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THE HEAVENLY TRADE

THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE WELL
IN IMPOVERISHING TIMES

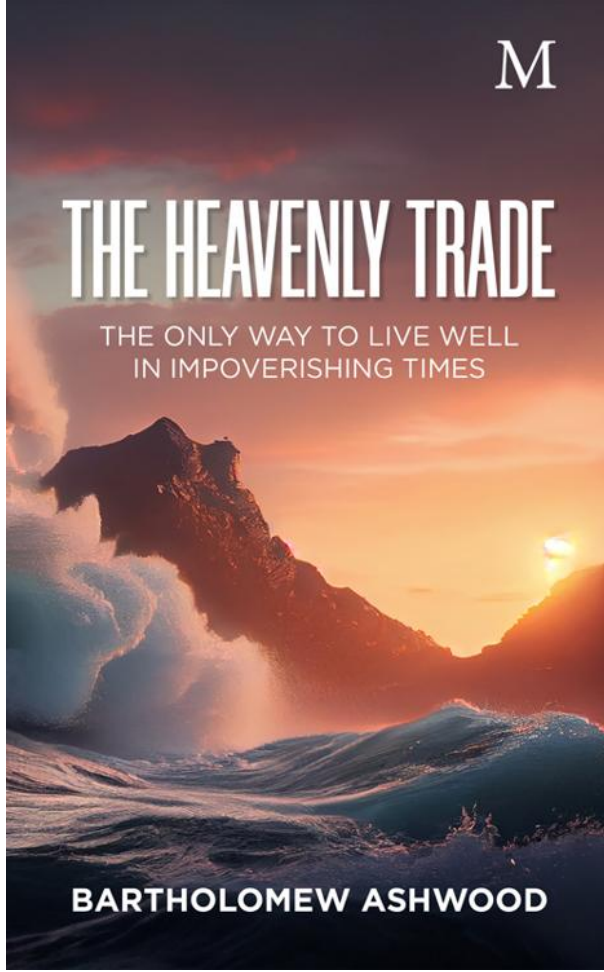
BARTHOLOMEW ASHWOOD

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The Heavenly Trade

The only way to live well in impoverishing times.

A Discourse occasioned from the decay of earthly Trades, and visible wastes of Practical Piety in the day we live in, offering Arguments and Counsels to all, towards a speedy revival of dying Godliness and timely prevention of the dangerous issues thereof impending on us.

By BARTHOLOMEW ASHWOOD Minister of the Gospel.

Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,

Joh. 6. 27.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you,

Matth. 6. 33.

London, Printed for Samuel Lee near Pope's Head Alley, over against the Church in Lombard-street,
1678.

This text has been initially updated from EEBO-TCP by Project Puritas (Logan West, with David Jonescue and Alex Sarrouf.) www.puritansearch.org

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TO MY HONORED FRIEND

Mr. Jeremy Holwey, Merchant in BRISTOL.

Sir,

Both Equity and Interest do give you a peculiar claim to this offspring of my weak Labors, it being born in your House, and drawing its first breath in your famous City. 'Twas with you I had the occasion, and from your Self the practical encouragement to treat on this Subject; while under your roof I enjoyed for divers weeks the advantage of your converse, and beheld in your expressions and

conversation a fair display of this Heavenly Trade. This cherished my hopes that a discourse of this nature might find or help to make more such Traders in your August and Merchandizing City: A place (among its many Ornaments) made happy with Gospel enjoyments, and the lovers of Truth and Peace. 'It is Religion is the honor and prosperity of a People, It lays their foundation with Agates, and makes their borders of pleasant stones, Isa. 54. 'It is like the Crown of Solomon, with which his Mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart, Cant. 3. 11. This gives them Peace within their walls, and Prosperity within their Palaces, Psal. 122. 7. It brings down a blessing on their Basket and Stores, fills their Chambers with all precious and pleasant riches, Prov. 24. 4. And decay in this Heavenly Trade, is doubtless one reason of those wastes in men's earthly Trades: There is no such way for men to thrive in their own interests, as to be faithful to God's interest; As 'twas said of Caesar, that by setting up Pompey's Image, he established his own, whereas a decay of Godliness brings a Moth on men's earthly Trades also: Hos, 5. 11, 12, Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the Commandment, therefore will I be unto Ephraim a Moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness. Gregory gives this reason why Dives was tormented in his Tongue, because he talked much of Religion, but practiced little, *Verba legis in ore tenuit quae opere servare Contempsit*. We live in an age of much talking of God, but of little walking with God; Men's tongues are tipped with Heaven, but their hearts and feet sunk into the World, and are full of Pride, Vanity, and Deceit. What was said of Diogenes Synopensis, That in Opinion he was a Stoic, but in Conversation an Epicure, may be sadly reflected on many Professors in this Age, who espouse strict Principles, but lead loose Lives, and only Treat for Heaven, but Trade for Earth. But Sir, You have not so learned Christ, or received this Spirit which is of the world; but that which is of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. Your devotedness to

the Lord making your earthly Interests subservient to things above, with your Zeal, Courage, and Constancy in the way of God, and natural care for the things of his Glory, do bespeak you to be a Trader of another Country, whose work and wages are above; And certainly whatever men think, a walking with God in his appointments, and a conscientious care in everything to please him, will one day appear to be the greatest interest even in their eyes who now despise it; neither is there at present anything in the ways of God which Souls have cause to be ashamed of, however clothed with Calumny and Scorn by men; nor can they who walk in them in Truth, be deprived of any real interest by the utmost severity of those that would run them down, And were there no other Argument to persuade men to the choice and pursuit of Godliness, this were sufficient, even that relief gracious Souls find from a reflection on their Uprightness, to bear them up under their greatest sufferings; yea, that serenity, peace, and sweet acquiescence of Spirit which sincerity affords them under the most dreadful issues which divine pleasure may allot them here. It must needs set Religion above all other Interests (its Enemies themselves being Judges, if they would be rational) that the worst things of Holiness, even then when Believers are under the saddest Circumstances, are chosen and preferred by them above the best things of the world; yea, they are thought a good bargain when purchased with their greatest Sufferings. Surely humor will not engage such who know the usefulness of earthly Comforts, and have least reason to be prodigal of them, to expose themselves, and their dearest concerns in the world unto ruin, but for what they are persuaded, is far better. Hebr. 10. 34. Nor can it be thought obstinacy or hypocrisy in those who know their own hearts, and the terrors of the Lord, to persist in those ways that would cost them their earthly All, and lay them open to divine wrath too, should they be false and disobedient. Certainly, did not prejudice and passion blind men's eyes, the calm exercise of their own light would restrain them from

such an uncharitable censure of those that desire to fear God, though they walk in some ways different from their understanding, while they labor to approve their integrity to God and men, and are found faithful to that measure of light they have received. But possibly this Piece may not fall into such hands, or be permitted long under their eye: My hopes, at least my desires are, that it may prosper with those who profess better things; And if it shall please the Lord (who sometimes uses clay and spittle, and Goats hair, and counts the things that are not as if they were) to make this of any service to your Self and Family, and unto those who profess his Name in your City, for whom I have so high respect in the Lord, it will abundantly compensate the labor, and answer the design of him who is and desires to approve himself.

