who would not think but that discovered wickedness should be ashamed of it self ? Did not *Judas* (think we) blush, and grow pale again, and cast down his guilty eyes, and turn away his troubled countenance at so galling an intimation ? Custome of sin steels the brow, and makes it incapable of any relenting impressions. Could the other Disciples have discerned any change in any one of their faces, they had not been so sorrowfully affected with the charge. Methinks I see how intently they bent their eyes upon each others, as if they would have look'd through those windows down into the bosome ; with what self-confidence, with what mutuall jealousy they perused each others foreheads : and now, as rather thinking fit to distrust their own innocence then their Master's assertion, each trembles to say, *Lord, is it I ?* It is possible there may lurk secret wickedness in some blind corner of the heart, which we know not of : It is possible that time and temptation, working upon our corruption, may at last draw us into some such sin as we could not fore-believe. Whither may we not fall, if we be left to our own strength ? It is both wise and holy to misdoubt the worst : *Lord, is it I ?*

In the mean time, how fair hath *Judas* (all this while) carried with his fellows ? Had his former life bewrayed any fallhood or misdemeanour, they had soon found where to pitch their just suspicion : now *Judas* goes for so honest a man, that every Disciple is rather ready to suspect himself then

then him. It is true, he was a thief; but who knows that besides his Maker? The outsides of men are no less deceitfull then their hearts. It is not more unsafe to judge by outward appearances, then it is uncharitable not to judge so.

Oh the head-strong resolutions of wickedness, not to be checked by any opposition! Who would not but have thought, if the notice of an intended evil could not have prevented it, yet that the threats of judgment should have affrighted the boldest offender? *Judas* can sit by, and hear his Master say, *Wo be to the man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been better for that man never to have been born*, and is no more blank'd then very innocence; but thinks, What care I? I have the money; I shall escape the shame: the fact shall be close, the match gainfull: it will be long ere I get so much by my service; if I fare well for the present, I shall shift well enough for the future. Thus secretly he claps up another bargain; he *makes a covenant with death, and with Hell an agreement.* O *Judas*, didst thou ever hear ought but truth fall from the mouth of that thy Divine Master? Canst thou distrust the certainty of that dreadful menace of vengeance? How then durst thou persist in the purpose of so flagitious and damnable a villany? Resolved sinners run on desperately in their wicked courses; and have so bent their eyes upon the profit or pleasure of their mischievous projects, that they will not see Hell lie open before them in the way.

As if that shameless man meant to outbrave all accusations, and to outface his own heart, he dares ask too, *Master, is it I?* No Disciple shall more zealously abominate that crime then he that fosters it in his bosome. Whatever the Searcher of hearts knows by him, is lock'd up in his own breast: to be perfidious is nothing, so he may be secret: his Master knows him for a Traitor, it is not long that he shall live to complain; his fellows think him honest: all is well, whilst he is well esteemed. Reputation

is the onely care of false hearts, not truth of being, not conscience of merit ; so they may seem fair to men, they care not how foul they are to God.

Had our Saviour onely had this knowledge at the second hand, this boldness had been enough to make him suspect the credit of the best intelligence : Who could imagine that a guilty man dared thus brow-beat a just accusation ? Now he whose piercing and unfailing eyes see things as they are, not as they seem, can peremptorily convince the impudence of this hollow questionist with a direct affirmation ; *Thou hast said.* Foolish Traitour ! couldst thou think that those blear eyes of thine would endure the beams of the Sun, or that counterfeit slip, the fire ? was it not sufficient for thee to be secretly vicious, but thou must presume to contest with an Omniscient accuser ? Hast thou yet enough ? Thou supposedst thy crime unknown. To men it was so ; had thy Master been no more, it had been so to him : now his knowledge argues him Divine. How durst thou yet resolve to lift up thy hand against him, who knows thine offence, and can either prevent or revenge it ? As yet the charge was private, either not heard, or not observed by thy fellows : it shall be at first whispered to one, and at last known to all. Bashfull and penitent sinners are fit to be concealed ; shame is meet for those that have none.

Curiosity of Knowledge is an old disease of humane nature : besides, *Peter's* zeal would not let him dwell under the danger of so doubtfull a crimination ; he cannot but sit on thorns, till he know the man. His signs ask what his voice dare not. What law requires all followers to be equally beloved ? Why may not our favours be freely dispensed where we like best, without envy, without prejudice ? None of *Christ's* train could complain of neglect ; *John* is highest in grace. Bloud, affection, zeal, diligence have indeared him above his fellows. He that is dearest in respect, is next in place : in that form of side-sitting at
the

the Table, he leaned on the bosome of *Jesus*. Where is more love, there may be more boldness. This secrecy and intireness privileges *John* to ask that safely, which *Peter* might not without much inconvenience and perill of a check. The beloved Disciple well understands this silent language, and dares put *Peter's* thought into words. Love shutteth out fear. O Saviour, the confidence of thy Goodness emboldens us not to shrink at any suit. Thy love shed abroad in our hearts bids us ask that which in a stranger were no better then presumption. Once, when *Peter* ask'd thee a question concerning *John*, *What shall this man doe?* he received a short answer, *What is that to thee?* Now, when *John* asks thee a question (no less seemingly curious) at *Peter's* instance, *Who is it that betrays thee?* however thou mightest have returned him the same answer, (since neither of their persons was any more concerned,) yet thou condescendest to a mild and full (though secret) satisfaction. There was not so much difference in the men, as in the matter of the demand. No occasion was given to *Peter* of moving that question concerning *John*; the indefinite assertion of treason amongst the Disciples was a most just occasion of moving *John's* question for *Peter* and himself. That which therefore was timorously demanded, is answered graciously; *He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And he gave the sop to Judas.* How loth was our Saviour to name him whom he was not unwilling to design? All is here expressed by dumb signs; the hand speaks what the tongue would not. In the same language wherein *Peter* asked the question of *John*, doth our Saviour shape an answer to *John*: what a beck demanded, is answered by a sop.

O Saviour, I do not hear thee say, Look on whomsoever I frown, or to whomsoever I doe a publick affront, that is the man; but, *To whomsoever I shall give a sop.* Surely a by-stander would have thought this man deep in thy books, and would have construed this act, as they did thy

tears for *Lazarus*, See how he loves him. To carve a man out of thine own dish, what could it seem to argue but a singularity of respect? Yet, lo, there is but one whom thou hatest, one onely Traitour at thy board; and thou givest him a sop. The outward Gifts of God are not always the proofs of his Love; yea, sometimes are bestowed in displeasure. Had not he been a wise Disciple that should have envied the great favour done to *Judas*, and have stomacked his own preterition? So foolish are they, who, measuring God's affection by temporall benefits, are ready to applaud prospering wickedness, and to grudge outward blessings to them who are incapable of any better.

After the sop Satan entred into Judas. Better had it been for that treacherous Disciple to have wanted that morsell: Not that there was any malignity in the bread, or that the sop had any power to convey Satan into the receiver, or that by a necessary concomitance that evil spirit was in or with it. Favours ill used make the heart more capable of farther evil. That wicked Spirit commonly takes occasion by any of God's gifts, to assault us the more eagerly. After our Sacramentall morsell, if we be not the better, we are sure the worse. I dare not say, yet I dare think, that *Judas*, comparing his Master's words and *John's* whisperings with the tender of this sop, and finding himself thus denoted, was now so much the more irritated to perform what he had wickedly purposed. Thus Satan took advantage by the sop of a farther possession. Twice before had that evil Spirit made a palpable entry into that leud heart. First, in his Covetousness and Theft; those sinfull habits could not be without that authour of ill: then, in his damnable resolution, and plot of so hainous a conspiracy against *Christ*. Yet now (as if it were new to begin) *After the sop Satan entred.* As in every gross sin which we entertain, we give harbour to that evil Spirit; so in every degree of growth in wickedness, new hold is taken by him of the heart. No sooner is the foot over the threshold,

threshold, then we enter into the house : when we pass thence into the inner rooms, we make still but a perfect entrance. At first Satan entred, to make the house of *Judas's* heart his own ; now he enters into it as his own. The first purpose of sin opens the gates to Satan ; consent admits him into the entry ; full resolution of sin gives up the keys to his hands, and puts him into absolute possession. What a plain difference there is betwixt the regenerate and evil heart ? Satan lays siege to the best by his Temptations ; and sometimes upon battery and breach made enters : the other admits him by willing composition. When he is entred upon the Regenerate, he is entertained with perpetuall skirmishes, and by an holy violence at last repulsed : in the other he is plausibly received, and freely commandeth. Oh the admirable meekness of this Lamb of God ! I see not a frown, I hear not a check ; but, *What thou doest, doe quickly.* Why do we startle at our petty wrongs, and swell with anger, and break into furious revenges upon every occasion, when the pattern of our Patience lets not fall one harshword upon so foul and bloody a Traitour ? Yea, so fairly is this carried, that the Disciples as yet can apprehend no change ; they innocently think of commodities to be bought : when *Christ* speaks of their Master sold, and, as one that longs to be out of pain, hastens the pace of his irreclamable conspiratour, *That thou doest, doe quickly.* It is one thing to say, Doe what thou intendest, and another to say, *Doe quickly what thou doest.* There was villany in the deed ; the speed had no sin, the time was harmless, whilst the man and the act were wicked. O *Judas*, how happy had it been for thee, if thou hadst never done what thou perfidiously intendedst ? but since thou wilt needs doe it, delay is but a torment.

That steely heart yet relents not ; the obfirm'd Traitour knows his way to the High Priest's hall and to the Garden ; the watchword is already given, *Hail, Master, and a kiss.* Yet more Hypocrisy ? yet more presumption upon so overstrained a lenity ? How knewest thou, O thou false Trai-

tour, whether that sacred cheek would suffer it self to be defiled with thine impure touch? Thou well foundest thy treachery was unmasked; thine heart could not be so false to thee as not to tell thee how hatefull thou wert. Goe, kiss and adore those silverlings which thou art too sure of; the Master whom thou hast sold is not thine. But oh the impudence of a deplored sinner! That tongue which hath agreed to sell his Master dares say, *Hail*: and those lips that have passed the compact of his death dare offer to kiss him whom they had covenanted to kill. It was God's charge of old, *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*. O Saviour, thou hadst reason to be angry with this kiss; the scourges, the thorns, the nails, the spear of thy Murtherers were not so painfull, so piercing, as this touch of *Judas*: all these were in this one alone. The stabs of an Enemy cannot be so grievous as the skin-deep wounds of a Disciple.

X L V.

The Agony.

WHat a Preface do I find to my Saviour's Passion? an Hymn, and an Agony: a chearfull Hymn, and an Agony no less sorrowfull. An Hymn begins, both to raise and testify the courageous resolutions of his Suffering; an Agony follows, to shew that he was truly sensible of those extremities wherewith he was resolved to grapple. All the Disciples bore their part in that Hymn; it was fit they should all see his comfortable and Divine Magnanimity wherewith he entred into those sad lists: onely Three of them shall be allowed to be the witnesses of his Agony; onely

onely those three that had been the witnesses of his glorious Transfiguration. That sight had well fore-arm'd and prepared them for this: how could they be dismay'd to see his trouble, who there saw his Majesty? how could they be dismay'd to see his Body now sweat, which they had then seen to shine? how could they be daunted to see him now accosted with *Judas* and his train, whom they then saw attended with *Moses* and *Elias*? how could they be discouraged to hear the reproaches of base men, when they had heard the voice of God to him from that excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?*

Now before these eyes this Sun begins to be over-cast with clouds; *He began to be sorrowfull and very heavy.* Many sad thoughts for mankind had he secretly hatched, and yet smothered in his own breast; now his grief is too great to keep in: *My soul is exceeding sorrowfull, even unto death.* O Saviour, what must thou needs feel when thou saidst so? Feeble minds are apt to bemoan themselves upon light occasions; the grief must needs be violent that causeth a strong heart to break forth into a passionate complaint. Woe is me! what a word is this for the Son of God? Where is that Comforter which thou promisedst to send to others? where is that thy *Father of all mercies and God of all comfort, in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore?* where are those constant and chearfull resolutions of a fearless walking through the valley of the shadow of death? Alas! if that face were not hid from thee whose essence could not be disunited, these pangs could not have been. The Sun was withdrawn awhile, that there might be a cool, though not a dark night, as in the world, so in thy breast; withdrawn in respect of sight, not of being. It was the hardest piece of thy sufferings, that thou must be disconsolate.

But to whom dost thou make this moan, O thou Saviour of men? Hard is that man driven that is fain to complain to

his inferiours. Had *Peter*, or *James*, or *John* thus bewailed himself to thee, there had been ease to their Soul in venting it self; thou hadst been both apt to pity them, and able to relieve them: but now in that thou lamentest thy case to them, alas! what issue couldst thou expect? They might be astonish'd with thy grief; but there is neither power in their hands to free thee from those sorrows, nor power in their compassion to mitigate them. Nay, in this condition what could all the Angels of Heaven (as of themselves) doe to succour thee? What strength could they have but from thee? What creature can help when thou complainest? It must be onely the stronger that can aid the weak.

Old and holy *Simeon* could fore-say to thy Blessed Mother, that *a sword should pierce through her Soul*; but, alas! how many swords at once pierce thine? Every one of these words is both sharp and edged; *My Soul is exceeding sorrowfull, even unto death*. What humane Soul is capable of the conceit of the least of those sorrows that oppressed thine? It was not thy Body that suffered now: the pain of body is but as the body of pain; the anguish of the Soul is as the soul of anguish. That, and in that thou sufferedst. Where are they that dare so far disparage thy Sorrow, as to say thy Soul suffered onely in sympathy with thy Body; not immediately, but by participation; not in its self, but in its partner? Thou best knewest what thou feltest, and thou that feltest thine own pain canst cry out of thy Soul. Neither didst thou say, *My Soul is troubled*; so it often was, even to tears: but, *My Soul is sorrowfull*; as if it had been before assaulted, now possessed with grief. Nor yet this in any tolerable moderation; changes of Passion are incident to every humane Soul: but, *Exceeding sorrowfull*. Yet there are degrees in the very extremities of evils: those that are most vehement, may yet be capable of a remedy, at least a relaxation; thine was past these hopes, *Exceeding sorrowfull unto death*.

What was it, what could it be, O Saviour, that lay thus heavy upon thy Divine Soul? Was it the fear of Death? was it the fore-felt pain, shame, torment of thine ensuing Crucifixion? Oh poor and base thoughts of the narrow hearts of cowardly and impotent mortality! How many thousands of thy blessed Martyrs have welcomed no less tortures with smiles and gratulations, and have made a sport of those exquisite cruelties which their very Tyrants thought unsufferable? Whence had they this strength but from thee? If their weakness were thus undaunted and prevalent, what was thy power? No, no: It was the sad weight of the Sin of mankind; it was the heavy burthen of thy Father's wrath for our sin that thus pressed thy Soul, and wrung from thee these bitter expressions.

What can it avail thee, O Saviour, to tell thy grief to men? who can ease thee, but he of whom thou saidst, *My Father is greater than I?* Lo, to him thou turnest; O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Was not this that prayer (O dear Christ) which in the days of thy flesh thou offeredst up with strong crying and tears to him that was able to save thee from death? Surely this was it. Never was cry so strong; never was God thus solicited. How could Heaven chuse but shake at such a Prayer from the Power that made it? How can my heart but tremble to hear this suit from the Captain of our Salvation? O thou that saidst, *I and my Father are one*, dost thou suffer ought from thy Father but what thou wouldst, what thou determinedst? was this Cup of thine either casual or forced? wouldst thou wish for what thou knewest thou wouldst not have possible? Far, far be these mis-raised thoughts of our ignorance and frailty. Thou camest to suffer, and thou wouldst doe what thou camest for: yet since thou wouldst be a man, thou wouldst take all of man, save sin: it is but humane (and not sinfull) to be loth to suffer what we may avoid. In this velleity of thine, thou wouldst shew what that Nature of ours which thou hadst

assumed could incline to wish ; but in thy resolution, thou wouldst shew us what thy victorious thoughts raised and assisted by thy Divine power had determinately pitched upon : *Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* As man thou hadst a Will of thine own : no humane Soul can be perfect without that main faculty. That will, which naturally could be content to incline towards an exemption from miseries, gladly veils to that Divine will whereby thou art designed to *the chastisements of our peace.* Those pains which in themselves were grievous, thou embracest as decreed : so as thy fear hath given place to thy love and obedience. How should we have known these evils so formidable, if thou hadst not in half a thought inclined to deprecate them ? How could we have avoided so formidable and deadly evils, if thou hadst not willingly undergone them ? We acknowledge thine holy fear, we adore thy Divine fortitude.

Whilst thy Mind was in this fearfull agitation, it is no marvell if thy Feet were not fixed. Thy place is more changed then thy thoughts. One while thou walkest to thy drouzy Attendants, and stirrest up their needfull vigilancy ; then thou returnest to thy passionate Devotions, thou fallest again upon thy face. If thy Body be humbled down to the earth, thy Soul is yet lower ; thy prayers are so much more vehement as thy pangs are. *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of bloud falling down to the ground.* O my Saviour, what an agony am I in, whilst I think of thine ? What pain, what fear, what strife, what horror was in thy Sacred breast ? How didst thou struggle under the weight of our sins, that thou thus sweatest, that thou thus bleedest ? All was peace with thee : thou wert one with thy coeternal and coessential Father ; all the Angels worshipp'd thee ; all the powers of Heaven and earth awfully acknowledged thine Infiniteness. It was our person that scoffed thee in this misery and torment ; in that thou sustai-

sustainedst thy Father's wrath and our curse. If eternal death be unsufferable, if every sin deserve eternal death, what, O what was it for thy Soul in this short time of thy bitter Passion to answer those millions of eternal deaths which all the sins of all mankind had deserved from the just hand of thy Godhead? I marvell not if thou bleedest a sweat, if thou sweatest blood: If the moisture of that Sweat be from the Body, the tincture of it is from the Soul. As there never was such another Sweat, so neither can there be ever such a Suffering. It is no wonder if the Sweat were more then natural, when the Suffering was more then humane.

O Saviour, so willing was that precious blood of thine to be let forth for us, that it was ready to prevent thy Persecutors; and issued forth in those pores, before thy wounds were opened by thy Tormentours. Oh that my heart could bleed unto thee with true inward compunction for those sins of mine which are guilty of this thine Agony, and have drawn blood of thee both in the Garden and on the Cross. Woe is me: I had been in Hell, if thou hadst not been in thine Agony; I had scorched, if thou hadst not sweat. Oh let me abhor my own wickedness, and admire and bless thy Mercy.