Sir,

Your Servant in Christ Jesus Barthol. Ashwood.

TO THE READERS,

Especially Those who are the more peculiar Objects of my Care, Love and Labors.

Notwithstanding the high Pretensions to Light and Wisdom in the Times we live in beyond some former Ages, there is no small measure of Soul darkness fallen upon us in this Evening-part of our Gospel day, Isa. 42. 19, 20. Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and

blind as the Lord's servant? seeing many things but thou observest not: opening the ear, but he heareth not. Were not a Veil on men's minds, could it possibly be that CHRIST should be so little precious in this Day of revelation and Land of visions in which we live? Was there ever a Nation in the World to whom Christ hath been so unveiled and manifestly held forth Crucified before their eyes? and yet not to know the Day of their visitation and the things of their peace, be-speaks shameful Ignorance. Is not this a manifest Evidence of men's Darkness and folly, to be fondly taken with Airy Notions and vain Speculations, and all the while neglect that Wisdom which maketh wise to salvation, to leave the Fire of the Sanctuary, and sit down by Sparks of their own kindling: That having a Kingdom before them which cannot be shaken, and an Inheritance that fadeth not away reserved in the heavens; they should turn again to the beggarly Elements of this world, loathing their Manna and Angels food, and longing again for the Onions and Garlic they had vomited up; to leave tried Gold for that which perisheth; to let Heaven drop out of their hands, and hug the World in their hearts; to neglect that Merchandise which brings in unsearchable riches, and drive a Trade for such Goods whose fashion passeth away: Do plainly argue Ignorance and folly. Are not the silver streams of Jordan better than the muddy waters of Assyria, and our Rock above the worldlings Sandy bottoms (they themselves being Judges?) and yet to lose those pleasant streams for that filthy puddle, is folly indeed. Will Eagles stoop to Flies? Can Souls who have ascended into the light of the Lord, and seen the things that differ, and had acquaintance with things above upon choice, come down again and prey upon the Carrion Comforts and Interests of a dying World? O no. Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire? Oh foolish people and unwise to be unmindful of the Rock that begat them, to leave the Snow of Lebanon, to let down such a gainful Trade as Holiness is, that they may pursue a Soul-cheating, starving, damning World:

demonstrates folly and madness in such as have the knowledge or hopes of better things: are ye so foolish having begun in the spirit; are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal. 3. 3. To obviate or retrieve this folly is the design of this ensuing Discourse, which comes not in the gaudy Dress of curious Art, or in the Excellency of man's wisdom, but in the plainness and demonstration of the truth as it is in Jesus. I am not ignorant that Books have their Fashions as well as men, and Discourses that come not forth in the Modish Garb laced with Elegancy and stuffed with Lofty strains, scarce meet with a Look except of Scorn and Contempt from the Wits of this Day: But I love not to follow them who darken counsel by words, and by their sublime Speculations and abstruse Notions, lead men into Clouds of their own creating, and while they show Themselves lose their Readers. There are many tricks and devices (saith Mr. Dod) that some men use in Preaching, (which we may apply also to Writing) but it seldom does good; the pure Gospel and that Preaching which the World counts foolishness, is that which works most kindly. Christ's own Weapons are the fittest for his own service, and when there is least of man in God's work, then usually does there most of God appear. The business of this Book is not to feed thy Curiosity, but to find out thy Conscience, and the likeliest way to That is through the plains of Intelligible truth. I cannot expect that Discourse should lead others towards Heaven, that has not its self drained and refined from Earth: Expect not in this anything that may please thy carnal mind, but what may profit thy teachable and obedient Soul; and before thou ascendest the Throne to judge it, take the Balance of the Sanctuary and weigh it: Be advised to go beyond such Readers who only view the Title, read the Epistle, glance a little on the Book, and if they find not something singular and pleasing their curious Fancy, lay it aside; this shows a full Stomach but an empty Soul, and is a Practice that overturns the Writers pains and the Readers profit; be persuaded to read it thoroughly and

impartially, and weigh it seriously, and thou mayest find something that concerns either thy Understanding, Affection, Conscience, or Conversation.

I have chosen to prosecute the Metaphor of (Trading) throughout this Discourse, having a principal respect to that sort of persons in the design of this Book, and the better to insinuate into the mind of ordinary Christians the knowledge of heavenly things, of men's duties, neglects and backsliding. If thou art one who never madest a profession of God farther than blindness, formality or superstition might lead thee; and a stranger to this great pleasant and gainful Trade of Godliness, here thou mayest find Arguments to persuade thee to this rational and necessary Undertaking in order to Life and Salvation, Grace and Glory, with Counsel and Instructions how thou mayest attain to this high and heavenly Calling.

If thou be one who drivest furiously after the World, pursuing thy earthly Interest with greediness, neglecting the things that concern thy peace, and subjecting the Concerns of Heaven and thy immortal Soul to the poor and perishing Trifles of this World; here thou wilt find reasons to convince thee of that folly, and helps to loosen thy heart from that ensnaring Soul ruining bondage.

If thou meetest with Rebukes upon thy earthly Interests, and crosses on thy Affairs and undertakings in the World, this Book will help thee to find out the Cause of thy Disappointments, and those consuming Moths on thy Estate, and Instruct thee to get Honey out of these Rods, good from these evils, and how to Comport with Divine ends, and thy own Advantages by such Dispensations.

Hast thou made a Profession of Godliness, and formerly driven this Heavenly Trade to Advantage, but art now fallen back and decayed in thy Spiritual substance, and become poor in thy Inward man and

towards God? here mayest thou find the Discoveries and Evidences of a backsliding Soul, with the Causes of it: thou wilt also meet with Awakening Considerations to Affect and Afflict thy heart with the sense of thy evil Case: Here also mayest thou know whether thy Decays are curable, and what course thou mayest take to get out of thy languishing estate.

Art thou one that doest profess this Heavenly Trade? this Piece will tell thee what thy work is, and wherein this Employment lies; what are the Important duties of Piety to be driven on every Day, with Directions and Rules about it.

If thou art one who keepest up this Trade for Heaven and thriveest therein, here hast thou marks of a Prosperous Trade in Godliness, and several Doubts cleared up about thy Soul-thriving's, with those Important Duties opened which this Peculiar Mercy calls for: Gather out of this Garden what Physic or Food thou needest, and Apply and Improve it, praying for the Assistance of that Spirit that hath been frequently and solemnly begged both for the Forming and Blessing of this Discourse unto all that read it.

You who have been Hearers of this Subject, though in somewhat different Expressions suited to your Capacity and Advantage in the Delivery of it, have reason above others to Receive and Improve this: Message Twice sent unto you.

But you Especially my dear Friends, the Care of whose Souls is upon me, for whose sake chiefly these Truths were at first Delivered, and are now made Public have the most obliging reasons to get them Copied out upon your Hearts and in your Lives. To you Firstly, more Especially, yea, most Affectionately was and is this Word of salvation sent and presented again to your View, that you might have these things abiding with you, and that they might live in your Eye which

have founded in your Ear, and be speaking to you when I shall be removed out of your sight, and be beyond all Capacity to serve your precious and immortal Souls, that when I can plead no more for God or with you, I may in this be speaking to you and others in the behalf of Christ, and glorious though despised Holiness. This has been the prevailing Argument with me to discover my weakness to the World, and expose myself to the censure or scorn of some.

I have the greatest reason to expect from you the Entertainment of these Truths, who have chosen and received me in the Lord, to declare the Gospel of his Son to you: You also have known my Labors, Infirmities and Afflictions with you and for your sake; that for Twenty years space I have served you in the Gospel, in reproach, wants, weaknesses; dangers and sufferings, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God: yea. being so affectionately desirous of you, I have been willing to have imparted to you not the Gospel of God only, but also my own Soul. Because you were dear unto me, you know and have acknowledged the suitableness of this Subject unto your own Cases, and how evidently the condition of most of you is opened here and suited, by the convictions, counsels, reprehensions, & consolations of this discourse; there are some among you that I am jealous of with a godly jealousy, lest I should have labored in vain for you, and your minds be corrupted from the simplicity of the Gospel through the temptations of this present world: I have often cried aloud in your ears against the sin, and have warned you of the danger of an earthly spirit and conversation, and do tell you now even weeping, that such are enemies to the Cross of Christ, who mind earthly things, until you are crucified to the world, you have no saving benefit of the cross of Christ, or can ever behold the face of God in heaven, until you are redeemed from the earth; all your

Profession, Parts, Duties and Enjoyments will be but so many Witnesses against you, if after all you are lovers of this present World: Coveting to be rich will also make your Souls poor, and deprive you of the refreshments of his presence and consolations of his blessed spirit, and will be a manifest evidence that you have little of those pleasures that are from above. 'Twas said of pious Mr. Bain, That he sought not great matters in the World, being taken up with comforts and griefs to which the World was a stranger. The more a Soul converses in heaven and lives upon the first fruits of the other world, the less will he be taken with things below: when Abraham came to live by faith, and in a view of that City whose Maker and Builder is God, the Plains of Sodom and Spoils of Canaan were to him but mean things; I never cared much for the world (saith one) since I came to know better things. You have tasted that the Lord is gracious; you have fed on the fat things of his house, and have found a day in his Courts better than a thousand elsewhere, and must be self-condemned if you prefer not God above Ten thousand Worlds, and count the enjoyment of himself riches enough; yea, if you esteem not the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. 'Twas a brave speech of that noble Galeatius when he had left his Honor, Interest and Relations for Christ and the Gospel sake: I have saith he, riches honor and joy enough while in this Cottage I may live in the Church of God, enjoy his Word and People, and have time to converse with God by holy meditation, and with my Friends about God's great goodness to me in my Conversion, cursed forever be that Religion which weds men to the World, and divorces them from God.

There are others of you (I fear) fallen back in your spiritual state; former days were better than now, and the shadow gone back some degrees upon the Dial of your hearts, who it may be have left your first love, have lost your spiritual taste, more dead to the things of God, Cold and Formal in Duty; possibly you have hid your face from

God, and he hath compassed himself with a cloud before you. You have neglected your walks with God, and he hath withheld converse with you: For the recovery of such from whence they have fallen to their first love and labors, is part of this Discourse framed; hear what the Spirit saith therein, Attend and Obey those Counsels, return to your first love, and do your first works, least the Lord take the Candlestick out of his place, and leave you in that wilderness into which you wander.

Some of you who are fearers of God yet walk in darkness, and see no light, have your continual Exercises and frequent Complaints, that he who should have comforted your souls, is removed far from you: My Advice to you is, to walk in the light when you sit in darkness, and wait for the light when the even shadows are upon you. 'It is but a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; the Son of righteousness is upon his journey towards you, and 'twill not be long ere it be risen upon you.

Are there any of you who have better days, does your Bow abide in strength, are your Affections warm towards your Beloved, and your hearts sometimes burn within you while he is talking to you in his Word? Do you long for his Appearance, and delight in his Presence, and press hard after him in his Appointments? Do you love the Word of his mouth more than your necessary food? Can you be content to let your own things sit, that you may seek the things that are Christ's? and sit at his feet, when others are in the market-place, and abroad in the crowd of their earthly affairs; Are you alone with Christ in a corner? If so, your Mercy is singular, and your Obligations strong to be entirely the Lord's; to be no more your own, but wholly devoted to his fear, to live a life of praise and well-pleasingness unto God, to think well of Christ, and bear his pleasure; to be patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, to long for the Well-head of

your mercies, and to be beginning a life of glory while you are here in a life of grace. I shall close up this Discourse with a few words of general Advice to you all.