But, O ye blessed Spirits which came to comfort my conflicted Saviour, how did ye look upon this Son of God, when ye saw him labouring for life under these violent temptations? with what astonishment did ye behold him bleeding whom ye adored? In the Wilderness, after his Duell with Satan, ye came and ministred unto him; and now in the Garden, whilst he is in an harder combat, ye appear to strengthen him. O the wise and marvellous dispensation of the Almighty! Whom God will afflict, an Angel shall relieve; the Son shall suffer, the Servant shall comfort him; the God of Angels droopeth, the Angel of God strengthens him.

Blessed *Jesu*, if as Man thou wouldst be *made a little lower then*

then the Angels ; how can it disparage thee to be attended and cheered up by an Angel ? Thine Humiliation would not disdain comfort from meaner hands. How free was it for thy Father to convey seasonable consolations to thine humbled Soul, by whatsoever means ? Behold, though thy Cup shall not pass, yet it shall be sweetned. What if thou see not (for the time) thy Father's face ? yet thou shalt feel his hand. What could that Spirit have done without the God of Spirits ? O Father of Mercies, thou maist bring thine into Agonies, but thou wilt never leave them there. *In the midst of the sorrows of my heart thy comforts shall refresh my Soul.* Whatsoever be the means of my suppotation, I know and adore the Authour.

XLVI.

Peter and Malchus : or , CHRIST
Apprehended.

WHerefore, O Saviour, didst thou take those three choice Disciples with thee from their fellows, but that thou expectedst some comfort from their presence ? A seasonable word may sometimes fall from the meanest attendant ; and the very society of those we trust carries in it some kind of contentment. Alas ! what broken reeds are men ? Whilst thou art sweating in thine Agony, they are snorting securely. Admonitions, threats, intreaties cannot keep their eyes open. Thou tellest them of danger, they will needs dream of ease ; and though twice rouzed (as if they had purposed this neglect) they carelessly sleep out thy sorrow and their own perill. What help hast thou

thou of such Followers? In the mount of thy Transfiguration they slept, and besides fell on their faces, when they should behold thy glory, and were not themselves for fear; in the garden of thine Agony they fell upon the ground for drouziness, when they should compassionate thy sorrow, and lost themselves in a stupid sleepiness. Doubtless even this disregard made thy prayers so much more fervent. The less comfort we find on earth, the more we seek above. Neither soughtest thou more than thou foundest: Lo, thou wert heard in that which thou fearedst. An Angel supplies men; that Spirit was vigilant whilst thy Disciples were heavy. The exchange was happy.

No sooner is this good Angel vanished, then that domestick Devil appears: *Judas* comes up, and shews himself in the head of those miscreant troupes. He whose too much honour it had been to be a Follower of so Blessed a Master, affects now to be the leader of this wicked rabble. The Sheep's fleece is now cast off; the Wolf appears in his own likeness. He that would be false to his Master, would be true to his Chapmen: Even evil spirits keep touch with themselves. The bold Traitour dares yet still mix Hypocrisy with Villany; his very salutations and kisses murder. O Saviour, this is no news to thee. All those who under a show of Godliness practise impiety do still betray thee thus. Thou who hadst said, *One of you is a Devil*, didst not now say, *Avoid, Satan*; but, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* As yet, *Judas*, it was not too late. Had there been any the least spark of Grace yet remaining in that perfidious bosome, this word had fetch'd thee upon thy knees. All this Sunshine cannot thaw an obdurate heart. The sign is given, *Jesus* is taken. Wretched Traitour! why wouldst thou for this purpose be thus attended? and ye foolish Priests and Elders! why sent you such a band and so armed for this apprehension? One messenger had been enough for a voluntary prisoner. Had my Saviour been unwilling to be taken, all your forces (with all the Legions of Hell

to help them) had been too little : since he was willing to be attached, two were too many. When he did but say, *I am he*, that easy breath alone routed all your troupes, and cast them to the earth, whom it might as easily have cast down into Hell. What if he had said, *I will not be taken* ? where had ye been ? or what could your swords and staves have done against Omnipotence ?

Those Disciples that failed of their vigilance, failed not of their courage : they had heard their Master speak of providing swords, and now they thought it was time to use them : *Shall we smite* ? They were willing to fight for him with whom they were not carefull to watch : but of all other *Peter* was most forward ; in stead of opening his lips, he unsheaths his sword ; and in stead of *Shall I* ? smites. He had noted *Malchus*, a busie servant of the High priest, too ready to second *Judas*, and to lay his rude hands upon the Lord of Life : against this man his heart rises, and his hand is lift up. That ear which had too-officiously listened to the unjust and cruell charge of his wicked Master, is now severed from that worse head which it had mis-served.

I love and honour thy zeal, O blessed Disciple : Thou couldst not brook wrong done to thy Divine Master. Had thy life been dearer to thee then his safety, thou hadst not drawn thy sword upon a whole troupe. It was in earnest that thou saidst, *Though all men, yet not I* ; and, *Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee*. Lo, thou art ready to die upon him that should touch that Sacred person ; what would thy life now have been in comparison of renouncing him ? Since thou wert so fervent, why didst thou not rather fall upon that Treachour that betray'd him, then that Sergeant that arrested him ? Surely the sin was so much greater, as the plot of mischief is more then the execution ; as a Domestick is nearer then a Stranger ; as the treason of a Friend is worse then the forced enmity of an Hireling. Was it that the guilty wretch upon the fact done subdued himself, and shrouded his false head under the wings

wings of darknes? Was it that thou couldst not so suddenly apprehend the odious depth of that Villany, and instantly hate him that had been thy old companion? Was it that thy amazedness as yet conceived not the purposed issue of this seizure, and astonishedly waited for the success? Was it that though *Judas* were more faulty, yet *Malchus* was more imperiously cruell? Howsoever, thy Courage was awaked with thy self; and thy heart was no less sincere then thine hand was rash. *Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* Good intentions are no warrant for our actions. O Saviour, thou canst at once accept of our meanings, and censure our deeds. Could there be an affection more worth encouragement then the love to such a Master? Could there be a more just cause wherein to draw his sword then in thy quarrell? Yet this love, this quarrell cannot shield *Peter* from thy check: thy meek tongue smites him gently, who had furiously smote thine enemy; *Put up thy sword.*

It was *Peter's* sword; but to put up, not to use: there is a sword which *Peter* may use; but it is of another metall. Our weapons are, as our warfare, spiritual: if he smite not with this, he incurs no less blame then for smiting with the other; as for this material sword, what should he doe with it that is not allowed to strike? When the Prince of Peace bade his followers sell their coat and buy a sword, he meant to insinuate the need of these arms, not their improvement; and to teach them the danger of the time, not the manner of the repulse of danger. When they therefore said, *Behold, here are two swords;* he answered, *It is enough:* he said not, *Go buy more.* More had not been enow, if a bodily defence had been intended: *David's* tower had been too streight to yield sufficient furniture of this kind. When it comes to use, *Peter's* own sword is too much: *Put up thy sword.* Indeed there is a temporal sword; and that sword must be drawn, else wherefore is it? but drawn by him that bears it; and he bears it that is ordained to be an avenger, to execute

wrath upon him that doeth evil; for he bears not the sword in vain. If another man draw it, it cuts his fingers; and draws so much blood of him that unwarrantably wields it, as that he who takes the sword shall perish with the sword. Can I chuse but wonder how Peter could thus strike unwounded? how he, whose first blow made the fray, could escape hewing in pieces from that band of Ruffians? This could not have been, if thy power, O Saviour, had not restrained their rage; if thy seasonable and sharp reproof had not prevented their revenge.

Now, for ought I see, Peter smarts no less than *Malchus*: neither is Peter's ear less smitten by the mild tongue of his Master, than *Malchus* his ear by the hand of Peter. Weak Disciple! thou hast zeal, but not according to knowledge: there is not more danger in this act of thine, than inconsideration and ignorance. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Thou drawest thy sword to rescue me from suffering. Alas! if I suffer not, what would become of thee? what would become of mankind? where were that eternal and just Decree of my Father, wherein I am a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world? Dost thou go about to hinder thine own and the whole world's Redemption? Did I not once before call thee *Satan*, for suggesting to me this immunity from my Passion? and dost thou now think to favour me with a real opposition to this great and necessary work? Canst thou be so weak as to imagine that this Suffering of mine is not free and voluntary? Canst thou be so injurious to me as to think I yield, because I want aid to resist? Have I not given to thee and to the world many undeniable proofs of my Omnipotence? Didst thou not see how easy it had been for me to have blown away these poor forces of my adversaries? Dost thou not know that, if I would require it, all the glorious troupes of the Angels of Heaven (any one whereof is more than worlds of men) would presently shew themselves ready to attend and rescue me? Might this have stood with the Justice
of

of my Decree, with the Glory of my Mercy, with the Benefit of Man's Redemption, it had been done ; my Power should have triumphed over the impotent malice of my enemies : but now, since that eternal Decree must be accomplished, my Mercy must be approved, mankind must be ransomed ; and this cannot be done without my Suffering ; thy well-meant valour is no better then a wrong to thy self, to the world, to me, to my Father.

O gracious Saviour, whilst thou thus smitest thy Disciple, thou healest him whom thy Disciple smote. Many greater Miracles hadst thou done ; none that bewraied more mercy and meekness then this last Cure : of all other this ear of *Malchus* hath the loudest tongue to blazon the praise of thy Clemency and Goodness to thy very enemies. Wherefore came that man but in an hostile manner to attach thee ? Besides his own, what favour was he worthy of for his Masters sake ? And if he had not been more forward then his fellows, why had not his skin been as whole as theirs ? Yet, even amidst the throng of thine apprehenders, in the heat of their violence, in the height of their malice, and thine own instant peril of death, thou healest that unnecessary ear, which had been guilty of hearing Blasphemies against thee, and receiving cruell and unjust charges concerning thee. O *Malchus*, could thy ear be whole, and not thy heart broken and contrite with remorse for rising up against so mercifull and so powerfull an hand ? Couldst thou chuse but say, " O Blessed *Jesu*, I see it " was thy Providence that preserved my head, when my " ear was smitten ; it is thine Almighty Power that hath " miraculously restored that ear of mine which I had justly " forfeited : this head of mine shall never be guilty of " plotting any farther mischief against thee ; this ear shall " never entertain any more reproaches of thy name ; this " heart of mine shall ever acknowledge and magnifie thy " tender mercies, thy Divine Omnipotence ? Could thy fellows see such a demonstration of Power and Goodness

with unrelenting hearts? Unthankfull *Malchus*, and cruell souldiers! ye were worse wounded, and felt it not. God had struck your breasts with a fearfull obduration, that ye still persist in your bloody enterprise. *And they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away, &c.*

XLVII.

CHRIST before Caiaphas.

THat Traitour whom his own cord made (soon after) too fast, gave this charge concerning *Jesus*, *Hold him fast*. Fear makes his guard cruell: they bind his hands, and think no twist can be strong enough for this *Sampson*. Fond *Jews*, and Souldiers! if his own will had not tied him faster then your cords, though those Manicles had been the stiffest cables or the strongest iron, they had been but threads of tow. What eyes can but run over to see those hands, that made Heaven and Earth, wrung together and bruised with those mercilefs cords; to see him bound, who came to restore us to the liberty of the Sons of God; to see the Lord of Life contemptuously dragged through the streets, first to the house of *Annas*, then from thence to the house of *Caiaphas*, from him to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, from *Herod* back again to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to his *Calvary*: whilst in the mean time the base rabble and scum of the incensed multitude runs after him with shouts and scorns? The act of death hath not in it so much misery and horreur, as the pomp of death.

And what needed all this pageant of Cruelty? wherefore was this state and lingering of an unjust execution? Was it for that their malice held a quick dispatch too much Mercy?

Mercy? Was it for that, whilst they meant to be bloody, they would fain seem just? A sudden violence had been palpably murderous: now the colour of a legall process guilds over all their deadly spight; and would seem to render them honest, and the accused guilty.

This attachment, this convention of the innocent was a true night-work; a deed of so much darkness was not for the light. Old *Annas* and that wicked Bench of gray-headed Scribes and Elders can be content to break their sleep to doe mischief: Envy and Malice can make noon of midnight. It is resolved he shall die; and now pretences must be sought that he may be cleanly murdered. All evil begins at the Sanctuary: The Priests and Scribes and Elders are the first in this bloody scene; they have pay'd for this head, and now long to see what they shall have for their thirty silverlings. The Bench is set in the Hall of *Caiaphas*: False witnesses are sought for, and hired: they agree not, but shame their suborners. Woe is me! what safety can there be for Innocence, when the evidence is wilfully corrupted? What State was ever so pure, as not to yield some miscreants, that will either sell or lend an Oath? What a brand hath the wisdom of God set upon falshood, even dissonance and distraction? whereas Truth ever holds together, and jays not whilst it is it self. O Saviour, what a perfect innocence was in thy Life, what an exact purity in thy Doctrine, that malice it self cannot so much as devise what to slander? It were hard if Hell should not find some Factours upon earth. At last two Witnesses are brought in, that have learned to agree with themselves, whilst they differed from truth; they say the same, though false; *This fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and build it again in three days.* Perjured wretches! Were these the terms that you heard from that Sacred mouth? Said he formally thus as ye have deposed? It is true, he spake of a *Temple, of destroying, of building, of three days*; but did he speak of that Temple, of his own destroying, of a material building.

in that space? He said, *Destroy ye*: Ye say, *I am able to destroy*. He said, *this Temple of his body*: Ye say, *the Temple of God*. He said, *I will make up this Temple of my body in three days*: Ye say, *I am able in three days to build this material Temple of God*. The words were his, the sentence yours: The words were true, the evidence false. So whilst you report the words, and misreport the sense, ye swear a true falsehood, and are truly forsworn. Where the resolutions are fixed, any colour will serve. Had those words been spoken, they contained no crime; had he been such as they supposed him, a meer man, the speech had carried a semblance of ostentation, no semblance of Blasphemy: yet how vehement is *Caiaphas* for an answer? as if those words had already battered that sacred pile, or the protestation of his ability had been the highest treason against the God of the Temple. That infinite Wisdom knew well how little satisfaction there could be in answers, where the sentence was determined. *Jesus held his peace*. Where the asker is unworthy, the question captious, words bootless, the best answer is silence.

Erewhile his just and moderate speech to *Annas* was returned with a buffet on the cheek; now his silence is no less displeasing. *Caiaphas* was not more malicious then crafty: what was in vain attempted by witnesses, shall be drawn out of *Christ's* own mouth; what an accusation could not effect, an adjuration shall: *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God*. Yea, this was the way to screw out a killing answer. *Caiaphas*, thy mouth was impure, but thy charge is dreadfull. Now if *Jesus* hold his peace, he is cried down for a profane disregard of that awfull Name; if he answer, he is ensnared: an affirmation is death; a denial worse then death. No, *Caiaphas*, thou shalt well know it was not fear that all this while stopped that Gracious mouth: thou speakest to him that cannot fear those faces he hath made: he that hath charged us to confess him, cannot but confess him-

himself. *Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said. There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence.* He that is the Wisdom of his Father, hath here given us a pattern of both. We may not so speak as to give advantage to cavils; we may not be so silent as to betray the Truth. Thou shalt have no more cause, proud and insulting *Caiaphas*, to complain of a speechless prisoner: now thou shalt hear more then thou demandedst: *Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.* There spake my Saviour; *the voice of God, and not of man.* Hear now, insolent High Priest, and be confounded. That Son of man whom thou seest, is the Son of God whom thou canst not see. That Son of man, that Son of God, that God and man whom thou now seest standing despicably before thy Consistorial seat in a base dejectedness, him shalt thou once with horrour and trembling see majestically sitting on the Throne of Heaven, attended with thousand thousands of Angels, and coming in the clouds to that dreadfull Judgment, wherein thy self amongst other damned malefactours shalt be presented before that glorious tribunal of his, and adjudged to thy just torments.

Goe now, wretched Hypocrite, and rend thy garment; whilst in the mean time thou art worthy to have thy Soul rent from thy body, for thy spightfull Blasphemy against the Son of God. Onwards thy pretence is fair, and such as cannot but receive applause from thy compacted crue; *What need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his Blasphemy. What think ye? And they answered & said, He is guilty of death.*

What heed is to be taken of mens judgment? So light are they upon the balance, that one dram of prejudice or forestalment turns the scales. Who were these but the grave Benchers of *Jerusalem*, the Synod of the choice Rabbi's of *Israel*? yet these pass sentence against the Lord of Life; sentence of that death of his, whereby (if ever) they shall be redeemed from the murder of their sentence.

O Saviour, this is not the last time wherein thou hast received cruel dooms from them that profess Learning and

Holiness. What wonder is it if thy weak members suffer that which was endured by so perfect an Head? What care we to be judged by man's day, when thou, who art the Righteous Judge of the world, wert thus misjudged by men? Now is the fury of thy malignant enemies let loose upon thee: what measure can be too hard for him that is denounced worthy of death? Now those foul mouths defile thy Blessed Face with their impure spittle, the venomous froth of their malice; now those cruell hands are lifted up to buffet thy Sacred Cheeks; now scorn and insultation triumphs over thine humble Patience, *Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who it is that smote thee.* O dear Jesu, what a beginning is here of a Passion? There thou standst bound, condemned, spat upon, buffeted, derided by malicious sinners. Thou art bound, who camest to loose the bands of death; thou art condemned, whose sentence must acquit the world; thou art spat upon, that art *fairer then the sons of men*; thou art buffeted, *in whose mouth was no guile*; thou art derided, who *art cloathed with Glory and Majesty.*

In the mean while, how can I enough wonder at thy infinite Mercy, who in the midst of all these wofull indignities couldst find a time to cast thine eyes back upon thy frail and ingratefull Disciple; and in whose gracious ear *Peter's* Cock founded louder then all these reproaches? O Saviour, thou who in thine apprehension couldst forget all thy danger, to correct and heal his over-lashing, now in the heat of thy arraignment and condemnation canst forget thy own misery, to reclaim his error; and by that seasonable glance of thine eye, to strike his heart with a needfull remorse. He that was lately so valiant to fight for thee, now the next morning is so cowardly as to deny thee: He shrinks at the voice of a Maid, who was not daunted with the sight of a Band. O *Peter*, had thy slip been sudden, thy fall had been more easy: Premonition aggravates thy offence; that stone was foreshew'd thee whereat thou stumbledst: neither did thy warning more adde to thy guilt, then thine own fore-

fore-resolution. How didst thou vow, though thou shouldst die with thy Master, not to deny him? Hadst thou said nothing, but answered with a trembling silence, thy shame had been the less. Good purposes, when they are not held, do so far turn enemies to the entertainer of them, as that they help to double both his sin and punishment.