First, lay the foundation sure on which you build all your Temporary labors and your Eternal hopes: You cannot be too certain, in that on which depends your all. Consider how often Satan hath battered down; yea, your own hearts have disputed away those Evidences on which you could sometimes have adventured your Souls, and yet the strongest Assaults are to come, and the greatest Forces of Hell reserved for the last Battle. Bottom not your hopes on anything short of a Crucified Christ, not on your Frames, but on his Favor; not upon your Duties, but his Righteousness; nor upon any kindnesses received from him short of a saving union with him; rest not till your Convictions be clear, deep and distressing, such as discover sin to be the greatest evil in its nature and fruits, and its residence and indwelling in you, a burden intolerable; such Convictions as will not admit of after favor or reconciliation to the least known or most beloved sin; that can make your heart to bleed afresh upon every new touch of it, and never at rest till the whole kind of it be destroyed out of your Souls: Labor to see such a Beauty in Christ, as may render all Created Glory as dross and dung in your Eye; stop not till you come to the Excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ as your Lord; till you can discern such a worth in the Person as well as Purchase of Christ, as will make you content to throw all over board, to take in him, and be sick of love till you enjoy him: be sure your close with Christ be right with his whole Person, Will and Designs, to be one with him upon all his own terms. And that this union be not in Judgment and Consent only, but in Heart and Will from your whole Souls, finding an inward likeness and love to him in your renewed nature.

2ly, Go on towards perfection, press after nearer and more complete Conformity to the Nature and Will of Christ every day: Think how short your highest measures do come of perfect holiness in the sight of God; set the Pattern before you every day, that you may be the more ashamed at your present attainments in Grace, and more provoked to higher Aims and Achievements; compare yourselves with them that are above you, with the Rule of Righteousness, and with all your Obligations, Time, Means and Mercies, to keep you humble in your own eyes; look upon your Wants as well as Enjoyments, that you may be as poor in spirit as in condition; that which is wanting in you cannot be numbered: Who am I and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? 1 Chron. 19. 14. Keep low thoughts in yourselves under the greatest services you do for God, and the highest honor you receive from God. Alas (said the Lord Du-Plessis to one that commended him for the improvement of his Talent) What is there of mine in that Work? say not that it was I, but God in me. I know more (saith another) by myself to abase me, than any man could know to extol me. So much humility a man hath, so much grace he hath and worth and no more: Dr. Har.

3ly, Keep up a life of faith upon Christ in the promises: As the first quickening of a Christian is by faith, so his whole life is maintained by believing; no longer than you believe can you live: Gal. 2. 20. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Draw fresh Influence thence by faith upon your Hopes, Comforts and Graces under every want, fears and deaths within you; make not your graces or duties the grounds of believing, but encouragements to Faith; study more the nature, freeness, fullness and unchangeableness of redemption grace, and get acquaintance with the promise and persuasions of the truth of them in Christ: To live only by faith (saith Dr. Harris) and a bare Promise without a pawn, and to give all to free grace and to Christ

alone, are mighty works; and some of those things he found most difficult.

4ly, Walk in Love as Christ hath loved you: This is the life of Heaven, and beginning of that Excellent glory which shall never be removed; there is nothing does make thee more like to God, more near and dear to him, and more fit for his use than this Grace of Love: Let your Affections be extended as large as the objects of them; unto God, his Word, Ways and People; love God to obey him; his Ways to walk in them, his People to delight in them, to sympathize with them, to mourn over them in their sufferings, to help them in their necessities, to rejoice with them in their consolations, counting their mercies your own, which is no easy part of your duty. It is far harder (saith one) to adopt another's Comforts than his Sorrows, and to hold ones self-exalted in another's exaltation.

5ly, In the enjoyment of the World, get above it, and while you live in it, be daily dying to it; so much as you get above the World, so near are you to God and Glory, and no nearer. Covet not another's Goods, the World is none of your Portion, if God be your part. Oh how much beneath the Extraction, Dignity and Duty of Saints is the love to, and life upon this low and dirty World: leave not Children's bread to feed on such Carrion dogs-meat, and filthy excrements, with which Satan feeds his Laborers. But having spoke largely of this matter in the Book, I advise your Eye and Heart thither for Conviction and Counsel herein.

6ly, Make much of the Time and Means of Grace while you have them; your Glass runs, your Sun hastens, and the Wind blows when and where it listeth. O make use of Time while you have it: God who made nothing in vain, hath work for every hour of your short Day; work as hard as you can, you will find something to do when you

come to die. Loss of time (saith Dr. Harris on his Death-bed) sits very near upon me; work, work apace, assure yourselves nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for that God which hath done so much for you. Wait upon and walk in the light while you have it; if Grace thinks it not much to spread a Table for you, don't you think it much to spare time to sit down at it: You that find so many things to do when God calls for your Company, will shortly find that God hath other things to do than to mind you when you need his Cordials; how glad would you be of enjoying time to hear the voice of peace when you are entering upon Eternity, who are not at leisure now to hear Divine precepts while in the possession of time: neglect not hearing praying seasons, which are your Seed-time for Glory O that every day (saith one) were a Sabbath or a Fast-day, for then I should be well. Buy not your ease or earthly interest at so dear a rate as the loss of salvation, time and helps: Evidence your love to God by your valuation of his Presence in his Ordinances; How can you long for the enjoyment of God in Heaven, who care not for his company on Earth, or his glorious appearances in his Sanctuary. Stick at nothing that may yield him delight or give him glory, how expensive soever it be on your dearest Comforts and Interests: When one told Du Moulin in his sickness that he wronged himself by speaking so much; 'It is true, said he, but I will die glorifying of God. A Soul that supremely loves God, will count nothing too much to do, part with or suffer that may bring him glory.

7ly. Rest not in your enjoyments of means, without improvement of them: What's a full Table if thy Soul abide empty, and frequent feeding, if thy inner man languish: 'tis a time of dying and secret waste in most Christians; O covet earnestly the best gifts, that you may flourish in the Courts of God, and grow as the Cedars of Lebanon; that you may be thoroughly furnished to every good work,

and your profiting appear to all men: Be deeply sensible of your little Fruit under great dressing, and be humbled; take heed of spiritual pride, and puffing's up in your apprehended Excellencies or Privileges; 'tis the humble soul is the most thriving soul; keep your Hearts pure, and Lives unspotted: As sound bodies, so sincere souls are most growing: pare off luxuriant branches as they sprout out, and lay the Ax to the root of them every day; keep up Faith in the Promises of Soul-prosperity to them that serve him in sincerity, Psal. 92. 12, 13. and stay on Christ by Faith for help: when you see nothing but Discouragements in yourselves, and when you are afraid to apply the Promises, even then bless God for them. These Promises, said a doubting Soul, are none of mine, yet I am glad that God hath made them, and for their sakes that shall partake of them; Mr. White.