Yet a single denial had been but easie; thine (I fear to speak it) was lined with swearing and execration. Whence then, oh whence was this so vehement and peremptory disclamation of so gracious a Master? What such danger had attended thy profession of his attendance? One of thy fellows was known to the High priest for a Follower of *Jesus*; yet he not onely came himself into that open Hall, in view of the Bench, but treated with the Maid that kept the door to let thee in also. She knew him what he was; and could therefore speak to thee, as brought in by his mediation, *Art not thou also one of this man's Disciples?* Thou also supposes the first acknowledged such; yet what crime, what danger was urged upon that noted Disciple? What could have been more to thee? Was it that thy heart misgave thee thou mightest be called to account for *Malchus*? It was no thank to thee that that ear was healed; neither did there want those that would think how near that ear was to the head. Doubtless, that busie fellow himself was not far off, and his fellows and kinsmen would have been apt enough to follow thee (besides thy Discipleship) upon a bloudshed, a riot, a rescue. Thy conscience hath made thee thus unduly timorous: and now, to be sure to avoid the imputation of that affray, thou renoucest all knowledge of him in whose cause thou foughtest. Howsoever the sin was hainous. I tremble at such a Fall of so great an Apostle. It was thou, O *Peter*, that buffetedst thy Master more then those *Jews*; it was to thee that he turned the cheek from them, as to view him by whom he most smarted: he felt thee afar off, and

answered thee with a look ; such a look as was able to kill and revive at once. Thou hast wounded me, (maist thou now say) O my Saviour, *thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes* : that one Eye of thy Mercy hath wounded my heart with a deep remorse for my grievous sin, with an indignation at my unthankfulness ; that one glance of thine hath resolved me into the tears of sorrow and contrition. *Oh that mine eyes were fountains,* and my cheeks chanelles that shall never be dried ! *And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

XLVIII.

CHRIST before Pilate.

WELL worthy were these *Jews* to be tributary ; they had cast off the yoke of their God, and had justly earned this *Roman* servitude. *Tiberius* had befriended them too well with so favourable a Governour as *Pilate*. Had they had the power of life and death in their hands, they had not been beholden to an Heathen for a Legall murder. I know not whether they more repine at this slavery, or please themselves to think how cleanly they can shift off this blood into another's hand. These great Masters of *Israel* flock from their own Consistory to *Pilate's* Judgment-hall : The Sentence had been theirs, the Execution must be his ; and now they hope to bear down *Jesus* with the stream of that frequent confluence.

But what ails you, O ye Rulers of *Israel*, that ye stand thus thronging at the door ? why do ye not go into that publick room of Judicature, to call for that Justice ye came for ? Was it for that ye would not defile your selves with
the

the contagion of an Heathen roof? Holy men! your Consciences would not suffer you to yield to so impure an act; your Passover must be kept, your persons must be clean: whilst ye expect Justice from the man, ye abhor the pollution of the place. Woe to you Priests, Scribes, Elders, Hypocrites; can there be any roof so unclean as that of your own breasts? Not *Pilate's* walls, but your hearts are impure. Is Murder your errand? and do you stick at a locall infection? *God shall smite you, ye whited walls.* Do ye long to be stained with blood, with the blood of God? and do ye fear to be defiled with the touch of *Pilate's* pavement? Doth so small a Gnat stick in your throats, whilst ye swallow such a Camel of flagitious wickedness? Go out of your selves, ye false dissemblers, if ye would not be unclean. *Pilate*, onwards, hath more cause to fear lest his walls should be defiled with the presence of so prodigious Monsters of Impiety.

That plausible Governour condescends to humour their Superstition: They dare not come in to him; he yields to go forth to them. Even *Pilate* begins justly, *What accusation bring you against this man?* It is no judging of Religion by the outward demearour of men; there is more Justice amongst *Romans* then amongst *Jews*. These malicious Rabbi's thought it enough that they had sentenced *Jesus*; no more was now expected but a speedy execution. *If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.* Civill Justice must be their hangman. It is enough conviction that he is delivered up to the secular powers. Themselves have judg'd, these other must kill. *Pilate* and *Caiaphas* have changed places: this Pagan speaks that Law and Justice which that High priest should have done; and that High priest speaks those murdering incongruities which would better have beseeemed the mouth of a Pagan. What needs any new triall? Dost thou know, *Pilate*, who we are? Is this the honour that thou givest to our sacred Priesthood? Is this thy valuation of our Sanctity? Had the basest

of the vulgar complained to thee, thou couldst but have put them to a review: Our Place and Holiness look'd not to be distrusted. If our scrupulous Consciences suspect thy very walls, thou maist well think there is small reason to suspect our Consciences. Upon a full hearing, ripe deliberation, and exquisitely-judiciall proceeding, we have sentenced this Malefactor to death; there needs no more from thee but thy command of Execution. Oh monster, whether of Malice or Unjustice! Must he then be a Malefactor whom ye will condemn? Is your bare word ground enough to shed blood? Whom did ye ever kill but the righteous? By whose hands perished the Prophets? The word was but mistaken; ye should have said, *If we had not been Malefactors, we had never delivered up this innocent man unto thee.*

It must needs be notoriously unjust which very Nature hath taught Pagans to abhor. *Pilate* sees and hates this bloody suggestion and practice. "Do ye pretend Holiness, and urge so injurious a violence? If he be such as ye accuse him, where is his conviction? If he cannot be legally convicted, why should he die? Do you think I may take your complaint for a crime? If I must judge for you, why have you judged for your selves? Could ye suppose that I would condemn any man unheard? If your *Jewish* Laws yield you this liberty, the *Roman* Laws yield it not to me. It is not for me to judge after your laws, but after our own. Your prejudice may not sway me. Since ye have gone so far, be ye your own carvers of Justice; *Take ye him, and judge him according to your Law.*

O *Pilate*, how happy had it been for thee, if thou hadst held thee there? thus thou hadst wash'd thy hands more clean then in all thy basons. Might Law have been the rule of this Judgment, and not Malice, this blood had not been shed. How palpably doth their tongue bewray their heart? *It is not lawfull for us to put any man to death.*

Pilate

Pilate talks of Judgment, they talk of Death. This was their onely aim : Law was but a colour, Judgment was but a ceremony ; Death was their drift, and without this nothing. Bloud-thirsty Priests and Elders ! it is well that this power of yours is restrained : no Innocence could have been safe, if your lawless will had had no limits. It were pity this sword should be in any but just and sober hands. Your fury did not always consult with Law : what Law allowed your violence to *Stephen*, to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and your deadly attempts against this Blessed *Jesus* whom ye now persecute ? How lawfull was it for you to procure that death which ye could not inflict ? It is all the care of Hypocrites to seek umbrages and pretences for their hatefull purposes ; and to make no other use of Laws (whether Divine or humane) but to serve turns.

Where death is fore-resolved, there cannot want accusations. Malice is not so barren as not to yield crimes enough. *And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation; and forbidding to give tribute unto Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ and King.*

“ What accusations saidst thou, O *Pilate* ? Hainous
 “ and capitall. Thou mightest have believed our confi-
 “ dent intimation : but since thou wilt needs urge us to
 “ particulars, know that we come furnished with such an
 “ inditement as shall make thine ears glow to hear it. Be-
 “ sides that Blasphemy whereof he hath been condemned
 “ by us, this man is a Seducer of the people, a raiser of
 “ Sedition, an usurper of Sovereignty. O impudent sug-
 “ gession ! What marvell is it, O Saviour, if thine honest
 “ servants be loaded with slanders, when thy most inno-
 “ cent person escaped not so shamefull criminations ? Thou
 “ a perverter of the Nation, who taughtest the way of
 “ God truly ? Thou a forbidder of Tribute, who pay-
 “ edst it, who prescribedst it, who provedst it to be *Caesar's*
 “ due ?

due? Thou a challenger of temporall Sovereignty, who avoidedst it, renouncedst it, professedst to come to serve? Oh the forehead of Malice! Go, ye shameless traducers, and swear that Truth is guilty of all Falshood, Justice of all Wrong; and that the Sun is the onely cause of Darknes, Fire of Cold.

Now *Pilate* startles at the Charge. The name of *Tribute*, the name of *Cæsar* is in mention: These potent spells can fetch him back to the common Hall, and call *Jesus* to the Bar. There, O Saviour, standest thou meekly to be judged, who shalt once come to judge the quick and the dead. Then shalt he before whom thou stoodest guiltless and dejected, stand before thy dreadfull Majesty guilty and trembling.

The name of a King, of *Cæsar*, is justly tender and awfull; the least whisper of an Usurpation or disturbance is entertained with a jealous care. *Pilate* takes this intimation at the first bound; *Art thou then the King of the Jews?* He felt his own free-hold now touched, it was time for him to stir. *Daniel's* Weeks were now famously known to be near expiring. Many arrogant and busie spirits, (as *Judas* of *Galilee*, *Theudas*, and that *Ægyptian* Seducer) taking that advantage, had raised severall Conspiracies, set up new titles to the Crown, gathered Forces to maintain their false claims. Perhaps *Pilate* supposed some such business now on foot, and therefore asks so curiously, *Art thou the King of the Jews?*

He that was no less Wisedom then Truth, thought it not best either to affirm or deny at once. Sometimes it may be extremely prejudiciall to speak all truths. To disclaim that Title suddenly which had been of old given him by the Prophets, at his Birth by the Eastern Sages, and now lately at his Procession by the acclaiming multitude, had been injurious to himself; to profess and challenge it absolutely, had been unsafe, and needlessly provoking. By wise and just degrees therefore doth he so affirm this truth, that he
both

both satisfies the inquirer, and takes off all perill and prejudice from his assertion. *Pilate* shall know him a King; but such a King as no King needs to fear, as all Kings ought to acknowledge and adore: *My Kingdom is not of this world.* It is your mistaking, O ye earthly Potentates, that is guilt of your fears. *Herod* hears of a King born, and is troubled; *Pilate* hears of a King of the *Jews*, and is incensed. Were ye not ignorant, ye could not be jealous: Had ye learned to distinguish of Kingdoms, these suspicions would vanish.

There are Secular Kingdoms, there are Spirituall; neither of these trenches upon other: your Kingdom is Secular, *Christ's* is Spirituall; both may, both must stand together. His Laws are Divine, yours civil: His Reign is eternall, yours temporall: the glory of his Rule is inward, and stands in the Graces of Sanctification, Love, Peace, Righteousness, Joy in the Holy Ghost; yours in outward pomp, riches, magnificence: His Enemies are the Devil, the World, the Flesh; yours are bodily usurpers, and externall peace-breakers: His Sword is the power of the Word and Spirit, yours materiall: His rule is over the Conscience, yours over bodies and lives: He punishes with Hell, ye with temporall death or torture. Yea so far is he from opposing your Government, that *by him* ye *Kings* reign: Your Scepters are his; but to maintain, not to wield, not to resist. O the unjust fears of vain men! He takes not away your earthly Kingdoms, who gives you Heavenly; he discrowns not the Body, who crowns the Soul; his intention is not to make you less great, but more happy.

The charge is so fully answered, that *Pilate* acquits the prisoner. The *Jewish* Masters stand still without; their very malice dares not venture their pollution in going in to prosecute their accusation. *Pilate* hath examined him within; and now comes forth to these eager complainants, with a cold answer to their over-hot expectation; *I find in him no fault at all.* O noble testimony of *Christ's* Innocence, from that mouth

which afterwards doomed him to death. What a difference there is betwixt a man as he is himself, and as he is the servant of others wills? It is *Pilate's* tongue that says, *I find in him no fault at all*: It is the *Jews* tongue in *Pilate's* mouth that says, *Let him be crucified*. That cruel sentence cannot blot him whom this attestation cleareth. Neither doth he say, *I find him not guilty in that whereof he is accused*; but gives an universall acquittance of the whole carriage of *Christ*, *I find in him no fault at all*. In spite of Malice, Innocence shall find abettours. Rather then *Christ* shall want witnesses, the mouth of *Pilate* shall be opened to his justification. How did these *Jewish* bloud-suckers stand thunder-stricken with so unexpected a word? His absolution was their death; his acquittall their conviction. *No fault*, when we have found Crimes? *no fault at all*, when we have condemned him for capitall offences? How palpably doth *Pilate* give us the lie? How shamefully doth he affront our authority and disparage our justice? So ingenuous a testimony doubtless exasperated the fury of these *Jews*: the fire of their indignation was seven-fold more intended with the sense of their repulse.

I tremble to think how just *Pilate* as yet was, and how soon after depraved; yea, how mercifull together with that Justice. How fain would he have freed *Jesus*, whom he found faultless? Corrupt custome, in memory of their deliverance from *Egyptian* bondage, allowed to gratify the *Jews* with the free delivery of some one prisoner. (Tradition would be incroaching; the Paschall Lamb was monument enough of that happy rescue: men affect to have something of their own.) *Pilate* was willing to take this advantage of dismissing *Jesus*. That he might be the more likely to prevail, he proposeth him with the choice and nomination of so notorious a Malefactor, as he might justly think incapable of all mercy; *Barabbas*, a Thief, a Murderer, a Seditious; infamous for all, odious to all. Had he propounded some other innocent prisoner, he might have feared

feared the election would be doubtfull ; he cannot misdoubt the competition of so prodigious a Malefactor. *Then they all cried again, Not him, but Barabbas.*

O Malice beyond all example shameless and bloody ! Who can but blush to think that an Heathen should see *Jews* so impetuoussly unjust, so savagely cruell ? He knew there was no Fault to be found in *Jesus* ; he knew there was no Crime that was not to be found in *Barabbas* : yet he hears (and blushes to hear) them say, *Not him, but Barabbas.* Was not this (think we) out of similitude of condition ? Every thing affects the like to it self ; every thing affects the preservation of that it liketh. What wonder is it then if ye *Jews*, who profess your selves the murtherers of that Just One, favour a *Barabbas* ? O Saviour, what a killing indignity was this for thee to hear from thine own Nation ? Hast thou refused all Glory, to put on shame and misery for their sakes ? Hast thou disregarded thy Blessed self, to save them ? and do they refuse thee for *Barabbas* ? Hast thou said, Not Heaven, but Earth ; not Sovereignty, but Service ; not the Gentile, but the *Jew* ? and do they say, Not him, but *Barabbas* ? *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people and unjust ?* Thus were thine ears and thine eyes first crucified ; and through them was thy Soul wounded even to death, before thy death ; whilst thou sawest their rage, and heardst their noise of *Crucify, crucify.*

Pilate would have chastised thee. Even that had been a cruel mercy from him ; for what evil hadst thou done ? But that cruelty had been true mercy to this of the *Jews*, whom no blood would satisfy but that of thy heart. He calls for thy Fault, they call for thy Punishment ; as proclaiming thy Crucifixion is not intended to satisfy Justice, but Malice, *They cried the more, Crucify him, Crucify him.*

As their clamour grew, so the President's Justice declined. Those Graces that lie loose and ungrounded, are easily washt away with the first tide of Popularity. Thrice had that man proclaimed the Innocence of him whom he now

inclines to condemn, *willing to content the people.* Oh the foolish aims of Ambition! Not God, not his Conscience come into any regard; but the People. What a base Idol doth the proud man adore? even the Vulgar, which a base man despiseth. What is their applause but an idle wind? what is their anger but a painted fire? O *Pilate*, where now is thy self and thy people? whereas a good conscience would have stuck by thee for ever, and have given thee boldness before the face of that God which thou and thy people shall never have the Happiness to behold.

The *Jews* have play'd their first part; the Gentiles must now act theirs. Cruell *Pilate*, who knew *Jesus* was *delivered for envy*, accused falsly, maliciously pursued, hath turned his profered chastisement into scourging. *Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him.* Woe is me, dear Saviour; I feel thy lashes; I shrink under thy painfull whippings; thy nakedness covers me with shame and confusion. That tender and precious body of thine is galled and torn with cords. Thou that didst of late water the garden of *Gethsemani* with the drops of thy bloody sweat, dost now bedew the pavement of *Pilate's* Hall with the showrs of thy blood. How fully hast thou made good thy word, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting?* How can I be enough sensible of my own stripes? these blows are mine; both my sins have given them, and they give remedies to my sins. *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed.* O Blessed *Jesu*, why should I think strange to be scourged with tongue or hand, when I see thee bleeding? what lashes can I fear either from Heaven or earth, since thy scourges have been born for me, and have sanctified them to me? Now, dear *Jesu*, what a world of insolent reproaches, indignities, tortures, art thou entring into? To an ingenuous and tender disposition scorns are torment enough;

nough ; but here pain helps to perfect thy misery, their despight.

Who should be actours in this whole bloody execution, but grim and barbarous Souldiers, men inured to cruelty, in whose faces were written the characters of Murther, whose very trade was killing, and whose looks were enough to prevent their hands ? These, for the greater terrour of their concourse, are called together ; and whether by the connivence or the command of their wicked Governour, or by the instigation of the malicious *Jews*, conspire to anticipate his death with scorns, which they will after inflict with violence.

O my Blessed Saviour, was it not enough that thy Sacred Body was stripped of thy garments, and waled with bloody stripes ; but that thy Person must be made the mocking-stock of thine insulting enemies, thy Back disguised with purple robes, thy Temples wounded with a thorny Crown, thy Face spat upon, thy Cheeks buffeted, thy Head smitten, thy Hand sceptred with a reed, thy Self derided with wry mouths, bended knees, scoffing acclamations ? Insolent Souldiers ! whence is all this jeering and sport, but to flout Majesty ? All these are the ornaments and ceremonies of a Royall Inauguration, which now in scorn ye cast upon my despised Saviour. Goe on, make your selves merry with this jolly pastime. Alas ! long agoe ye now feel whom ye scorned. Is he a King, think you, whom ye thus play'd upon ? Look upon him with gnashing and horreur, whom ye look'd at with mockage and insultation. Was not that Head fit for your Thorns, which you now see crowned with Glory and Majesty ? Was not that Hand fit for a Reed, whose iron Scepter crushes you to death ? Was not that Face fit to be spat upon, from the dreadfull aspect whereof ye are ready to desire the mountains to cover you ?

In the mean time, whither, O whither dost thou stoop ; O thou coeternal Son of thine eternal Father ? whither dost

thou abase thy self for me? I have sinned, and thou art punished; I have exalted my self, and thou art dejected; I have clad my self with shame, and thou art stripped; I have made my self naked, and thou art cloathed with robes of dishonour; my head hath devised evil, and thine is pierced with thorns; I have smitten thee, and thou art smitten for me; I have dishonoured thee, and thou for my sake art scorned; thou art made the sport of men for me, that have deserved to be insulted on by Devils.