8thly, Neglect not secret transactions between God and your Souls, to which I fear some of you may be too great strangers: no wonder that Intimacy between God and Souls does fall, when they are seldom together in retirements. Oh take heed of passing by thy Closet or secret corners one day, Matth. 6. 6. or posting out of them before God and your Souls have some Converse together; and be not only constant in it, but careful to please God in the spiritual performance of it: Let not Custom or Formality deprive thee of the sweetness of that bread eaten in secret. You are in this Book more fully called upon to these Duties of secret Prayer, meditation, heart-searching, and watching-work, to which I refer you.

9ly; Make conscience of every Duty you owe towards others, in your Relations, Places and Callings; keep up Family duty, or write Heathen upon thy doors, that the World may know thee: If you neglect God's service, he will not be your Sanctuary; Prayerless houses have broken walls and doors, and no defense against the least evil: If you will not give God your breathings, how can you think he

will give you his blessings: 'It is sad that any, especially such whom God hath taken into his house, should shut him out of their doors; or give him such pitiful service as some do, scarce ever reading the Scriptures in their Families from one Lord's-day to another; only send him a little hasty fruit, some short and shuffled prayers once a day: no wonder that salvation come not to their houses, or converting grace into their families, but a flying Roll is over their habitations, and the black marks of Ruin on their Children and Servants: think it not strange that God makes thy pleasant Roses pricking Briars and Thorns to thee, who hast made them Spears and Swords to him. Oh keep with God in every duty of his service, your Relation, Calling and Employments.

Lastly, in every condition walk with God, and wait for God; if he lead you in ways of mercy, follow him in ways of duty. If you have Comforts take heed of doting on or abusing of them: when he sends you Afflictions receive them; be not fainting nor froward under them, but sanctify God in them, and by their hand return to him; do not over-love your mercies, or over-fear your troubles: prepare for Changes, but live upon Immutability, and be settled under all your un settlements; count nothing strange but sin, and nothing hard to bear, but the absence or anger of a gracious God: lose not your fears in times of peace, neither cast away your confidence in the day of trouble: let your Lamps be always burning, that you may see the way of your duty in the Night of your danger; and how to get in Comfort in your Adversity; and let your loins be girt, that you may be ready both to do your work and to meet your wages; and be always looking and waiting for the coming of your Lord, who will welcome you in the Acceptance of your Duties, uncloath you of your sins and sufferings, and crown your sincerity and faithfulness with a Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you; which is the longed

for Fruit of all his Labors with you, and the subject matter of his daily prayers for you, who is in him that was and is, and is to come,

Your Affectionate Laborer, Fellow Servant, and Brother, Barthol. Ashwood.

THE HEAVENLY TRADE

Opened and improved from:

Proverbs 3. 14. For the Merchandise of it is better than the Merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

That Religion is under a very great declension in the day and place wherein we live, is too evident to serious observers; but too little laid to heart; or the prodigious effects, which usually follow such expiring godliness, duly trembled at. The character of the last and perilous times hath over taken us; men having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it, 2 Tim. 3, 5. A lamp, a name to live, notions parts, external privileges and duties, make up the Religion of the greatest part of professing Christians this day, while the vitals of Christianity visibly languish; where is that ancient Faith, Love, Zeal, Faithfulness, Courage, Patience, Self-denial, Mortifiedness to the world, Justice, Charity, Heavenly-mindedness, holy Converses, with that universal Piety and Unity, which made the Saints so famous in former generations, and had so great an influence on the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom, notwithstanding Pagan and Antichristian force against it? In the room of which, now pride, contention, formality, selfishness, hypocrisy, with the general gangrene of an earthly spirit, eats out the life and power of true holiness: The affecting sense of this dangerous evil gives occasion to this ensuing discourse, whose errand into the world, is not to plead for notion or faction, but to advocate for despised godliness; to help to awaken this sleepy age, and contribute a weak hand with abler shoulders, to give a lift (if possible) to fallen piety.

Amongst the many Advocates for piety, Solomon the Penman of this book hath done worthily, and laid out much strength of reason to attach the minds of men, and regain them to the knowledge and fear of God. This chapter is a system of those motives which he more largely prosecutes throughout this book, to persuade men unto a thorough pursuit of holiness. Divers are the considerations he proposes to this end: taken

First, From the happiness of those that obtain and improve this pearl of grace, verse. 13. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: (though with greatest labor and cost) and having gotten it, doth put it to its due use and improvement for the good of others; they, whoever they be, are blessed men and women, in regard of that profit, pleasure, peace, honor, safety and life (with the durable and eternal possession thereof) ensured to those that thus make Religion their business, from verse. 13, to 27.

Secondly, From the evil estate and end of those that pursue the ways of sin, which is in its nature vile and abominable to God, and as to its products, its shameful, cursed and destructive in the end; verse. 23, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The Penman knew that few would deal in those commodities and trade about divine things (all men seeking their own, and few the things of Christ) and therefore sets forth those wares with greatest commendation to buyers, that they might off the better. He begins with the gain that comes by godliness; a popular argument, and that which in other things puts men on great adventures, and restless labors towards their enjoyment. The hope of advantage (saith Chrysostom) makes all difficult things easy. What will not the Merchant do or suffer to get a little profit? a fit metaphor to set forth

the diligence of a Christian in his race, and to insinuate the worth of those eternal things he is in chase of. The merchandise of which is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain there thereof than fine gold.

In the words, for methods sake, you may observe,

First, The subject, wisdoms merchandise, and the gain thereof.

Secondly, The Predicate, Better than silver, than fine gold.

Wisdom] Divine Wisdom, which in this book, (not to mention all its acceptations:)

First Is put sometimes for the Lord Jesus Christ, <H&G>, the word, and increated Wisdom of God, or the wisdom who is God; who is made to us of God, Wisdom, as well as Righteousness; the light of the world; the bright morning Star; the Sun of Righteousness, from whom are derived all those beams which irradiate the dark minds of men; and that Wisdom which makes wise to salvation; in whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom: This is that shining Diamond, that Pearl of price, which outvies all the beauties of the world; the costly gems, and whole treasures of nature, in whom are unsearchable riches, the enjoyment and use of whom is soul enriching.

Secondly, For the Word of God, which is, sure, making wise the simple; pure, enlightening the eye; and more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold; called the Light of the Lord, Isa. 2. 5. Come ye, and let us walk in the Light of the Lord; the discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. which are able through the Spirit's illumination, to make one wise to salvation; and in this sense the Jews usually take Wisdom for the Word and Law of God: In keeping of which there is great reward, Psal. 19. 11.

Thirdly, By it is held forth a true and saving knowledge of God, part of that Original beauty which man lost by his first fall, and is regained by a second edition, and impress of the Spirit, when renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created it: this knowledge is called <H&G> , not an idle speculative, but a lively operative knowledge, which consists of an illumination of the mind, and an infusion of faith and spiritual knowledge. Parisiensis calls it, The gate of life through which God first enters into the mind of man. In this Wisdom and Knowledge of God as the souls last end, with the way that leads thereto, and felicity that results from it, enlightened minds see greater luster than in fine gold, and all the bravery of this lower world.

Now this Wisdom is not only speculative, taking in the notion of truth, and pleasing the mind with refreshing views of things excellent; but practical, which disposes the soul to a fruition of God, so revealed to the eye of Wisdom, and to the obedience of all those counsels opened in order to it. Hence Davenant counts it an error in the Schoolmen to restrain Wisdom and Understanding to a contemplative life, when both have their equal reference to an active practical life and conversation: In regard of it's essence, it's an intellectual virtue; but in respect to the matter and use, it's practical and moral; and therefore he defines Wisdom to be an infused knowledge of those things which lead to faith and a holy life, with a pious affection, inclining the soul to the application & practice of the things it knows. This the Scriptures hold out to be that true Wisdom, which God requires of men: And to man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding, Job 28. 28. Job having spoken of the wonderful Wisdom of God in the works of Creation, beyond all the searches of human understanding, he tells them what is that Wisdom which God requires of man, not to screw into those unfathomed deeps and

mysteries of divine works in the Creation; not to feed on abstruse notions of things that concern them not; but this is true Wisdom, to fear God, to serve and obey him, and to depart from iniquity; So Deut. 4. 5, 6. Behold I have taught you Statutes and Judgments, keep therefore, and do them, for this is your Wisdom and understanding in the sight of the Nations, which shall hear of all these Statutes, and say, Surely this great Nation is a wise and an understanding people. Wisdom from above (says the Apostle) is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, James 3. 17. that is it makes men holy and fruitful in good works. So the Psalmist describes Wisdom, by holy walking; I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way; Psal. 101. 2. and Ephes. 5. 15. Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Holy walking is both the fruit of Wisdom, and the way to Wisdom. Col. 1. 9, 10. You may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all knowledge and understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord to all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. And so the Wise man understands it in this book. Prov. 1. 7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. That saith Aquinas) from whence Wisdom begins to be operative. Chap. 4. 11. I have taught thee in the way of Wisdom, and led thee in right paths. Wisdom hath its way, and feet to walk in it; and this way of Wisdom is a right path; or, right-holy-actions (saith Piscator) so the Ancients take Wisdom. Cicero calls it, The Art of living. That Wisdom which doth nothing, is worth nothing. All Wisdom lies in this one thing (saith Lactantius) That we know and worship God. Religion is wrapped up in Wisdom, and Wisdom in Religion. The work of Wisdom lies in this, that contemning earthly things, by which we were formerly held, serving and desiring these frail perishing things, we may now be directed to seek after the eternal reward of a heavenly Treasure: (So saith Aquinas) Wisdom is not to be considered only as it leads to a knowledge of God; but as it directs and orders the life according to

divine Rules: And in this sense I take Wisdom here for true Holiness; that Wisdom which is manifested in a heavenly, gospel conversation, the merchandise of which is so advantageous.

The Merchandise thereof: Objectively considered: The trading for this Wisdom, or Merchandizing about; so the Septuagint renders it: <H&G> , To merchandize, is to buy and sell to get in, and put off goods, to take in, and lay out: this Wisdom is better than to get in gold, or anything that gold can buy, <H&G> from <H&G> , The word is, to go up and down here and there as Merchants do, to buy & vend their goods, to travel abroad now in one place, then in another; to be full of distraction, tumbling up and down to get and put off their wares: So busy a work is merchandizing, which takes up men's thoughts, time and labors to follow it, that they might get some advantage in the world. And such is the work of Religion; it is an active work, that calls for the heart, time and strength, if ever souls think to turn it to any account: And they that do thus, that make Religion their work, that lay out themselves and their all in pursuit of Heaven and spiritual things, whatever cost and pains they are at, if they can but gain these treasures of godliness, and obtain Wisdoms wares, they make a good bargain; for the profit that comes by these is far better than silver yea than fine gold: The Septuagint hath it: Than to get the treasures of silver and gold; yea the best gold, beaten gold.

There is another sense that one gives the words, taking Wisdom for the price by which those great and eternal things are got: (I rather like the instrument than the price) spiritual things are freely given, not bought, Isa. 55. 1. but those that lay out, and improve their Wisdom to gain grace, to promote godliness, and further salvation, make a better bargain: than they that lay out their treasures of gold and silver to buy the best goods on earth: In either sense it's a truth, Wisdom's merchandise is the best merchandise; to trade about

spiritual things, grace and glory is incomparably the best trade: Whence observe this Doctrine or Position,

Doct. The Heavenly Trade is the best Trade; no Merchandise like Wisdom's Merchandise, and trafficking about spiritual and eternal things.

This Truth will evidently appear, if you consider,

1. The nature of those things about which Wisdoms Merchants trade.
2. The Person they deal with.
3. The Terms they trade upon.
4. The gain that comes by it.

Reas. 1. First, The things about which this Heavenly Trade is taken up, are in their nature things of greatest worth; wares which all the worlds treasures cannot purchase or compare with; they are all great, glorious and excellent things; nothing mean, contemptible and useless, among all the goods that Wisdom proposes to souls choice and reception: The favor of God: Redemption from Hell: Pardon of sin: Peace with God: The graces of the Spirit: Communion with Father, Son and Spirit, with Saints and Angels: Walking with God: Spiritual blessings: Joy in the Holy Ghost: Heavenly Treasures: Assurance of Glory: These are all things of incomparable value, and the things that heavenly Traders deal about: And are not these far better in their nature, than the low, dirty, fading things of this world? No Onyx, Sapphire, Crystal, Coral, Pearl, Topaz, Rubies, or the most costly pieces of nature, can compare with this pearl of price; this stone cut out of the mountains, or those spiritual treasures which are

the subject of this Heavenly Trade: Let those be Judges who know the worth of things; call in Wisdom's Lapidaries, let God, Saints and Angels speak in this matter, their verdict will be, Wisdom's wares weigh down all, as to their innate excellency: I shall only propose three evidences to determine this case, and they are of unquestionable verity, and a sufficient proof of this truth. They are,