Thus disguised, thus bleeding, thus mangled, thus deformed art thou brought forth, whether for compassion, or for a more universall derision, to the furious multitude, with an *Ecce homo*, *Behold the man*: look upon him, O ye merciless *Jews*; see him in his shame, in his wounds and bloud, and now see whether ye think him miserable enough. Ye see his Face blew and black with buffeting, his Eyes swoln, his Cheeks beslabbered with spittle, his Skin torn with scourges, his whole Body bathed in bloud; and would ye yet have more? *Behold the man*; the man whom ye envied for his greatness, whom ye feared for his usurpation: Doth he not look like a King? is he not royally dressed? See whether his magnificence do not command reverence from you. Would ye wish a finer King? Are ye not afraid he will wrest the Scepter out of *Cæsar's* hand? *Behold the man*.

Yea, and behold him well, O thou proud *Pilate*, O ye cruel Souldiers, O ye insatiable *Jews*. Ye see him base, whom ye shall see glorious; the time shall surely come wherein ye shall see him in another dress: he shall shine whom ye now see to bleed; his Crown cannot be now so ignominious and painfull, as it shall be once majesticall and precious; ye who now bend your knees to him in scorn, shall see all knees both in Heaven and in earth and under the earth to bow before him in an awfull adoration; ye that now see him with contempt, shall behold him with horroure.

What an inward war do I yet find in the breast of *Pilate*? His Conscience bids him spare, his Popularity bids him kill. His Wife, warned by a Dream, warns him to *have no hand in the blood of that just man*; the importunate multitude presses him for a sentence of death. All shifts have been tried to free the man whom he hath pronounced innocent: All violent motives are urged to condemn that man whom malice pretends guilty.

In the height of this strife, when Conscience and moral Justice were ready to sway *Pilate's* distracted heart to a just dismissal, I hear the *Jews* cry out, *If thou let this man goe, thou art not Cæsar's friend.* There is the word that strikes it dead: it is now no time to demur any more. In vain shall we hope that a carnal heart can prefer the care of his Soul to the care of his safety and honour, God to *Cæsar*. Now *Jesus* must die: *Pilate* hafts into the Judgment-hall; the Sentence sticks no longer in his teeth, *Let him be crucified.*

Yet how foul so ever his Soul shall be with this fact, his hands shall be clean. *He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.* Now all is safe I wis: this is expiation enough; water can wash off blood, the hands can cleanse the heart: protest thou art innocent, and thou canst not be guilty. Vain Hypocrite! canst thou think to scape so? Is Murder of no deeper dye? Canst thou dream waking, thus to avoid the charge of thy wife's dream? Is the guilt of the blood of the Son of God to be wip'd off with such ease? What poor shifts do foolish sinners make to beguile themselves? Any thing will serve to charm the Conscience, when it lists to sleep.

But, Oh Saviour, whilst *Pilate* thinks to wash off the guilt of thy blood with water, I know there is nothing that can wash off the guilt of this his sin but thy blood. Oh do thou wash my Soul in that precious bathe, and I shall be clean. Oh *Pilate*, if that very blood which thou
sheddest

sheddest do not wash off the guilt of thy bloodshed, thy water doth but more defile thy Soul, and intend that fire wherewith thou burnest.

Little did the desperate *Jews* know the weight of that blood, which they were so forward to wish upon themselves and their children. Had they deprecated their interest in that horrible murder, they could not so easily have avoided the vengeance: but now that they fetch it upon themselves by a willing execration, what should I say, but that they long for a curse? it is pity they should not be miserable. And have ye not now felt, O Nation worthy of plagues, have ye not now felt what blood it was whose guilt ye affected? Sixteen hundred years are now passed since you wished your selves thus wretched: have ye not been ever since the hate and scorn of the world? Did ye not live (many of you) to see your City buried in ashes, and drowned in blood? to see your selves no Nation? Was there ever people under Heaven that was made so famous a spectacle of misery and desolation? Have ye yet enough of that blood which ye called for upon your selves and your children? Your former Cruelties, Uncleanneses, Idolatries cost you but some short Captivities; God cannot but be just: this Sin, under which you now lie groaning and forlorn, must needs be so much greater then these, as your vastation is more; and what can that be other then the murder of the Lord of Life? Ye have what ye wisht: be miserable till ye be penitent.

XLIX.

The Crucifixion.

THE sentence of Death is past, and now who can with dry eyes behold the sad pomp of my Saviour's bloody execution? All the streets are full of gazing spectatours, waiting for this ruefull sight. At last, O Saviour, there thou comest out of *Pilate's* gate, bearing that which shall soon bear thee. To expect thy Cross was not torment enough; thou must carry it. All this while thou shalt not onely see, but feel thy death before it come; and must help to be an agent in thine own Passion. It was not out of favour, that, those scornfull robes being stripped off, thou art led to death in thine own cloaths. So was thy face besmeared with blood, so swoln and discoloured with buffetings, that thou couldst not have been known but by thy wonted habit. Now thine insulting enemies are so much more imperiously cruell, as they are more sure of their success. Their merciless tormentings have made thee half dead already: yet now, as if they had done nothing, they begin afresh; and will force thy weakned and fainting nature to new tasks of pain. The transverse of thy Cross (at least) is upon thy shoulder: when thou canst scarce goe, thou must carry. One kicks thee with his foot, another strikes thee with his staff, another drags thee hastily by thy cord, and more then one spur on thine unpitied weariness with angry commands of haste. Oh true form and state of a servant! All thy former actions, O Saviour, were (though painfull, yet) free; this, as it is in it self servile; so it is tyrannously inforced: Inforced yet more upon thee by thy own Love to mankind, then by their power and despight. It was thy Father that

laid upon thee the iniquity of us all : It was thine own Mercy that caused thee to bear our sins upon the Cross, and to bear the Cross (with the curse annexed to it) for our sins. How much more voluntary must that needs be in thee, which thou requirest to be voluntarily undertaken by us ? It was thy charge, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* Thou didst not say, Let him bear his cross as forceably imposed by another ; but, *Let him take up his cross*, as his free burthen : free in respect of his heart, not in respect of his hand : so free, that he shall willingly undergoe it, when it is laid upon him ; not so free as that he shall lay it upon himself unrequired. O Saviour, thou didst not snatch the Cross out of the Souldiers hands, and cast it upon thy shoulder ; but when they laid it on thy neck, thou underwentest it. The constraint was theirs, the will was thine. It was not so heavy to them, or to *Simon*, as it was to thee : they felt nothing but the wood, thou feltest it clogged with the load of the sins of the whole world. No marvell if thou faintedst under that sad burthen ; thou that bearest up the whole earth by thy word, didst sweat, and pant, and groan under this unsupportable carriage. O Blessed *Jesu*, how could I be confounded in my self to see thee, after so much loss of blood and over-toiledness of pain, languishing under that fatal Tree ! And yet why should it more trouble me to see thee sinking under thy Cross now, then to see thee anon hanging upon thy Cross ? In both thou wouldst render thy self weak and miserable, that thou mightest so much the more glorify thy infinite mercy in suffering.

It is not out of any compassion of thy misery, or care of thine ease, that *Simon of Cyrene* is forced to be the porter of thy Cross ; it was out of their own eagerness of thy dispatch : thy feeble paces were too slow for their purpose ; their thirst after thy blood made them impatient of delay. If thou have wearily struggled with the burthen of thy shame all along the streets of *Jerusalem*, when thou comest once
past

past the gates, an helper shall be deputed to thee : the expedition of thy death was more sweet to them, then the pain of a lingring passage. What thou saidst to *Judas*, they say to the Executioner, *What thou doest, doe quickly*. Whilst thou yet livest, they cannot be quiet, they cannot be safe : to hasten thine end, they lighten thy carriage.

Hadst thou done this out of choice which thou didst out of constraint, how I should have envied thee, O *Simon of Cyrene*, as too happy in the honour to be the first man that bore that Cross of thy Saviour, wherein millions of blessed Martyrs have (since that time) been ambitious to succeed thee? Thus to bear thy Cross for thee, O Saviour, was more then to bear a Crown from thee. Could I be worthy to be thus graced by thee, I should pity all other glories.

Whilst thou thus passest, O dear *Jesu*, the streets and ways resound not all with one note. If the malicious *Jews* and cruell Souldiers insulted upon thee, and either haled or railed thee on with a bitter violence, thy faithfull Followers were no less loud in their moans and ejulations; neither would they endure that the noise of their cries and lamentations should be drowned with the clamour of those reproaches : but especially thy Blessed Mother, and those other zealous associates of her own sex, were most passionate in their wailings. And why should I think that all that devout multitude which so lately cried *Hosanna* in the streets, did not also bear their part in these publick condolings? Though it had not concerned thy self, O Saviour, thine ears had been still more open to the voice of grief then of malice : and so thy lips also are open to the one, shut to the other. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your selves and for your children*. Who would not have thought, O Saviour, that thou shouldst have been wholly taken up with thine own sorrows? The expectation of so bitter a Death had been enough to have overwhelmed any Soul but thine : yet even now can thy gracious

eye find time to look beyond thine own miseries, at theirs; and to pity them, who, insensible of their own insuing condition, mourned for thine now present. They see thine extremity, thou foreseest theirs; they pour out their sorrow upon thee, thou divertest it upon themselves. We silly creatures walk blindfolded in this vale of tears, and little know what evil is towards us: onely what we feel we know; and whilst we feel nothing, can find leisure to bestow our commiseration on those who need it perhaps less then our selves. Even now, O Saviour, when thou wert within the view of thy *Calvary*, thou canst foresee and pity the vastation of thy *Jerusalem*; and givest a sad Prophecy of the imminent destruction of that City which lately had cost thee tears, and now shall cost thee blood. It is not all the indign cruelty of men that can rob thee of thy Mercy.

Jerusalem could not want Malefactours, though *Barabas* was dismissed. That all this execution might seem to be done out of the zeal of Justice, two capital offenders, adjudged to their Gibbet, shall accompany thee, O Saviour, both to thy death, and in it. They are led maniced after thee, as less criminous: no stripes had disabled them from bearing their own Crosses. Long agoe was this unmeet society foretold by thine Evangelical Seer, *He was taken from prison and from judgment; He was cut out of the land of the living; He made his grave with the Wicked.* O Blessed *Jesu*, it had been disparagement enough to thee to be sorted with the best of men, (since there is much sin in the perfectest, and there could be no sin in thee;) but to be matched with the scum of mankind, whom vengeance would not let to live, is such an indignity as confounds my thoughts. Surely there is no Angel in Heaven but would have been proud to attend thee; and what could the earth afford worthy of thy train? yet malice hath suited thee with company next to Hell; that their viciousness might reflect upon thee, and their sin might stain thine Innocence.

nocence. Ye are deceived, O ye fond Judges : This is the way to grace your dying malefactours ; this is not the way to disgrace him whose guiltlesness and perfection triumph'd over your injustice : his presence was able to make your Thieves happy ; their presence could no more blemish him then your own. Thus guarded, thus attended, thus accompanied art thou, Blessed *Jesus*, led to that loathsome and infamous hill, which now thy last blood shall make Sacred : now thou settest thy foot upon that rising ground which shall prevent thine *Olivet*, whence thy Soul shall first ascend into thy Glory.

There whilst thou art dressing thy self for thy last Act, thou art presented with that bitter and farewell-potion wherewith dying Malefactours were wont to have their senses stupified, that they might not feel the torments of their execution. It was but the common mercy of men to alleviate the death of Offenders ; since the intent of their last doom is not so much pain, as dissolution.

That draught, O Saviour, was not more welcome to the guilty then hatefull unto thee. In the vigour of all thine inward and outward senses thou wouldst incounter the most violent assaults of death, and scornedst to abate the least touch of thy quickest apprehension. Thou well knewest that the work thou wentest about would require the use of all thy powers ; it was not thine ease that thou soughtest, but our Redemption ; neither meantest thou to yield to thy last enemy, but to resist and to overcome him : which that thou mightest doe the more gloriously, thou challengedst him to doe his worst ; and in the mean time wouldst not disfurnish thy self of any of thy powerfull faculties. This greatest combat that ever was shall be fought on even hand : neither wouldst thou steal that Victory which thou now atchievedst over Death and Hell. Thou didst but touch at this cup ; it is a far bitterer then this that thou art now drinking up to the dregs : thou refusedst that which was offered thee by men, but that which

was mixed by thine eternal Father (though mere Gall and Wormwood) thou didst drink up to the last drop. And therein, O Blessed *Jesu*, lies all our health and salvation. I know not whether I do more suffer in thy pain, or joy in the issue of thy Suffering.

Now, even now, O Saviour, art thou entering into those dreadful lists, and now thou art grappling with thy last enemy; as if thou hadst not suffered till now, now thy bloody Passion begins: a cruell expoliation begins that violence. Again do these grim and merciless Souldiers lay their rude hands upon thee, and strip thee naked; again are those bleeding wales lay'd open to all eyes; again must thy Sacred Body undergoe the shame of an abhorred nakedness. Lo, thou that cloathest man with raiment, beasts with hides, fishes with scales and shells, earth with flowers, Heaven with Stars, art despoiled of cloaths, and standest exposed to the scorn of all beholders. As the First *Adam* entred into his Paradise, so dost thou (the Second *Adam*) into thine, naked; and as the First *Adam* was cloathed with Innocence when he had no cloaths, so wert thou (the Second) too: and more then so; thy nakedness, O Saviour, cloaths our Souls not with Innocence onely, but with Beauty. Hadst not thou been naked, we had been cloathed with confusion. O happy nakedness, whereby we are covered from shame! O happy shame, whereby we are invested with glory! All the beholders stand wrapped with warm garments; thou onely art stripped to tread the wine-press alone. How did thy Blessed Mother now wish her veil upon thy shoulders? and that Disciple who lately ran from thee naked, wish'd in vain that his loving pity might doe that for thee, which fear forced him to for himself.

Shame is succeeded with Pain. Oh the torment of the Cross! Methinks I see and feel how, having fastned the transverse to the body of that fatal Tree, and laid it upon the ground, they racked and strained thy tender and sacred
Lims,

Lims, to fit the extent of their fore-appointed measure ; and having tenter'd out thine arms beyond their natural reach, how they fastned them with cords, till those strong iron nails (which were driven up to the head, through the palms of thy Blessed hands) had not more firmly then painfully fixed thee to the Gibbet. The tree is raised up, and now not without a vehement concussion settled in the mortise. Woe is me ! how are thy joynts and sinews torn, and stretched till they crack again, by this torturing distension ? how doth thine own weight torment thee, whilst thy whole body rests upon this forced and dolorous hold, till thy nailed feet bear their part in a no-less-afflictive supportation ? How did the rough iron pierce thy Soul, whilst, passing through those tender and sensible parts, it carried thy flesh before it, and as it were rivetted it to that shamefull Tree ?

There now, O dear *Jesu*, there thou hangest between Heaven and earth, naked, bleeding, forlorn, despicable, the spectacle of miseries, the scorn of men. Be abashed, O ye Heavens and earth, and all ye creatures wrap up your selves in horreur and confusion, to see the shame and pain and curse of your most pure and Omnipotent Creatour. How could ye subsist, whilst he thus suffers in whom ye are ? O Saviour, didst thou take flesh for our Redemption, to be thus indignly used, thus mangled, thus tortured ? Was this measure fit to be offered to that Sacred Body that was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the pure substance of an immaculate Virgin ? Woe is me ! that which was unspotted with sin, is all blemished with humane cruelty, and so wofully disfigured, that the Blessed Mother that bore thee could not now have known thee ; so bloody were thy Temples, so swoln and discoloured was thy Face, so was the Skin of thy whole body streaked with red and blew stripes, so did thy thorny diadem shade thine Heavenly Countenance, so did the streams of thy blood cover and deform all thy Parts. The eye of Sense could not distinguish.

stinguish thee, O dear Saviour, in the nearest proximity to thy Cross: the eye of Faith sees thee in all this distance; and by how much more ignominy, deformity, pain it finds in thee, so much more it admires the glory of thy mercy. Alas! is this the Head that is decked by thine eternall Father with a Crown of pure gold, of immortall and incomprehensible Majesty, which is now bushed with thorns? Is this the Eye that saw the Heavens opened, and the Holy Ghost descending upon that Head, that saw such splendence of Heavenly brightness on mount *Tabor*, which now begins to be overclouded with death? Are these the Ears that heard the voice of thy Father owning thee out of Heaven, which now tingle with buffetings, and glow with reproaches, and bleed with thorns? Are these the Lips that *spake as never man spake, full of grace and power*, that called out dead *Lazarus*, that ejected the stubbornest Devils, that commanded the cure of all diseases, which now are swoln with blows, and discoloured with blewness and bloud? Is this the Face that should be *fairer then the sons of men*, which the Angels of Heaven so desired to see, and can never be satisfied with seeing, that is thus foul with the nasty mixtures of sweat, and bloud, and spittings on? Are these the Hands that *stretched out the Heavens as a curtain*, that by their touch healed the lame, the deaf, the blind, which are now bleeding with the nails? Are these the Feet which walked lately upon the liquid pavement of the sea, before whose footstool all the Nations of the earth are bidden to worship, that are now so painfully fixed to the Cross? O cruell and unthankfull mankind, that offered such measure to the Lord of Life! O infinitely-mercifull Saviour, that wouldst suffer all this for unthankfull mankind! That fiends should doe these things to guilty souls, it is (though terrible, yet) just; but that men should doe thus to the Blessed Son of God, it is beyond the capacity of our horreur.