1. Scripture.
2. Experience.
3. Reason.

First, The Scriptures will tell you, there are no wares like heavenly wares, Deut. 32. 32. Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being Judges. His loving-kindness is better than life, Psal. 63. 3. And the light of his countenance, then the increases of corn, and wine, and oil, Psal. 4. 6, 6. The Law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver, Psal. 119. 72. Tryed faith much better than gold that perisheth, 1 Pet. 1. 7. One day in God's Courts better than a thousand elsewhere, Psa. 84. 10. None in Heaven like to God, nor any on earth in comparison of him, Psal. 73. 25. To make provision for the soul is the one thing needful; to enjoy Christ and spiritual things is the better part that shall never be taken away, Luk. 10. 42. The Kingdom of God is the chiefest thing to be sought for in the first place, Matth. 6. 33. first in affection, and first in time: Multitude of testimonies might be produced from Scripture to attest this truth, the Heavenly Trade is the best Trade; no goods like heavenly goods: what do you trade for here? is it for more than life you plot, you work for? you gain no more here than meat, drink, raiment, money, land, credit, and the like, which only tend to life; but the favor of God is better than life: one gracious look, one whisper of peace from God, weighs down all those: riches, pleasures,

honors, do not make a happy man or woman; the Scripture never reports such blessed as have the abundance of these things, but rather miserable and unhappy, obnoxious to more snares and dangers; but godliness makes a blessed man, and pardon of sin a happy man, in God's account, Psal. 1, 1, 2. and 32. 1. whose testimony is truth itself, and to be relied on beyond all the grounds of blinded opinion, and false hopes.

Secondly, Experience assures men of this truth; that heavenly things are the best things: come to a Soul that hath tried both; one who hath had all that the World could afford on the one hand, and hath also experienced the favor of God, and spiritual things, and he will tell you of spiritual things, as David did of Goliath 's Sword: There is none like them 1 Sam. 21. 9. And as Solomon of the virtuous Wife: These things above excel them all, Prov. 31. 29. And wisdom is much better than Gold, and to get understanding rather to be chosen than Silver, Prov. 16. 16. This was Solomon 's experience, who had the largest trial of any man, he had Houses, Vineyards, Gardens, Servants, Silver, Gold, the peculiar treasures of Kings; Greatness, Pleasure, Music, and whatsoever his eyes desired: and upon all gives this verdict; That wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excels darkness, Eccles. 24, 13.

Piety transcendeth Pravity; Heaven the World: Purity out-passeth Pleasures, as Light doth Darkness: When he speaks of things below, he tells you; These are all vanity and vexation of spirit; he that labors for these, labors for the wind, Eccles. 5. 16. and what he seeks, finds not; but when he speaks of wisdom, and spiritual things, he is as one that wants words to express their worth: Wisdom is better than Rubies, and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to it, Prov. 8. 11. David was a man who had tried various conditions in the World, he knew what trouble and comfort was,

what youth and age was, what poverty and riches were; he had pleasures, honors, treasures, with the hearts of his people, and command of a Kingdom, and yet he tells you, he had seen an end of all perfection: and that the light of God's countenance was better than all, and to be a door-keeper (a mean place) in the house of God, was more eligible, than to abide in the tents of wickedness: Psal. 119. 96. Ps. 4. 6. and 84. 10. He chooses it as his one thing; To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple, Psal. 27. 4.

Moses knew what honor was, and the pleasures of sin, and yet upon choice, preferred poverty with godliness, on the side of truth, before all the treasures of Egypt; He refused to be called Pharaoh' s Son, rather choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26. He knew the Nobles of Egypt, and grandeur of Pharaoh 's Court, and yet could value a poor persecuted people, that owned God, and cleaved to him, beyond them all: Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like to thee? Deut. 33. 20. He counts God the none-such; Who is like to thee, O God? Ex. 15. 11. and Religion the best interest; Set your hearts unto all the words, I testify; for it is not a vain thing for you, for it is your life, Deut. 32. 46, 47.

Ask of Paul, and he will tell you what the fruit of sin, and driving furiously against Christ and his interest was, when the Lord Jesus came to reckon with, and to pay him off in the way to Damascus, Act. 9. 3, 4. whose blow he felt many years after, in Conscience twitches now and then, 1 Tim, 1. 13, 15. And upon the sense of that change Grace made on his heart and condition, he tells you, that whatever he counted gain before, he saw now to be loss for Christ, Phil. 3. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. There was a time when he thought his letter-knowledge, blind

zeal, birth privileges, legal duties, popular applause, Rulers favor, and protection by Power, to be great things; but now he alters his reckoning, and values the knowledge of Christ and interest in him, and grace derived from the power of his death and resurrection, to be an excellency that stained all his former glory.

The Jailor once thought it his greatest interest to swim with the stream, and sail by the compass of the times he lived in, to run down the ways and servants of the Lord Jesus, to obey his warrant, and secure the Saints feet in his stocks, Act. 16. ver. 24, to 34. but when once Grace takes him in hand, and plucks him through the strait-gate of conscience, terrors, and repentance, into a state of regeneration, then he corrects his errors, and sees it his chiefest concern to espouse Christ, and to come over into the way of persecuted godliness; then to believe in the Lord Jesus, to be kind to his servants, and to drive the Trade of despised Christianity; he thought upon most mature consideration to be worthy of his choice and pursuit. What treasures more rich or precious (said Agerius, when a prisoner for Christ at Venice) than everlasting life? where be greater riches or dignities more honorable than in Heaven? here droppeth the delectable dew, here floweth the pleasant Nector, here runneth the sweet milk, here is plenty of all good things; I have found a nest of honey in the entrails of a Lion, in the deep, dark Dungeon; I have found a Paradise of pleasure; where others do weep, I do rejoice; when others do shake and tremble, I do find plenty of strength, and boldness; in strait Bonds, and cold Irons, I have rest: Fox, Vol. 2. pag. 181. Come to sinners also when they lie under Conscience, terrors, and the armed troops of death and hell invade their guilty hearts, and inquire their opinion concerning the goodness of their choice, the advantage of that bargain they have made, in parting with God for the World, in rejecting Christ for the Flesh, in turning their backs on holiness, for the service of sin; and their dejected countenances, their ghastly

looks, their unquiet gestures, their cries and groans, will soon tell you the sad resentment of their folly, and bad Trade they have driven in the ways of sin and death.