Even the most hostile dispositions have been onely content

tent to kill; Death hath sated the most eager malice: thine enemies, O Saviour, held not themselves satisfied, unless they might enjoy thy torment. Two Thieves are appointed to be thy companions in death; thou art designed to the midst, as the chief malefactor: on whether hand soever thou lookest, thine eye meets with an hateful partner. But, O Blessed *Jesu*, how shall I enough admire and celebrate thy infinite Mercy, who madest so happy an use of this *Jewish* despight, as to improve it to the occasion of the Salvation of one, and the comfort of millions? Is not this, as the last, so the greatest specialty of thy wonderfull compassion, to convert that dying Thief? with those nailed hands to snatch a Soul out of the mouth of Hell? Lord, how I bless thee for this work? how do I stand amazed at this, above all other the demonstrations of thy Goodness and Power? The Offender came to die: nothing was in his thoughts but his guilt and torment: *whilst he was yet in his blood*, thou saidst, *This Soul shall live*. Ere yet the intoxicating Potion could have time to work upon his brain, thy Spirit infuses Faith into his heart. He that before had nothing in his eye but present death and torture, is now lifted up above his Cross in a blessed ambition; *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*. Is this the voice of a Thief, or of a Disciple? Give me leave, O Saviour, to borrow thine own words; *Verily I have not found so great faith, no not in all Israel*. He saw thee hanging miserably by him, and yet styles thee *Lord*; he saw thee dying, yet talks of thy *Kingdom*; he felt himself dying, yet talks of a future remembrance. O Faith stronger then death, that can look beyond the Cross at a Crown; beyond dissolution at a remembrance of Life and Glory! Which of thine eleven were heard to speak so gracious a word to thee in these thy last pangs? After thy Resurrection and knowledge of thine impassible condition it was not strange for them to talk of thy Kingdom; but in the midst of thy shameful death, for a dying malefactor to speak of thy reigning, and to implore

thy remembrance of himself in thy Kingdom, it is such an improvement of Faith as ravisheth my Soul with admiration. O blessed Thief, that hast thus happily stoln Heaven ! How worthy hath thy Saviour made thee to be a partner of his sufferings, a pattern of undauntable belief, a spectacle of unspeakable mercy ? *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Before I wondred at thy Faith ; now I envy at thy Felicity. Thou cravedst a remembrance ; thy Saviour speaks of a present possession, *This day* : thou suedst for remembrance as a favour to the absent ; thy Saviour speaks of thy presence with him : thou spakest of a Kingdom ; thy Saviour of Paradise. As no Disciple could be more faithfull, so no Saint could be happier. O Saviour, what a precedent is this of thy free and powerfull grace ? Where thou wilt give, what unworthiness can bar us from Mercy ? when thou wilt give, what time can prejudice our vocation ? who can despair of thy goodness, when he that in the morning was posting towards Hell, is in the evening with thee in Paradise ? Lord, he could not have spoken this to thee, but by thee, and from thee. What possibility was there for a Thief to think of thy Kingdom, without thy Spirit ? That good Spirit of thine breathed upon this man, breathed not upon his fellow ; their trade was alike, their sin was alike, their state alike, their cross alike, onely thy Mercy makes them unlike : *One is taken, the other is refused.* Blessed be thy Mercy in taking one ; blessed be thy Justice in leaving the other. Who can despair of that Mercy ? who cannot but tremble at that Justice ?

Now, O ye cruell Priests and Elders of the *Jews*, ye have full leisure to feed your eyes with the sight ye so much longed for ; there is the bloud ye purchased : and is not your malice yet glutted ? Is not all this enough, without your taunts and scoffs and sports at so exquisite a misery ? The people, the passengers are taught to insult, where they should pity. Every man hath a scorn ready to cast at a dying innocent. A generous nature is more wounded
with

with the tongue, then with the hand. O Saviour, thine ear was more painfully pierced then thy brows, or hands, or feet. It could not but goe deep into thy Soul, to hear these bitter and girding reproaches from them thou camest to save.

But, alas ! what flea-bitings were these in comparison of those inward torments which thy Soul felt in the sense and apprehension of thy Father's wrath for the sins of the whole world, which now lay heavy upon thee for satisfaction ? This, oh this was it that pressed thy Soul as it were to the neathermost Hell. Whilst thine Eternall Father look'd lovingly upon thee, what didst thou, what neededst thou to care for the frowns of men or Devils ? but when he once turn'd his face from thee, or bent his brows upon thee, this, this was worse then death. It is no marvell now, if darknes were upon the face of the whole earth, when thy Father's Face was eclipsed from thee by the interposition of our sins. How should there be light in the world without, when the God of the world, the Father of lights, complains of the want of light within ? That word of thine, O Saviour, was enough to fetch the Sun down out of Heaven, and to dissolve the whole frame of Nature, when thou criedst, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* Oh what pangs were these, dear *Jesu*, that drew from thee this complaint ? Thou well knewest nothing could be more cordiall to thine enemies, then to hear this sad language from thee : they could see but the outside of thy sufferings ; never could they have conceived so deep an anguish of thy Soul, if thy own lips had not expressed it. Yet, as not regarding their triumph, thou thus pourest out thy sorrow : and when so much is uttered, who can conceive what is felt ?

How is it then with thee, O Saviour, that thou thus astonishest men and Angels with so wofull a quiritation ? Had thy God left thee ? Thou not long since saidst, *I and my Father are one* : Are ye now severed ? Let this thought be as far from my Soul, as my Soul from Hell. No more

can thy Blessed Father be separated from thee, then from his own Essence. His Union with thee is eternall; his Vision was intercepted: He could not withdraw his Presence, he would withdraw the influence of his comfort. Thou, the Second *Adam*, stoodst for mankind upon this Tree of the Cross, as the First *Adam* stood and fell for mankind under the Tree of offence. Thou barest our sins; thy Father saw us in thee, and would punish us in thee, thee for us: how could he but withhold comfort, where he intended chastisement? Herein therefore he seems to forsake thee for the present, in that he would not deliver thee from that bitter Passion which thou wouldst undergoe for us. O Saviour, hadst thou not been thus forsaken, we had perished; thy dereliction is our safety: and however our narrow Souls are not capable of the conceit of thy pain and horror; yet we know there can be no danger in the forsaking, whilst thou canst say, *My God*. He is so thy God as he cannot be ours: all our right is by Adoption, thine by Nature; thou art one with him in eternall Essence, we come in by Grace and mercifull election: yet whilst thou shalt enable me to say, *My God*, I shall hope never to sink under thy desertions.

But whilst I am transported with the sense of thy Sufferings, O Saviour, let me not forget to admire those sweet Mercies of thine which thou pouredst out upon thy Persecutors. They rejoyce in thy death, and triumph in thy misery, and scoff at thee in both: In stead of calling down fire from Heaven upon them, thou heapest coals of fire upon their heads. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doe*. They blaspheme thee, thou prayest for them; they scorn, thou pitiest; they sin against thee, thou prayest for their forgiveness; they profess their malice, thou pleadest their ignorance. O compassion without example, without measure, fit for the Son of God, the Saviour of men! Wicked and foolish *Jews*! ye would be miserable, he will not let you: ye would fain pull upon your selves the guilt of his blood, he deprecates it: ye kill, he

he sues for your remission and life. His tongue cries louder than his blood; *Father, forgive them.* O Saviour, thou couldst not but be heard. Those who out of ignorance and simplicity thus persecuted thee, find the happy issue of thine intercession. Now I see whence it was that three thousand souls were converted soon after at one Sermon: It was not *Peter's* speech, it was thy prayer, that was thus effectuali. Now they have grace to know and confess whence they have both forgiveness and salvation; and can recompense their blasphemies with thanksgiving. What sin is there, Lord, whereof I can despair of the remission, or what offence can I be unwilling to remit, when thou prayest for the forgiveness of thy murtherers and blasphemers?

There is no day so long but hath his evening. At last; O Blessed Saviour, thou art drawing to an end of these painfull Sufferings, when spent with toil and torment thou criest out, *I thirst.* How shouldst thou doe other? O dear *Jesu*, how shouldst thou doe other then thirst? The night thou hadst spent in watching, in prayer, in agony, in thy conveyance from the Garden to *Jerusalem*, from *Annas* to *Caiaphas*, from *Caiaphas* to *Pilate*, in thy restless answers, in buffetings and stripes; the day in arraignments, in haling from place to place, in scourgings, in stripping, in robing and disrobing, in bleeding, in tugging under thy Cross, in woundings and distension, in pain and passion: No marvell if thou thirstedst. Although there was more in this drought then thy need: It was no less requisite thou shouldst thirst, then that thou shouldst die: Both were upon the same predetermination, both upon the same prediction. How else should that word be verified, *Psal. 22. 14, 15. All my bones are out of joynt; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels: My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death?* Had it not been to make up that word whereof one jot cannot pass, though thou hadst felt this thirst, yet thou hadst not be-

wrayed it. Alas! what could it avail to bemoan thy wants to insulting enemies, whose sport was thy misery? How should they pity thy thirst, that pitied not thy bloudshed? It was not their favour that thou expectedst herein, but their conviction. O Saviour, how can we, thy sinfull servants, think much to be exercised with hunger and thirst, when we hear thee thus plain?

Thou that not long since proclaimedst in the Temple, *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink: He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters,* now thy self thirstest: Thou, in whom we believe, complainest to want some drops; thou hadst the command of all the waters both above the firmament and below it, yet thou wouldst thirst. Even so, Lord, thou that wouldst die for us, wouldst thirst for us. O give me to thirst after those waters which thou promigest, what-ever become of those waters which thou wouldst want. The time was, when, craving water of the Samaritan, thou gavest better then that thou askedst. Oh give me to thirst after that more precious Water; and so do thou give me of that water of life, that I may never thirst again.

Blessed God! how marvellously dost thou contrive thine own affairs? Thine enemies, whilst they would despight thee, shall unwittingly justifie thee, and convince themselves. As thou fore-saidst, *In thy thirst, they gave thee vinegar to drink.* Had they given thee Wine, thou hadst not taken it: the night before thou hadst taken leave of that comfortable liquour, resolving to drink no more of that sweet juice till thou shouldst drink it new with them in thy Father's Kingdom. Had they given thee Water, they had not fulfilled that prediction, whereby they were self-condemned. I know not now, O dear *Jesu*, whether this last draught of thine were more pleasing to thee or more distastfull: Distastfull in it self; (for what liquour could be equally harsh;) pleasing, that it made up those Sufferings thou wert to endure, and those Prophecies thou wert to fulfill.

Now

Now there is no more to doe, thy full consummation of all predictions, of all types and ceremonies, of all sufferings, of all satisfactions is happily both effected and proclaimed; nothing now remains but a voluntary, sweet and Heavenly resignation of thy Blessed Soul into the hands of thine eternall Father, and a bowing of thine head for the change of a better Crown, and a peaceable obdormition in thy bed of ease and honour, and an instant entrance into rest, triumph, Glory.

For the full explication whereof, I refer my Reader to my Passion-Sermon, wherein the particularities are largely discussed.

And now, O Blessed *Jesu*, how easily have carnall eyes all this while mistaken the passages and intentions of this thy last and most glorious work? Our weakness could hitherto see nothing here but pain and ignominy; now my better-inlightned eyes see in this elevation of thine both honour and happiness. Lo, thou that art the Mediatour betwixt God and man, the Reconciler of Heaven and earth, art lift up betwixt earth and Heaven, that thou mightest accord both. Thou that art the great *Captain of our Salvation*, the conquerour of all the adverse powers of Death and Hell, art exalted upon this Triumphall Chariot of the Cross, that thou mightest trample upon Death, and drag all those Infernall Principalities maniced after thee. Those Arms which thine enemies meant violently to extend, are stretched forth for the imbracing of all mankind that shall come in for the benefit of thine all-sufficient redemption. Even whilst thou sufferest, thou reignest. Oh the impotent madness of silly men! They think to disgrace thee with wrie faces, with tongues put out, with bitter scoffs, with poor wretched indignities; when in the mean time *the Heavens declare thy righteousness*, O Lord, and the Earth shews forth thy power. The Sun pulls in his light, as not abiding to see the Sufferings of his Creatour; the Earth trembles under the sense of the wrong done to her Maker; the Rocks rend, the veil of the Temple tears from

from the top to the bottom : shortly, all the frame of the world acknowledges the dominion of that Son of God whom Man despised.

Earth and Hell have done their worst. O Saviour, thou art in thy Paradise, and triumphest over the malice of men and Devils : The remainders of thy Sacred person are not yet free. The Souldiers have parted thy garments, and cast lots upon thy seamless coat. (Those poor spoils cannot so much enrich them as glorifie thee, whose Scriptures are fulfilled by their barbarous sortitions.) The *Jews* sue to have thy bones divided ; but they sue in vain. No more could thy garments be whole, then thy body could be broken. One inviolable Decree over-rules both. Foolish executioners ! ye look up at that crucified Body, as if it were altogether in your power and mercy ; nothing appears to you but impotence and death : little do ye know what an irresistable guard there is upon that Sacred corps ; such, as if all the powers of Darknes shall band against, they shall find themselves confounded. In spite of all the gates of Hell that word shall stand, *Not a bone of him shall be broken.*

Still the infallible Decree of the Almighty leads you on to his own ends, through your own ways. Ye saw him already dead, whom ye came to dispatch : those bones therefore shall be whole, which ye had had no power to break. But yet, that no piece either of your cruelty or of Divine prediction may remain unsatisfied, he whose Bones may not be impaired, shall be wounded in his flesh ; he whose Ghost was yielded up, must yield his last blood. *One of the souldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water.* Malice is wont to end with life ; here it over-lives it. Cruell man ! what means this so late wound ? what commission hadst thou for this bloody act ? *Pilate* had given leave to break the bones of the living, he gave no leave to goar the side of the dead : what wicked superrerogation is this ? what a superfluity of

of maliciousness? To what purpose did thy spear pierce so many hearts in that one? why wouldst thou kill a dead man? Methinks the Blessed Virgin, and those other passionate associates of hers, and the Disciple whom *Jesus* loved, together with the other of his fellows, the friends and followers of *Christ*, and especially he that was so ready to draw his sword upon the troupe of his Master's apprehenders, should have work enough to contain themselves within the bounds of patience at so savage a stroke: their sorrow could not chuse but turn to indignation, and their hearts could not but rise (as even mine doth now) at so impertinent a villany. How easily could I rave at that rude hand? But, O God, when I look up to thee, and consider how thy holy and wise Providence so overrules the most barbarous actions of men, that (besides their will) they turn beneficiall, I can at once hate them, and bless thee. This very wound hath a mouth to speak the *Messiahship* of my Saviour, and the truth of thy Scripture, *They shall look at him whom they have pierced*. Behold now the Second *Adam* sleeping, and out of his side formed the Mother of the living, the Evangelicall Church: Behold the Rock which was smitten, and the waters of life gushed forth. Behold *the fountain that is set open to the house of David, for sin and for uncleanness*; a fountain not of water onely, but of blood too. O Saviour, by thy water we are washed, by thy blood we are redeemed. Those two Sacraments which thou didst institute alive, flow also from thee dead, as the last memorialls of thy Love to thy Church: the Water of Baptism, which is *the laver of Regeneration*; *the Blood of the new Testament shed for remission of sins*: and these, together with the Spirit that gives life to them both, are the three Witnesses on earth, whose attestation cannot fail us. O precious and sovereign wound, by which our Souls are healed! Into this cleft of the rock let my Dove fly and enter, and there safely hide her self from the talons of all the Birds of prey.

It could not be but that the death of *Christ* contrived and

acted at *Jerusalem* in so solemn a Festivall, must needs draw a world of beholders. The *Romans*, the Centurion and his band, were there as actours, as supervisors of the Execution. Those strangers were no otherwise engaged, then as they that would hold fair correspondence with the Citizens where they were engarisoned: their freedome from prejudice rendred them more capable of an ingenuous construction of all events. *Now when the Centurion and they that were with him that watched Jesus saw the Earthquake, and the things that were done, they feared greatly, and glorified God, and said, Truly this was the Son of God.*

What a marvellous concurrence is here of strong and irrefragable convictions? Meekness in suffering, Prayer for his murtherers, a faithfull resignation of his Soul into the hands of his Heavenly Father, the Sun eclipsed, the Heavens darkened, the earth trembling, the graves open, the rocks rent, the veil of the Temple torn; who could goe less then this, *Truly this was the Son of God?* He suffers patiently; this is through the power of Grace: many good men have done so through his enabling. The frame of Nature suffers with him; this is proper to the God of Nature, the Son of God.

I wonder not that these men confessed thus; I wonder that any Spectatour confessed it not: these proofs were enough to fetch all the world upon their knees, and to have made all mankind a Convert. But all hearts are not alike; no means can work upon the wilfully-obdured. Even after this the Souldier pierced that Blessed Side; and whilst *Pagans* relented, *Jews* continued impenitent. Yet even of that Nation, those beholders whom envy and partiality had not interessed in this slaughter, were stricken with just astonishment, and smote their breasts, and shook their heads, and by passionate gesture spake what their tongues durst not. How many must there needs be, in this universall course, of them whom he had healed of diseases, or freed from Devils, or miraculously fed, or some way obliged in their persons or friends? These, as they were deeply affected with

with the mortall indignities which were offered to their acknowledged *Messiah*, so they could not but be ravished with wonder at those powerfull demonstrations of the Deity of him in whom they believed; and strangely distracted in their thoughts, whilst they compared those Sufferings with that Omnipotence. As yet their Faith and Knowledge was but in the bud or in the blade. How could they chuse but think, Were he not the Son of God, how could these things be? and if he were the Son of God, how could he die? His Resurrection, his Ascension, should soon after perfect their belief; but in the mean time their hearts could not but be conflicted with thoughts hard to be reconciled. Howsoever, they glorify God, and stand amazed at the expectation of the issue.

But above all other, O thou Blessed Virgin, the Holy Mother of our Lord, how many swords pierced thy Soul, whilst standing close by his Cross thou sawest thy dear Son and Saviour thus indignly used, thus stripped, thus stretched, thus nailed, thus bleeding, thus dying, thus pierced? How did thy troubled heart now recount what the Angel *Gabriel* had reported to thee from God in the message of thy blessed Conception of that Son of God? How didst thou think of the miraculous formation of that thy Divine burthen by the power of the Holy Ghost? How didst thou recall those prophecies of *Anna* and *Simeon* concerning him, and all those supernaturall works of his, the irrefragable proofs of his Godhead? and laying all these together, with the miserable infirmities of his Passion, how wert thou crucified with him? The care that he took for thee in the extremity of his torments could not chuse but melt thy heart into sorrow: But oh! when in the height of his pain and misery thou heardst him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* what a cold horror possessed thy Soul? I cannot now wonder at thy qualms and swoonings; I could rather wonder that thou survivedst so sad an hour. But when, recollecting thy self, thou sawest the Heavens

to bear a part with thee in thy mourning, and feltest the Earth to tremble no less then thy self, and foundest that the dreadfull concussion of the whole frame of Nature proclaimed the Deity of him that would thus suffer and die, and remembredst his frequent predictions of drinking this bitter cup, and of being baptized thus in Bloud; thou beganst to take heart, and to comfort thy self with the assured expectation of the glorious issue. More then once had he foretold thee his victorious Resurrection. He who had openly professed *Jonas* for his type, and had fore-promised in three days to raise up the ruined Temple of his Body; had doubtless given more full intimation unto thee, who hadst so great a share in that sacred Body of his. *The just shall live by Faith.* Lo, that Faith of thine in his ensuing Resurrection and in his triumph over death, gives thee life, and cheers up thy drouping Soul, and bids it in an holy confidence to triumph over all thy fears and sorrows; and him whom thou now seest dead and despised, represents unto thee living, immortal, glorious.

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The Resurrection.

GRace doth not ever make show where it is. There is much secret riches both in the earth and sea, which never eye saw. I never heard any news till now of *Joseph of Arimathæa*: yet was he eminently both rich, and wise, and good; a worthy, though close, Disciple of our Saviour. True Faith may be wisely reserved, but will not be cowardly. Now he puts forth himself, and dares beg the Body of *Jesus*. Death is wont to end all quarrells. *Pilate's* heart tells him
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he hath done too much already, in sentencing an innocent to death : no doubt that Centurion had related unto him the miraculous symptoms of that Passion. He that so unwillingly condemned Innocence, could rather have wished that just man alive, then have denied him dead. The Body is yielded, and taken down ; and now, that which hung naked upon the Cross, is wrapped in fine linen ; that which was soiled with sweat and blood, is curiously washed and embalmed. Now even *Nicodemus* comes in for a part, and fears not the envy of a good profession. Death hath let that man loose, whom the Law formerly over-awed with restraint. He hates to be a night-bird any longer ; but boldly flies forth, and looks upon the face of the Sun, and will be now as liberall in his Odours, as he was before niggardly in his Confession. O Saviour, the earth was thine and the fulness of it ; yet, as thou hadst not an house of thine own whilst thou livedst, so thou hadst not a grave when thou wert dead. *Joseph* that rich Council-lour lent thee his ; lent it so, as it should never be restored : thou took'st it up but for a while ; but that little touch of that Sacred Corps of thine made it too good for the owner.

O happy *Joseph*, that hadst the honour to be Land-lord of the Lord of Life ! how well is thy house-room repay'd with a *mansion not made with hands, eternall in the heavens* ? Thy Garden and thy Tomb were hard by *Calvary*, where thou couldst not fail of many monitions of thy frailty. How oft hadst thou seasoned that new Tomb with sad and savoury meditations ? and hadst oft said within thy self, Here I shall once lie down to my last rest, and wait for my Resurrection ? Little didst thou then think to have been disappointed by so-Blessed a Guest ; or that thy grave should be again so soon empty, and in that emptiness incapable of any mortall in-dweller. How gladly dost thou now resign thy grave to him in whom thou livest, and who liveth for ever, whose Soul is in Paradise, whose God-

head every-where? Hadst thou not been rich before, this gift had enriched thee alone, and more ennobled thee than all thine earthly Honour. Now great Princes envy thy bounty, and have thought themselves happy to kiss the stones of that rock which thou thus hewedst, thus bestowedst.

Thus purely wrapped and sweetly embalmed lies the precious Body of our Saviour in *Joseph's* new Vault. Are ye now also at rest, O ye *Jewish* Rulers? Is your malice dead and buried with him? Hath *Pilate* enough served your envy and revenge? Surely it is but a common hostility that can die; yours surviveth death, and puts you upon a farther project. *The chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that this Deceiver said whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: Command therefore that the Sepulcher be made sure till the third day; lest his Disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say to the people he is risen.*

How full of terrours and inevitable perplexities is guiltiness? These men were not more troubled with envy at *Christ* alive, then now with fear of his Resurrection. And what can now secure them? *Pilate* had helpt to kill him; but who shall keep him from rising? Wicked and foolish *Jews!* how fain would ye fight against God and your own hearts? how gladly would ye deceive your selves, in believing him to be a Deceiver whom your consciences knew to be no less true then powerfull? *Lazarus* was still in your eye: That man was no phantasm; his death, his reviving was undeniable; the so-fresh resuscitation of that dead body after four days dissolution was a manifest conviction of Omnipotence. How do ye vainly wish that he could deceive you in the fore-reporting of his own Resurrection? Without a Divine power he could have raised neither *Lazarus* nor himself: with and by it, he could as well raise himself as *Lazarus*. What need we other witnesses then your own mouths? That which he would doe, ye confess he

he foretold ; that the truth of his word might answer the power of this deed, and both of them might argue him the God of Truth and Power, and your selves enemies to both. And now what must be done ? The Sepulcher must be secured, and you with it : An huge stone, a strong guard must doe the deed : and that stone must be sealed, that guard of your own designing. Methinks I hear the Souldiers and busie Officers, when they were rolling that other weighty Stone (for such we probably conceive) to the mouth of the vault with much toil and sweat and breathlessness, how they bragg'd of the sureness of the place and unremovableness of that load ; and when that so choice a Watch was set, how they boasted of their valour and vigilance, and said, they would make him safe from either rising or stealing. Oh the madness of impotent men, that think by either wile or force to frustrate the will and designs of the Almighty ! How justly doth that wise and powerfull Arbitrer of the world laugh them to scorn in Heaven, and befool them 'in their own vain devices ? O Saviour, how much evidence had thy Resurrection wanted, if these enemies had not been thus maliciously provident ? how irrefragable is thy Rising made by these bootless endeavours of their prevention ?

All this while the devout *Maries* keep close, and silently spend their Sabbath in a mixture of grief and hope. How did they wear out those sad hours in bemoaning themselves each to other ; in mutuall relations of the patient sufferings, of the happy expiration of their Saviour, of the wonderfull events both in the Heavens and earth that accompanied his Crucifixion, of his frequent and clear Predictions of his Resurrection ? And now they have gladly agreed, (so soon as the time will give them leave,) in the dawning of the Sunday-morning to visit that dear Sepulcher. Neither will they goe empty-handed: She that had bestowed that costly Alabaster-box of Ointment upon their Saviour alive, hath prepared no less precious Odours for him dead.

Love is restless and fearless. In the dark of night these good Women goe to buy their spices, and ere the day-break are gone out of their houses towards the Tomb of *Christ* to bestow them. This Sex is commonly fearfull; it was much for them to walk alone in that unsafe season: yet, as despising all fears and dangers, they thus spend the night after their Sabbath. Might they have been allowed to buy their Perfumes on the Sabbath, or to have visited that holy Tomb sooner, can we think they would have staid so long? can we suppose they would have cared more for the Sabbath then for the *Lord of the Sabbath*; who now kept his Sabbath in the Grave? Sooner they might not come, later they would not, to present their last homage to their dead Saviour. Had these holy women known their *Jesus* to be alive, how had they hasted, who made such speed to doe their last offices to his sacred Corps? For us, we know that our Redeemer liveth; we know where he is. O Saviour, how cold and heartless is our love to thee, if we do not haste to find thee in thy Word and Sacraments; if our Souls do not fly up to thee in all holy Affections into thy Heaven?

Of all the Women *Mary Magdalen* is first named, and in some Evangelists alone: She is noted above her fellows. None of them were so much obliged, none so zealously thankfull: Seven Devils were cast out of her by the command of *Christ*. That Heart which was freed from Satan by that powerfull dispossession, was now possessed with a free and gracious bounty to her deliverer. Twice at the least hath she poured out her fragrant and costly Odours upon him. Where there is a true sense of favour and beneficence, there cannot but be a fervent desire of retribution. O Blessed Saviour, could we feel the danger of every sin, and the malignity of those spirituall possessions from which thou hast freed us, how should we pour out our selves into thankfulness unto thee?

Every thing here had horror. The Place, both solitary
and

and a Sepulcher : Nature abhors, as the visage, so the region of Death and Corruption. The Time, Night ; onely the Moon gave them some faint glimmering : (for this being the seventeenth day of her age, afforded some light to the latter part of the night.) The Business, the visitation of a dead Corps. Their zealous Love hath easily overcome all these. They had followed him in his Sufferings when the Disciples left him ; they attended him to his Cross weeping ; they followed him to his Grave, and saw how *Joseph* laid him : even there they leave him not, but, ere it be day-light, return to pay him the last tribute of their duty. How much *stronger is Love then death* ? O Blessed *Jesus*, why should not we imitate thy love to us ? Those *whom thou lovest, thou lovest to the end*, yea in it, yea after it : even when we are dead, not our Souls onely, but our very dust is dearly respected of thee. What condition of thine should remove our affections from thy person in Heaven, from thy lims on earth ?

Well did these worthy Women know what *Joseph* of *Arimathæa* and *Nicodemus* had done to thee ; they saw how curiously they had wrapped thee, how preciously they had embalmed thee : yet, as not thinking others beneficence could be any just excuse of theirs, they bring their own Odours to thy Sepulture to be perfumed by the touch of thy Sacred Body. What thank is it to us that others are obsequious to thee, whilst we are slack or niggardly ? We may rejoyce in others forwardness ; but if we rest in it, how small joy shall it be to us, to see them go to Heaven without us ?

When on the Friday-evening they attended *Joseph* to the intombing of *Jesus*, they mark'd the place, they mark'd the passage, they mark'd that inner grave-stone which the owner had fitted to the mouth of that tomb ; which all there care is now to remove ; *Who shall roll away the stone ?* That other more weighty load wherewith the vault was barred, the seal, the guard set upon both, came not perhaps into their knowledge ; this was the private

plot of *Pilate* and the Priests, beyond the reach of their thoughts.

I do not hear them say, How shall we recover the charges of our Odours? or, How shall we avoid the envy and censure of our angry Elders, for honouring him whom the Governours of our Nation have thought worthy of condemnation? The onely thought they now take is, *Who shall roll away the stone?* Neither do they stay at home and move this doubt, but when they are well forward on their way, resolving to try the issue. Good hearts cannot be so solicitous for any thing under Heaven, as for removing those impediments which lie between them and their Saviour. O Blessed *Jesu*, thou who art clearly revealed in Heaven, art yet still both hid and sealed up from too many here on earth: Neither is it some thin veil that is spread between thee and them, but an huge stone; even a true stone of offence lies rolled upon the mouth of their hearts. Yea, if a second weight were superadded to thy Grave here, no less than three spirituall bars are interposed betwixt them and thee above; Idleness, Ignorance, Unbelief. Who shall roll away these stones, but the same power that removed thine? O Lord, remove that our Ignorance, that we may know thee; our Idleness, that we may seek thee; our Unbelief, that we may find and enjoy thee.

How well it succeeds when we go faithfully and conscientiously about our work, and leave the issue to God? Lo, now God hath removed the cares of these holy Women, together with the grave-stone. To the wicked that falls out which they feared, to the Godly that which they wished and cared for, yea more. Holy cares ever prove well; the worldly dry the bones, and disappoint the hopes. Could these good Visitants have known of a greater stone sealed, of a strong watch set, their doubts had been doubled: now God goes beyond their thoughts, and at once removes that which both they did and might have feared: The stone is removed, the seal broken, the watch fled. What a scorn doth

doth the Almighty God make of the impotent designs of men? They thought, the stone shall make the grave sure, the seal shall make the stone sure, the guard shall make both sure: Now when they think all safe, God sends an Angel from Heaven above, the earth quakes beneath, the stone rolls away, the Souldiers stand like carkasses, and when they have got heart enough to run away, think themselves valiant; the Tomb is opened, *Christ* is risen, they confounded. Oh the vain projects of silly men! as if with one shovel-full of mire they would dam up the Sea; or with a clout hang'd forth they would keep the Sun from shining. Oh these Spiders-webs, or houses of cards which fond children have (as they think) skilfully framed, which the least breath breaks and ruins! Who are we, sorry worms, that we should look in any business to prevail against our Creatour? What creature is so base that he cannot arm against us to our confusion? The Lice and Frogs shall be too strong for *Pharaoh*, the Worms for *Herod*. *There is no wisdom nor counsell against the Lord.*

Oh the marvellous pomp and magnificence of our Saviour's Resurrection! The Earth quakes, the Angel appears; that it may be plainly seen that this Divine person now rising had the command both of Earth and Heaven. At the dissolution of thine Humane nature, O Saviour, was an Earthquake, at the re-uniting of it is an Earthquake; to tell the world that the God of Nature then suffered, and had now conquered. Whilst thou laiest still in the earth, the earth was still; when thou camest to fetch thine own, *The earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob*. When thou our true *Sampson* awakedst, and foundest thy self tied with these *Philistian* cords, and rousedst up, and brakest those hard and strong twists with a sudden power, no marvell if the room shook under thee.

Good cause had the earth to quake, when the God that made it powerfully calls for his own flesh from the usurpation of her bowells. Good cause had she to open her graves and yield up her dead, in attendance to the Lord of Life,

whom she had presumed to detain in that cell of darkness. What a seeming impotence was here, that thou, who art the true Rock of thy Church, shouldst lie obscurely shrouded in *Joseph's* rock? thou, that art the true corner-stone of thy Church, shouldst be shut up with a double stone, the one of thy grave, the other of thy vault? thou, *by whom we are sealed to the day of our Redemption*, shouldst be sealed up in a blind cavern of earth? But now what a demonstration of power doth both the world and I see, in thy glorious Resurrection? The rocks tear, the graves open, the stones roll away, the dead rise and appear, the Souldiers flee and tremble, Saints and Angels attend thy rising. O Saviour, thou laiest down in weakness, thou risest in power and glory; thou laiest down like a man, thou risest like a God.

What a lively image hast thou herein given me of the dreadfull majesty of the generall Resurrection and thy second appearance? Then not the earth onely, but *the powers of Heaven shall be shaken*: not some few graves shall be open, and some Saints appear; but all the bars of death shall be broken, and *all that sleep in their graves shall awake, and stand up from the dead* before thee: not some one Angel shall descend; but thou, *the great Angel of the Covenant*, attended with thousand thousands of those mighty Spirits. And if these stout Souldiers were so filled with terrour at the feeling of an Earthquake and the sight of an Angel, that they had scarce breath left in them for the time to witness them alive; where shall thine enemies appear, O Lord, in the day of thy terrible appearance, when the earth shall reel and vanish, and the elements shall be on a flame about their ears, and the Heavens shall wrap up as a scroll?

O God, thou mightest have removed this stone by the force of thine Earthquake, as well as rive other rocks; yet thou wouldst rather use the ministry of an Angel: or, thou that gavest thy self life, and gavest being both to the
stone

stone and to the earth, couldst more easily have removed the stone then moved the earth ; but it was thy pleasure to make use of an Angel's hand. And now he that would ask why thou wouldst doe it rather by an Angel then by thy self, may as well ask why thou didst not rather give thy Law by thine own immediate hand then by the ministration of Angels ; why by an Angel thou struckest the *Israelites* with plagues, the *Assyrians* with the sword ; why an Angel appeared to comfort thee after thy Temptation and Agony, when thou wert able to comfort thy self ; why thou usist the influences of Heaven to fruiten the earth ; why thou employest Second causes in all events, when thou couldst doe all things alone. It is good reason thou shouldst serve thy self of thine own ; neither is there any ground to be required whether of their motion or rest, besides thy will.

Thou didst raise thy self, the Angels removed the stone. They that could have no hand in thy Resurrection, yet shall have an hand in removing outward impediments ; not because thou neededst, but because thou wouldest : like as thou alone didst raise *Lazarus*, thou badest others let him loose. Works of Omnipotency thou reservest to thine own immediate performance ; ordinary actions thou doest by subordinate means.

Although this act of the Angels was not merely with respect to thee ; but partly to those devout Women, to ease them of their care, to manifest unto them thy Resurrection. So officious are those glorious Spirits, not onely to thee their Maker, but even to the meanest of thy servants, especially in the furtherance of all their spirituall designs. Let us bring our Odours, they will be sure to roll away the stone. Why do not we imitate them in our forwardness to promote each others Salvation ? We pray to doe thy will here as they doe in Heaven : if we do not act our wishes, we do but mock thee in our Devotions.

How glorious did this Angel of thine appear ? The ter-

rified Souldiers saw his face like lightning, both they and the Women saw his garments shining, bright, and white as snow: such a presence became his errand. It was fit that, as in thy Passion the Sun was darkened, and all creatures were clad with heaviness, so in thy Resurrection the best of thy creatures should testify their joy and exultation in the brightness of their habit; that as we on Festivall-days put on our best cloaths, so thine Angels should celebrate this blessed Festivity with a meet representation of Glory. They could not but enjoy our joy, to see the work of man's Redemption thus fully finished: and if there be *mirth in Heaven at the conversion of one sinner*, how much more when a world of sinners is perfectly ransomed from death, and restored to Salvation? Certainly, if but one or two appeared, all rejoiced, all triumphed. Neither could they but be herein sensible of their own happy advantage, who by thy mediation are confirmed in their glorious estate; since thou by the blood of thy Cross and power of thy Resurrection hast *reconciled things not in earth onely, but in Heaven.*

But, above all other, the Love of thee their God and Saviour must needs heighten their joy, and make thy Glory theirs. It is their perpetuall work to praise thee: how much more now when such an occasion was offered as never had been since the world began, never could be after? when thou the God of Spirits hadst vanquished all the spirituall powers of darkness, when thou the Lord of Life hadst conquered death for thee and all thine, so as they may now boldly insult over their last enemy, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

Certainly, if Heaven can be capable of an increase of joy and felicity, never had those Blessed Spirits so great a cause of triumph and gratulation as in this day of thy glorious Resurrection. How much more, O dear *Jesu*, should we men, whose flesh thou didst assume, unite, revive, for whose sake and in whose stead thou didst vouchsafe to suffer

suffer and die, whose arrerages thou payedst in death and acquittedst in thy Resurrection, whose Souls are discharged, whose Bodies shall be raised by the power of thy rising; how much more should we think we have cause to be overjoyed with the happy memory of this great work of thy Divine Power and unconceivable Mercy?

Lo now, how weak soever I am in my self, yet in the confidence of this victorious Resurrection of my Saviour I dare boldly challenge and desie you, O all ye adverse Powers. Doe the worst ye can to my Soul; in despite of you it shall be safe.

Is it Sin that threatens me? Behold, this Resurrection of my Redeemer publishes my discharge. My Surety was arrested and cast into the prison of his Grave: had not the utmost farthing of mine arrerages been paid, he could not have come forth. He is come forth: the Sum is fully satisfied. What danger can there be of a discharged Debt?

Is it the Wrath of God? Wherefore is that but for sin? If my sin be defrayed, that quarrell is at an end: and if my Saviour suffered it for me, how can I fear to suffer it in my self? That infinite Justice hates to be twice paid. He is risen, therefore he hath satisfied. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen.*

Is it Death it self? Lo, my Saviour, that overcame death by dying, hath triumph'd over him in his Resurrection. How can I now fear a conquered enemy? What harm is there in the Serpent, but for his sting? *The sting of death is sin*: that is pulled out by my powerfull Redeemer, it cannot now hurt me; it may refresh me to carry this cool Snake in my bosome.

O then, my dear Saviour, I bless thee for thy Death; but I bless thee more for thy Resurrection. That was a work of wonderfull Humility; of infinite Mercy; this was a work of infinite Power: In that was humane Weakness;

ness ; in this Divine Omnipotence : In that thou didst *die for our sins* ; in this thou didst *rise again for our Justification*.

And now how am I conformable to thee, if, when thou art risen, I lie still in the grave of my Corruptions? How am I a lim of thy body, if, whilst thou hast that perfect dominion over death, death hath dominion over me ; if, whilst thou art alive and glorious, I lie rotting in the dust of death? I know the locomotive faculty is in the Head : by the power of the Resurrection of thee our Head, all we thy Members cannot but be raised. As the earth cannot hold my Body from thee in the day of the Second Resurrection, so cannot sin withhold my Soul from thee in the First. How am I thine, if I be not risen? and if I be risen with thee, why do I not *seek the things above, where thou sittest at the right hand of God?*

The Vault or Cave which *Joseph* had hewn out of the rock was large, capable of no less than ten persons : upon the mouth of it Eastward was that great stone rolled ; within it, at the right hand, in the North part of the Cave, was hewn out a receptacle for the body, three handfulls high from the pavement ; and a stone was accordingly fitted for the cover of that Grave.

Into this Cave the good Women (finding the stone rolled away) descended to seek the body of *Christ* ; and in it saw the Angels. This was the Goal to which *Peter* and *John* ran, finding the spoils of death, the grave-cloaths wrapped up, and the napkin that was about the head folded up together and laid in a place by it self : and as they came in haste, so they return'd with wonder.

I marvel not at your speed, O ye blessed Disciples, if upon the report of the Women ye ran, yea flew upon the wings of zeal, to see what was become of your Master. Ye had wont to walk familiarly together in the attendance of your Lord : now society is forgotten ; and, as for a wager, each tries the speed of his legs, and, with neglect of other, vies who shall be first at the Tomb.

Who

Who would not but have tried masteries with you in this case, and have made light touches of the earth to have held paces with you? Your desire was equall; but *John* is the younger, his lims are more nimble, his breath more free: he first looks into the Sepulcher, but *Peter* goes down first. O happy competition who shall be more zealous in the enquiry after *Christ*! Ye saw enough to amaze you, not enough to settle your Faith. How well might you have thought, "Our Master is not subdued, but risen? Had he been taken away by others hands, this fine linen had not been left behind: Had he not himself risen from this bed of earth, he had not thus wrapped up his night-cloaths, and laid them sorted by themselves. What can we doubt, when he foretold us he would rise?" O Blessed *Jesu*, how wilt thou pardon our errours? how should we pardon and pity the errours of each other in lesser occasions, whenas yet thy prime and dearest Disciples, after so much Divine instruction, *knew not the Scriptures, that thou must rise again from the dead?* They went away more astonished then confident; more full of wonder as yet then of belief.

There is more strength of zeal (where it takes) in the weaker Sex. Those holy Women, as they came first, so they staid last: especially devout *Mary Magdalene* stands still at the mouth of the Cave weeping. Well might those tears have been spared, if her Knowledge had been answerable to her Affection, her Faith to her Fervour. Withall, (as our eye will be where we love) she stoops, and looks down into that dear Sepulcher.

Holy desires never but speed well. There she sees two glorious Angels, the one sitting at the head, the other at the feet where the body of *Jesus* had lain. Their shining brightness shew'd them to be no mortall creatures: besides that *Peter* and *John* had but newly come out of the Sepulcher, and both found and left it empty in her sight, which was now suddenly filled with those celestiall guests. That white linen wherewith *Joseph* had shrouded the

Sacred Body of *Jesus* was now shamed with a brighter whiteness.

Yet do I not find the good Woman ought appalled with that unexpected glory. So was her heart taken up with the thought for her Saviour, that she seemed not sensible of whatsoever other Objects. Those tears which she did let drop into the Sepulcher, send up back to her the voice of those Angels, *Woman, why weepest thou?* God and his Angels take notice of every tear of our Devotion. The sudden wonder hath not dried her eyes, nor charmed her tongue: She freely confesseth the cause of her grief to be the missing of her Saviour; *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* Alas, good *Mary!* how dost thou lose thy tears? of whom dost thou complain, but of thy best friend? who hath removed thy Lord but himself? who but his own Deity hath taken away that humane body out of that region of death? Neither is he now laid any more, he stands by thee whose removall thou complainest of. Thus many a tender and humbled Soul afflicts it self with the want of that Saviour whom it hath, and feeleth not.

Sense may be no judge of the bewailed absence of *Christ*. Do but turn back thine eye, O thou Religious Soul, and see *Jesus* standing by thee, though thou knewest not that it was *Jesus*. His habit was not his own. Sometimes it pleases our Saviour to appear unto his not like himself: his holy disguises are our trialls. Sometimes he will seem a Stranger, sometimes an Enemy; sometimes he offers himself to us in the shape of a poor man, sometimes of a distressed captive. Happy is he that can discern his Saviour in all forms. *Mary* took him for a Gardener. Devout *Magdalene*, thou art not much mistaken. As it was the trade of the First *Adam* to dress the Garden of *Eden*, so was it the trade of the Second to tend the Garden of his Church. He digs up the soil by seasonable afflictions, he sows in it the seeds of Grace, he plants it with gracious motions, he waters it with

with his Word, yea with his own Bloud, he weeds it by wholsome censures. O Blessed Saviour, what is it that thou neglectest to doe for this selected inclosure of thy Church? As in some respect thou art *the true Vine, and thy Father the Husbandman*; so also in some other we are the Vine, and thou art the Husbandman. Oh be thou such to me as thou appearedst unto *Magdalene*: break up the fallows of my Nature, implant me with Grace, prune me with meet corrections, bedew me with the former and latter rain; doe what thou wilt to make me fruitfull.

Still the good woman weeps, and still complains, and passionately enquires of thee, O Saviour, for thy self. How apt are we, if thou dost never so little vary from our apprehensions, to mis-know thee, and to wrong our selves by our mis-opinions? All this while hast thou concealed thy self from thine affectionate client; thou sawest her tears, and heardest her importunities and inquiries: at last (as it was with *Joseph*, that he could no longer contain himself from the notice of his brethren) thy compassion causes thee to break forth into a clear expression of thy self, by expressing her name unto her self; *Mary*. She was used, as to the name, so to the sound, to the accent. Thou spakest to her before, but in the tone of a stranger; now of a friend, of a Master. Like a good Shepherd, thou *callest thy sheep by their name, and they know thy voice*. What was thy call of her, but a clear pattern of our Vocation?

As her, so thou callest us, first, familiarly, effectually. She could not begin with thee otherwise then in the compellation of a stranger; it was thy mercy to begin with her. That correction of thy Spirit is sweet and usefull, *Now after ye have known God, or rather are known of him.* Gal. 4. 9.

We do know thee, O God, but our active knowledge is after our passive; first we are known of thee, then we know thee that knewest us. And as our Knowledge, so is our Calling, so is our Election; thou beginnest to us in all, and most justly saist, *You have not chosen*

me, but *I have chosen you*. When thou wouldst speak to this Devout client as a stranger, thou spakest aloof; *Woman, whom seekest thou?* now when thou wouldst be known to her, thou callest her by her name, *Mary*. Generall invitations and common mercies are for us as men; but where thou givest Grace as to thine elect, thou comest close to the Soul, and winnest us with dear and particular intimations.

That very name did as much as say, Know him of whom thou art known and beloved, and turns her about to thy view and acknowledgment: *She turned her self, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master*. Before, her face was towards the Angels: this word fetches her about, and turns her face to thee from whom her misprision had averted it. We do not rightly apprehend thee, O Saviour, if any creature in Heaven or earth can keep our eyes and our hearts from thee. The Angels were bright and glorious; thy appearance was homely, thy habit mean: yet when she heard thy voice, she turns her back upon the Angels, and salutes thee with a *Rabboni*, and falls down before thee, in a desire of an humble amplexation of those Sacred feet which she now rejoyces to see past the use of her Odours.

Where there was such familiarity in the mutuall compellation, what means such strangeness in the charge? *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*. Thou wert not wont, O Saviour, to make so dainty of being touched: It is not long since these very same hands touched thee in thine anointing; the Bloody-fluxed woman touched thee; the thankfull Penitent in *Simon's* house touched thee. What speak I of these? The multitude touch'd thee, the Executioners touch'd thee; and even after thy Resurrection thou didst not stick to say to thy Disciples, *Touch me, and see*, and to invite *Thomas* to put his fingers into thy side: neither is it long after this before thou sufferest the three *Maries* to touch and hold thy feet. How then

then saist thou, *Touch me not?* Was it in a mild taxation of her mistaking? as if thou hadst said, Thou knowest not that I have now an Immortal body, but so demeaneest thyself towards me as if I were still in my wonted condition: know now that the case is altered: howsoever indeed I have not yet ascended to my Father, yet this Body of mine, which thou seest to be reall and sensible, is now impassible, and qualified with immortality, and therefore worthy of a more awfull veneration then heretofore. Or was it a gentle reproof of her dwelling too long in this dear hold of thee, and fixing her thoughts upon thy Bodily presence; together with an implied direction of reserving the height of her affection for thy perfect Glorification in Heaven? Or lastly, was it a light touch of her too much haste and eagerness in touching thee, as if she must use this speed in preventing thine Ascension, or else be indangered to be disappointed of her hopes? as if thou hadst said; Be not so passionately forward avd sudden in laying hold of me; as if I were instantly ascending; but know that I shall stay some time with you upon earth, before my going up to my Father. O Saviour, even our well-meant zeal in seeking and injoying thee may be faulty; if we seek thee where we should not, on earth; how we should not, unwarrantably. There may be a kind of carnality in spirituall actions. *If we have heretofore known thee after the flesh, henceforth know we thee so no more.* That thou livedst here in this shape, that colour, this stature, that habit, I should be glad to know; nothing that concerns thee can be unusefull. Could I say, here thou satest, here thou layest, here and thus thou wert crucified, here buried, here settest thy last foot; I should with much contentment see and recount these memorialls of thy presence. But if I shall so fasten my thoughts upon these, as not to look higher to the spirituall part of thine achievements, to the power and issue of thy Resurrection, I am never the better.

No sooner art thou risen then thou speakest of ascending; as thou didst lie down to rise, so didst thou rise to ascend: that is the consummation of thy Glory, and ours in thee. Thou that forbadst her touch, enjoynedst her errand; *Goe to my brethren, and say, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*

The annunciation of thy Resurrection and Ascension is more then a private fruition; this is for the comfort of one, that for the benefit of many. To sit still and enjoy, is more sweet for the present; but to goe and tell, is more gainfull in the sequel. That great Angel thought himself (as he well might) highly honoured, in that he was appointed to carry the happy news unto the Blessed Virgin (thy Holy Mother) of her conception of thee her Saviour: how honourable must it needs be to *Mary Magdalene*, that she must be the messenger of thy second birth; thy Resurrection, and instant Ascension? *How beautifull do the feet of those* deserve to be, *who bring the glad tidings of peace and Salvation?* What matter is it, O Lord, if men despise, where thou wilt honour?

To whom then dost thou send her? *Goe tell my Brethren.* Blessed *Jesu*, who are those? were they not thy Followers? yea, were they not thy Forsakers? yet still thou stylest them thy Brethren. O admirable Humility! O infinite Mercy! How dost thou raise their titles with thy self? At first they were thy Servants, then Disciples, a little before thy death they were thy Friends; now after thy Resurrection they were thy Brethren. Thou that wert exalted infinitely higher from mortall to immortall, descendest so much lower to call them Brethren, who were before Friends, Disciples, Servants. What do we stand upon the terms of our poor inequality, when the Son of God stoops so low as to call us Brethren? But, oh Mercy without measure! Why wilt thou, how canst thou, O Saviour, call them Brethren, whom in their last parting thou foundst fugitives? Did they not run from thee? did not
one

one of them rather leave his inmost coat behind him, then not be quit of thee? did not another of them deny thee, yea abjure thee? and yet thou saist, *Goe tell my Brethren.* It is not in the power of the sins of our infirmity to unbrother us: when we look at the acts themselves, they are hainous; when at the persons, they are so much more faulty as more obliged; but when we look at the mercy of thee who hast called us, now, *Who shall separate us?* When we have sinned, thy dearness hath reason to aggravate our sorrows; but when we have sorrowed, our Faith hath no less reason to uphold us from despairing: Even yet we are Brethren. Brethren in thee, O Saviour, who art ascending for us; in thee, who hast made thy Father ours, thy God our God. He is thy Father by eternall Generation, our Father by his gracious Adoption; thy God by Unity of Essence, our God by his Grace and Election.

It is this propriety wherein our life and happiness consisteth: They are weak comforts that can be raised from the apprehension of thy generall Mercies. What were I the better, O Saviour, that God were thy Father, if he be not mine? Oh do thou give me a particular sense of my interest in thee, and thy goodness to me. Bring thou thy self home to me, and let me find that I have a God and Saviour of my own.

It is fit I should mark thy order; First, *my Father*, then, *yours.* Even so, Lord, He is first thine, and in thine onely right ours. It is in thee that we are adopted, it is in thee that we are elected; without thee, God is not onely a stranger, but an enemy to us. Thou onely canst make us free, thou onely canst make us Sons. Let me be found in thee, and I cannot fail of a Father in Heaven.

With what joy did *Mary* receive this errand? with what joy did the Disciples welcome it from her? Here was good news from a far Country, even as far as the utmost regions of Death.

Those Disciples whose flight scattered them upon their Master's apprehension, are now, at night, like a dispersed Covy met together by their mutuall call: their assembly is secret; when the light was shut in, *when the doors were shut up.* Still were they fearfull, still were the *Jews* malicious. The assured tidings of their Master's Resurrection and Life hath filled their hearts with joy and wonder. Whilst their thoughts and speech are taken up with so happy a subject, his miraculous and sudden presence bids their senses be witnesses of his reviving and their happiness. *When the doors were shut where the Disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.* O Saviour, how thou camest in thither I wonder, I inquire not: I know not what a Glorified body can doe; I know there is nothing that thou canst not doe. Had not thine entrance been recorded for strange and supernaturall, why was thy standing in the midst noted before thy passage into the room? why were the doors said to be shut whilst thou camest in? why were thy Disciples amazed to see thee ere they heard thee? Doubtless; they that once before took thee for a Spirit when thou didst walk upon the waters, could not but be astonished to see thee whilst the doors were barred (without any noise of thine entrance) to stand in the midst: well might they think thou couldst not thus be there, if thou wert not the God of Spirits. There might seem more scruple of thy realty then of thy power: and therefore, after thy wonted greeting, thou shewest them thy hands and thy feet, stamped with the impressions of thy late sufferings. Thy respiration shall argue the truth of thy life. Thou breathest on them as a Man, thou givest them thy Spirit as a God; and as God and Man thou sendest them on the great errand of thy Gospel.

All the mists of their doubts are now dispelled, the Sun breaks out clear. *They were glad when they had seen the Lord.* Had they known thee for no other then a meer man,

man, this re-appearance could not but have affrighted them; since till now by thine Almighty power this was never done, that the long-since dead rose out of their graves, and appeared unto many : But when they recounted the miraculous works that thou hadst done, and thought of *Lazarus* so lately raised, thine approved Deity gave them confidence, and thy presence joy.

We cannot but be losers by our absence from holy Assemblies. Where wert thou, O *Thomas*, when the rest of that Sacred Family were met together? Had thy fear put thee to so long a flight, that as yet thou wert not returned to thy fellows? or didst thou suffer other occasions to detain thee from this happiness? Now for the time thou missest that Divine breath which so comfortably inspired the rest; now thou art suffered to fall into that weak distrust which thy presence had prevented. They told thee, *We have seen the Lord*; was not this enough? would no eyes serve thee but thy own? were thy ears to no use for thy Faith? *Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* Suspicious man! who is the worse for that? whose is the loss if thou believe not? Is there no certainty but in thine own senses? Why were not so many and so holy eyes and tongues as credible as thine own hands and eyes? How little wert thou yet acquainted with the ways of Faith? *Faith comes by hearing.* These are the tongues that must win the whole world to an assent; and durst thou the first man detrect to yield? Why was that word so hard to pass? Had not that thy Divine Master foretold thee with the rest that he must be crucified, and the third day rise again? Is any thing related to be done but that which was fore-promised? any thing beyond the sphere of Divine Omnipotence? Go then, and please thy self in thine over-wise incredulity, whilst thy fellows are happy in believing.

It is a whole week that *Thomas* rests in this sullen unbelief;

lief; in all which time doubtless his ears were beaten with the many constant assertions of the holy Women, (the first witnesses of the Resurrection,) as also of the two Disciples walking to *Emmaus*, (whose hearts burning within them, had set their tongues on fire in a zealous relation of those happy occurrences,) with the assured reports of the rising and re-appearance of many Saints in attendance of the Lord and giver of life: yet still he struggles with his own distrust, and stiffly suspends his belief to that truth whereof he cannot deny himself enough convinced. As all bodies are not equally apt to be wrought upon by the same Medicine, so are not all Souls by the same means of Faith; one is refractory, whilst others are pliable. O Saviour, how justly mightest thou have left this man to his own pertinacy? whom could he have thank'd if he had perished in his unbelief? But, O thou good Shepherd of *Israel*, that couldst be content to leave the ninety and nine to go fetch one stray in the wilderness, how carefull wert thou to reduce this straggler to his fellows? Right so were thy Disciples re-assembled, such was the season, the place the same, so were the doors shut up, when (that unbelieving Disciple being now present with the rest) thou so camest in, so stoodst in the midst, so shewedst thy hands and feet; and singling out thy incredulous client, invitest his eyes to see, and his fingers to handle thine hands, and his hand to be thrust into thy side, that he might not be faithless, but faithfull.

Blessed *Jesu*, how thou pitiest the errors and infirmities of thy servants? Even when we are froward in our misconceits, and worthy of nothing but desertion, how thou followest us, and overtakest us with mercy; and in thine abundant compassion wilt reclaim and save us, when either we meant not or would not? By how much more unworthy those eyes and hands were to see and touch that immortal and glorious Body, by so much more wonderfull was thy Goodness in condescending to satisfy that curious Infidelity.

delity. Neither do I hear thee so much as to chide that weak obstinacy. It was not long since thou didst sharply take up the two Disciples that walk'd to *Emmans*, *O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken*; but this was under the disguise of an unknown traveller, upon the way, when they were alone: Now thou speakest with thine own tongue, before all thy Disciples; in stead of rebuking, thou onely exhortest, *Be not faithless, but faithfull.*

Behold, thy Mercy no less then thy Power hath melted the congealed heart of thy unbelieving follower. *Then Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.* I do not hear that, when it came to the issue, *Thomas* employed his hands in this triall: his eyes were now sufficient assurance; the sense of his Master's Omniscience in this particular challenge of him spared (perhaps) the labour of a farther disquisition. And now how happily was that doubt bestowed, which brought forth so faithfull a confession, *My Lord, my God?*

I hear not such a word from those that believed. It was well for us, it was well for thee, *O Thomas*, that thou distrustedst: else, neither had the world received so perfect an evidence of that Resurrection whereon all our Salvation dependeth; neither hadst thou yielded so pregnant and divine an astipulation to thy Blessed Saviour. Now thou dost not onely profess his Resurrection, but his Godhead too, and thy happy interest in both. And now, if *they be blessed that have not seen, and yet believed*; blessed art thou also, who having seen, hast thus believed: and blessed be thou, *O God*, who knowest how to make advantage of the infirmities of thy chosen, for the promoting of their Salvation, the confirmation of thy Church, the glory of thine own Name. *Amen.*

L I.

The Ascension.

IT stood not with thy purpose, O Saviour, to ascend immediately from thy grave into Heaven; thou meantest to take the earth in thy way; not for a sudden passage, but for a leisurely conversation. Upon thine Easter-day thou spakest of thine Ascension; but thou wouldst have forty days interposed. Hadst thou meerly respected thine own Glory, thou hadst instantly changed thy grave for thy Paradise; for so much the sooner hadst thou been possessed of thy Father's joy; we would not continue in a Dungeon, when we might be in a Palace: but thou, who for our sakes vouchsafedst to descend from Heaven to earth, wouldst now in the upshot have a gracious regard to us in thy return.

Thy Death had troubled the hearts of many Disciples, who thought that condition too mean to be compatible with the glory of the *Messiah*; and thoughts of diffidence were apt to seize upon the holiest breasts. So long therefore wouldst thou hold footing upon earth, till the world were fully convinced of the infallible evidences of thy Resurrection; of all which time thou onely canst give an account: it was not for flesh and blood to trace the ways of Immortality; neither was our frail, corruptible, sinfull nature a meet companion for thy now-glorified Humanity; the glorious Angels of Heaven were now thy fittest attendents. But yet how oft did it please thee graciously to impart thy self this while unto men; and not onely to appear unto thy Disciples, but to renew unto them the familiar forms of thy

thy wonted conversation, in conferring, walking, eating with them? And now when thou drewest near to thy last parting, thou, who hadst many times shewed thy self before to thy severall Disciples, thoughtest meet to assemble them all together, for an universall valediction.

Who can be too rigorous in censuring the ignorances of well-meaning Christians, when he sees the domestick Followers of *Christ*, even after his Resurrection, mistake the main End of his coming in the flesh? *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* They saw their Master now out of the reach of all *Jewish* envy; they saw his power illimited and irresistible; they saw him stay so long upon earth, that they might imagine he meant to fix his abode there; and what should he doe there, but reign? and wherefore should they be now assembled, but for the choice and distribution of Offices, and for the ordering of the affairs of that state which was now to be vindicated? Oh weak thoughts of well-instructed Disciples! What should an Heavenly body doe in an earthly throne? How should a spirituall life be employed in secular cares? How poor a business is the Temporall Kingdom of *Israel* for the King of Heaven? And even yet, O Blessed Saviour, I do not hear thee sharply controll this erroneous conceit of thy mistaken Followers; thy mild correction insists rather upon the time, then the misconceived substance of that restoration. It was thy gracious purpose that thy Spirit should by degrees rectify their judgments, and illuminate them with thy Divine truths; in the mean time it was sufficient to raise up their hearts to an expectation of that Holy Ghost, which should shortly lead them into all needfull and requisite verities. And now, with a gracious promise of that Spirit of thine, with a carefull charge renewed unto thy Disciples for the promulgation of thy Gospel, with an Heavenly Benediction of all

thine acclaiming attendents, thou takest leave of earth. *When he had spoken these things, whilst they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Oh happy parting, fit for the Saviour of mankind, answerable to that Divine conversation, to that succeeding Glory! O Blessed *Jesus*, let me so far imitate thee; as to depart hence with a blessing in my mouth; let my Soul, when it is stepping over the threshold of Heaven, leave behind it a legacy of Peace and Happiness.

It was from the mount of Olives that thou tookest thy rise into Heaven. Thou mightest have ascended from the valley, all the globe of earth was alike to thee: but since thou wert to mount upward, thou wouldst take so much advantage as that stair of ground would afford thee; thou wouldst not use the help of a Miracle in that wherein Nature offered her ordinary service. What difficulty had it been for thee to have styeed up from the very center of earth? But since thou hadst made hills so much nearer unto Heaven, thou wouldest not neglect the benefit of thine own Creation. Where we have common helps, we may not depend upon Supernaturall provisions; we may not strain the Divine Providence to the supply of our negligence, or the humouring of our presumption. Thou that couldst alwaies have walked on the Sea, wouldst walk so but once, when thou wantedst shipping: thou, to whom the highest mountains were but valleys, wouldst walk up to an hill to ascend thence into Heaven. O God, teach me to bless thee for means, when I have them; and to trust thee for means, when I have them not; yea to trust to thee without means, when I have no hope of them.

What Hill was this thou chofest but the mount of Olives? Thy Pulpit shall I call it, or thine Oratory? The place from whence thou hadst went to showr down thine Heavenly Doctrine upon the hearers; the place whence thou hadst went to send up thy Prayers unto thy Heavenly Father; the place that shared with the Temple for both:

both : In the day-time thou wert preaching in the Temple, in the night praying in the mount of Olives. On this very hill was the bloody sweat of thine Agony ; now is it the mount of thy Triumph. From this mount of Olives did flow that oyl of gladness wherewith thy Church is everlastingly refreshed. That God that uses to punish us in the same kind wherein we have offended, retributes also to us in the same kind and circumstances wherein we have been afflicted. To us also, O Saviour, even to us thy unworthy members dost thou seasonably vouchsafe to give a proportionable joy to our heaviness, laughter to our mourning, glory to contempt and shame. Our agonies shall be answered with exaltation.

Whither then, O Blessed *Jesu*, whither didst thou ascend ? whither but home into thine Heaven ? From the mountain wert thou taken up ; and what but Heaven is above the hills ? Lo, these are those mountains of spices which thy Spouse, the Church, long since desired thee to climb. Thou hast now climbed up that infinite steepness, and hast left all sublimity below thee. Already hadst thou approved thy self the Lord and commander of Earth, of Sea, of Hell. The Earth confess'd thee her Lord, when at thy voice she rendered thee thy *Lazarus* ; when she shook at thy Passion, and gave up her dead Saints : The Sea acknowledged thee, in that it became a pavement to thy feet and (at thy command) to the feet of thy Disciple ; in that it became thy treasury for thy Tribute-money : Hell found and acknowledged thee, in that thou conqueredst all the powers of darkness ; even him that had the power of death, the Devil. It now onely remained that, as the Lord of the Air, thou shouldst pass through all the regions of that yielding element ; and, as Lord of Heaven, thou shouldst pass through all the glorious contignations thereof ; that so *every knee might bow to thee both in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the earth.*

Thou hadst an everlasting right to that Heaven that should

should be, an undoubted possession of it ever since it was ; yea even whilst thou didst cry and spraul in the Cratch, whilst thou didst hang upon the Cross, whilst thou wert sealed up in thy Grave : but thine Humane nature had not taken actuall possession of it till now. Like as it was in thy true type, *David*, he had right to the Kingdom of *Israel* immediately upon his anointing ; but yet many an hard brunt did he pass ere he had the full possession of it in his ascent to *Hebron*. I see now, O Blessed *Jesu*, I see where thou art ; even far above all Heavens, at the right hand of thy Father's Glory. This is the far country into which the Nobleman went to receive for himself a Kingdom ; far off to us, to thee near, yea intrinsecall. Oh do thou raise up my Heart thither to thee ; place thou my Affections upon thee above, and teach me therefore to love Heaven because thou art there.

How then, O Blessed Saviour, how didst thou ascend ? *Whilst they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.* So wast thou taken up, as that the act was thine own, the power of the act none but thine. Thou that descendedst wast the same that ascendedst : as in thy descent there was no use of any power or will but thine own, no more was there in thine ascent. Still and ever wert thou the Master of thine own acts. Thou laidst down thy own life, no man took it from thee ; Thou raisedst up thy self from death, no hand did or could help thee ; Thou carriedst up thine own glorified flesh, and placedst it in Heaven. The Angels did attend thee, they did not aid thee : whence had they their strength but from thee ? *Elias* ascended to Heaven, but he was fetch'd up in a chariot of fire ; that it might appear hence, that man had need of others helps ; who else could not of himself so much as lift up himself to the Aiery Heaven, much less to the Emphyreall. But thou, our Redeemer, needest no chariot, no carriage of Angels : thou art the Authour of life and motion ; they move in and from thee. As thou therefore didst move thy self upward,

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so, by the same Divine power, thou wilt raise us up to the participation of thy Glory. These *vile bodies shall be made like to thy glorious body, according to the working whereby thou art able to subdue all things unto thy self.*

Elias had but one witness of his rapture into Heaven : *S. Paul* had none, no not himself ; for, *whether in the body, or out of the body,* he knew not. Thou, O Blessed *Jesu,* wouldst neither have all eyes witnesses of thine Ascension, nor yet too few. As after thy Resurrection thou didst not set thy self upon the pinnacle of the Temple, nor yet publicly shew thy self within it, as making thy presence too cheap ; but madest choice of those eyes whom thou wouldst bless with the sight of thee ; thou wert seen indeed of five hundred at once, but they were Brethren : So in thine Ascension, thou didst not carry all *Jerusalem* promiscuously forth with thee to see thy glorious departure, but onely that selected company of thy Disciples which had attended thee in thy life. Those who immediately upon thine ascending returned to *Jerusalem,* were an hundred and twenty persons : a competent number of witnesses, to verify that thy miraculous and triumphant passage into thy Glory. Lo, those onely were thought worthy to behold thy majesticall Ascent, which had been partners with thee in thy Humiliation. Still thou wilt have it thus with us, O Saviour, and we embrace the condition : if we will converse with thee in thy lowly estate here upon earth, wading with thee through contempt and manifold afflictions, we shall be made happy with the sight and communion of thy Glory above.

O my Soul, be thou now (if ever) ravished with the contemplation of this comfortable and blessed farewell of thy Saviour. What a sight was this? how full of joyfull assurance, of spirituall consolation? Methinks I see it still with their eyes, how thou my glorious Saviour didst leisurely and insensibly rise up from thine *Olivet,* taking leave of thine acclaiming Disciples now left below thee, with gracious eyes,

with Heavenly benedictions. Methinks I see how they followed thee with eager and longing eyes, with arms lifted up, as if they had wished them winged to have soared up after thee. And if *Eliab* gave assurance to his servant *Elisha*, that if he should behold him in that rapture, his Master's Spirit should be doubled upon him; what an accession of the spirit of joy and confidence must needs be to thy happy Disciples in seeing thee thus gradually rising up to thy Heaven? Oh how unwillingly did their intentive eyes let go so Blessed an Object! How unwelcome was that Cloud that interposed it self betwixt thee and them, and, closing up it self, left onely a glorious splendour behind it, as the bright track of thine Ascension? Of old here below the Glory of the Lord appeared in the Cloud; now afar off in the sky the Cloud intercepted this Heavenly Glory; if distance did not rather doe it, then that bright meteor. Their eyes attended thee on thy way so far as their beams would reach; when they could goe no farther, the Cloud received thee. Lo, yet even that very screen whereby thou wert taken off from all earthly view was no other then glorious: how much rather do all the beholders fix their sight upon that Cloud, then upon the best piece of the Firmament? Never was the Sun it self gazed on with so much intention. With what long looks, with what astonished acclamations did these transported beholders follow thee their ascending Saviour? as if they would have look'd through that Cloud and that Heaven that hid thee from them.

But oh, what tongue of the highest Archangel of Heaven can express the welcome of thee the King of Glory into those Blessed Regions of Immortality? Surely the Empyreall Heaven never resounded with so much joy: *God ascended with jubilation, and the Lord with the sound of the Trumpet.* It is not for us weak and finite creatures, to wish to conceive those incomprehensible, spirituall, Divine gratulations that the Glorious Trinity gave to the victo-
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rious and now-glorified Humane nature. Certainly, if *when he brought his onely-begotten Son into the world, he said, Let all the Angels worship him*; much more now that he *ascends on high, and hath led captivity captive, hath he given him a Name above all names, that at the Name of JESUS all knees should bow*. And if the Holy Angels did so carol at his Birth, in the very entrance into that estate of Humiliation and infirmity; with what triumph did they receive him now returning from the perfect achievement of Man's Redemption? And if when his type had vanquished *Goliath*, and carried the head into *Jerusalem*, the damsels came forth to meet him with dances and timbrels; how shall we think those Angelicall Spirits triumphed in meeting of the great Conquerour of Hell and Death? How did they sing, *Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in*?

Surely, as he shall come, so he went; and *behold he shall come with thousands of his Holy ones; thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand thousands stood before him*: From all whom methinks I hear that blessed applause, *Worthy is the Lamb that was killed, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise: Praise, and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore*. And why dost not thou, O my Soul, help to bear thy part with that happy Quire of Heaven? Why art not thou rapt out of my bosome with an ecstasy of joy, to see this Humane nature of ours exalted above all the Powers of Heaven, adored of Angels, Archangels, Cherubin, Seraphim, and all those mighty and glorious Spirits, and *sitting there crowned with infinite Glory and Majesty*?

Although little would it avail thee that our Nature is thus honoured, if the benefit of this Ascension did not reflect upon thee. How many are miserable enough in themselves, notwithstanding the Glory of their humane nature in *Christ*? None but those that are found in him are the

happier by him : who but the Members are the better for the glory of the Head ? O Saviour, how should our weakness have ever hoped to climb into Heaven, if thou hadst not gone before and made way for us ? It is for us that thou the fore-runner art entred in : Now thy Church hath her wish, *Draw me, and I shall run after thee.* Even so, O Blessed *Jesu*, how ambitiously should we follow thee with the paces of Love and Faith, and aspire towards thy Glory ? Thou that art *the way*, hast made the way to thy self and us : *Thou didst humble thy self, and becamest obedient to the death, even to the death of the Cross.* Therefore hath God also highly exalted thee ; and upon the same terms will not fail to advance us : we see thy track before us, of Humility and Obedience. O teach me to follow thee in the roughest ways of Obedience, in the bloody paths of Death, that I may at last overtake thee in those high steps of Immortality.

Amongst those millions of Angels that attended this triumphant Ascension of thine, O Saviour, some are appointed to this lower station, to comfort thine astonished Disciples, in the certain assurance of thy no-less-glorious Return ; *Two men stood by them in white apparell.* They stood by them, they were not of them ; they seemed Men, they were Angels : *Men* for their familiarity ; *two*, for more certainty of testimony ; *in white*, for the joy of thine Ascension.

The Angels formerly celebrated thy Nativity with Songs ; but we do not find they then appeared in white : thou wert then to undergoe much sorrow, many conflicts ; it was the vale of tears into which thou wert come down. So soon as thou wert risen, the women saw an Angel in the form of a young man, cloathed in white ; and now, so soon as thou art ascended, *Two men cloathed in white* stand by thy Disciples : thy task was now done, thy victory achieved, and nothing remained but a Crown, which was now set upon thy Head. Justly therefore were those blessed Angels suited with the robes of light and joy. And why should our garments be of any other colour ? why should
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oyl be wanting to our heads, when the eyes of our Faith see thee thus ascended? It is for us, O Saviour, that thou art gone to prepare a place in those celestially mansions; it is for us that thou sittest at the right hand of Majesty. It is a piece of thy Divine Prayer to thy Father, that *those whom he hath given thee, may be with thee.* To every bleeding Soul thou saiest still as thou didst to Peter, *Whither I goe thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me hereafter.* In assured hope of this Glory, why do I not rejoyce, and beforehand walk in white with thine Angels, that at the last I may walk with thee in white?

Little would the presence of these Angels have availed, if they had not been heard as well as seen. They stand not silent therefore, but, directing their speech to the amazed beholders, say, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into Heaven?* What a question was this? Could any of those two hundred and forty eyes have power to turn themselves off to any other Object then that Cloud, and that point of Heaven where they left their ascended Saviour? Surely every one of them were so fixed, that had not the speech of these Angels called them off, there they had set up their rest till the darkness of night had interposed. Pardon me, O ye Blessed Angels; had I been there with them, I should also have been unwilling to have mine eyes pull'd off from that dear prospect, and diverted unto you. Never could they have gazed so happily as now. If but some Great man be advanced to Honour over our heads, how apt we are to stand at a gaze, and to eye him as some strange meteor? Let the Sun but shine a little upon these Dials, how are they look'd at by all passengers? Yet, alas! what can earthly advancement make us other then we are, dust and ashes; which the higher it is blown, the more it is scattered? Oh how worthy is the King of Glory to command our eyes now in the highest pitch of his Heavenly exaltation? Lord, I can never look enough at the place where thou art; but what eye could be satisfied with seeing the way that thou wentest?

It was not the purpose of these Angels to check the long looks of these faithfull Disciples after their ascended Master; it was onely a change of Eyes that they intended, of Carnall for Spirituall, of the eye of Sense for the eye of Faith. *This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him goe into Heaven.* Look not after him, O ye weak Disciples, as so departed that ye shall see him no more; if he be gone, yet he is not lost; those Heavens that received him shall restore him; neither can those Blessed mansions decrease his Glory. Ye have seen him ascend upon the chariot of a bright Cloud; and in the clouds of Heaven ye shall see him descend again to his last Judgment. He is gone: can it trouble you to know you have an Advocate in Heaven? Strive not now so much to exercise your bodily eyes in looking after him, as the eyes of your Souls in looking for him.

Ye cannot, O ye Blessed Spirits, wish other then well to mankind. How happy a diversion of eyes and thoughts is this that you advise? If it be our sorrow to part with our Saviour, yet to part with him into Heaven it is our comfort and felicity: if his absence could be grievous, his return shall be happy and glorious.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. In the mean while it is not Heaven that can keep thee from me, it is not Earth that can keep me from thee. Raise thou up my Soul to a life of Faith with thee: let me ever enjoy thy conversation, whilst I expect thy return.

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