Thirdly, Nay, Reason itself rightly exercised, must needs grant, that heavenly wares are the best wares upon a fourfold consideration.

1. Of their Rarity.
2. Their Price.
3. Their worth.
4. Their Duration.

First, Heavenly things are rare, and therefore excellent; scarcity enhanceth the price of things; Diamonds and precious stones are dear, because scarce, and more rarely had; plenty usually beats down the price of things, when rarity makes them costly; and such are Heavenly wares; they are the greatest rarity in the world; they are less known, more hardly come by, and seldomer enjoyed than anything this earth affords; there are few parts of the world where Wisdom's goods ever come: How many Countries are there where the Gospel is not known? or any sights of God, or things eternal ever had, but such as are discernible by the dim light of nature; and of those coasts which this days spring hath visited, to how few have the brightness of this light appeared? few places have the mysteries of the Gospel opened, or the deep things of God purely, fully and powerfully preached. It hath been the privilege of this Nation above many, to have a peculiar share of Gospel discoveries and truths, more spiritually and practically disclosed; and yet how few here, or in other parts, have any acquaintance with these glorious secrets? or arrive to this excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and Divine

Mysteries? what a veil is there on the minds of most, under the purest administrations of the Gospel, that seeing, they see not; understanding, and yet not affected with the things they know; the spiritual beauty, and inward worth of them being hid from their eyes. Most hearers (like Balaam) see heavenly goods with eyes half opened; and hence it is they no more value and pursue them: Could these poor, beggarly, dirty things of the world, be so preferred in men's affections and embraces, and so much time consumed upon them, with neglect of God, and things above, if the worth of Wisdom's Treasures were truly known and believed? no certainly, we may without breach of charity complain, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53. 1. They are rare, in that they seldom appear in their own worth and excellency to the view of men: few know and believe the worth of heavenly things.

They are also goods that few trade on. It's a rare thing to see men much versed about heavenly things, and to drive a trade of godliness: There are divers possibly that barter for some of Wisdom's goods, for knowledge, peace, comfort, parts, external duties, &c. but few that carry on a full trade of godliness: An Enoch, a Noah, a Caleb, a Joshua, a Job, a David, a Paul, a Barnabas; here and there one in their several ages, that are thorough with God, and universal in the duties of godliness, heart purity, godly simplicity, universal holiness, converse with God, meditation on things above, tenderness of conscience, self-denial, mortifiedness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, spiritual converses, are commodities that few deal about this day. A thorough-paced Christian is the Phoenix of the place he lives in, and more seldom seen than a sparkling Diamond in the dark night we live in; few seek these goods in earnest, as they do the world and their own things, and fewer obtain them, Phil. 2. 21. Few I fear do live in the daily exercise of their graces, the warm

breathings of their souls after God and spiritual things: few that find the white stone, that live in the view of their pardons, and sensible enjoyment of divine grace; and therefore these heavenly goods are rare things, seldom discovered, seldom known, seldom pursued, seldom enjoyed; and being rare, are excellent and desirable.

Secondly, Heavenly things are the best, because the most costly; this argument will not hold in all things: men may buy their desired comforts too dear, and give more for the world, pleasures, and their particular goods, than they are worth; but none can be deceived in Wisdoms wares; the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the enjoyment of grace and spiritual blessings, cannot be too dearly obtained; their price bespeaks the greatness of their worth, they being realities and things excellent in their nature and use; and if they are valuable according to their price, they must needs be transcendent; for the purchase of them cost God dear; he hath been at the expense of eternal counsels of manifold wisdom, of unknown love, of the gift and blood of his own Son, to procure these great things for Believers; and it hath cost him mighty power and patience to fit Believers for them, and maintain their enjoyment of them: Ye are bought with a price, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, and without spot. He gave himself a ransom, an equal price, sufficient to purchase Believers to himself, with grace and glory for them: He so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, to give him to death, to the death of the Cross, to unspeakable torments, and all to procure these glorious and blessed treasures for Believers, Joh. 3. 16. O costly wares! O dear bought goods! for which the pearl of price was sold, and the treasures of Heaven emptied out.

And as these stand the purchaser dear, so they are costly to the receiver also: The preparation for an interest in these treasures, is

many times dear to Believers: O the wounds and lancing's, the bleeding and heart-pricking's, the pangs & throws that lead the van to this banner of love, which redemption-grace spreads over saved souls; these are the stormy tempests, the bloody skirmishes, that go before the Believers reception of purchased peace: Besides, the terms on which this good bargain is offered, though infinitely beneath its worth, yet as to the souls capacity are high, it's no less than a throwing of all its former treasures over-board, a parting with its nearest interests, and dearest comforts that lie in the way of its enjoyments; a plucking out a right eye, and cutting off a right hand; a denying (O hard saying!) of a man's own beloved self; a not only bearing when laid on, but a taking up not the Cross of Christ alone, but his own Cross too, whatever his own sins, or the hand of men and Devils may make for him; and in this plight not to sit down, or stand still, but to go on and follow Christ up the hill, through thick and thin, through scorns and thorns, day and night, through every change, in every state, home to the grave: No easier terms are given to the enjoyment of these riches, than a hearty consent to these proposals, which may expose the soul to an actual loss of his earthly all, and undergoing unknown trials, troubles and duties in the way: This bargain, though blessed in itself, yet is thought so dear by some, as that they break upon these very terms, and think God, grace and glory, too chargeable for their acceptance: This then sets off the worth of heavenly things, that they cost so much upon choice, and upon the highest reason and deliberation.

Thirdly, As their price is high, so is their worth great; they are good in themselves, and good to those that have them. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your souls delight itself in fatness; earthly things are not so, if good in themselves, yet they may not be good to those that have them: Riches are snares and swords to the owners thereof, and oftentimes do pierce them

thorough with many sorrows: They are not only good, but absolutely good; other things are not so; earthly things are but conditionally good, when God sees them good, and makes them good, so long as he doth bless them, and let out something of himself through them, manna, food, raiment, nether springs, are so far good as God is pleased to convey out some spiritual good thorough them, or make them some way subservient thereto; these things cannot make men happy, or prove them so. Nebuchadnezzar 's greatness could not secure him from grazing amongst the beasts, and bedding with them in open fields, and under wetting dews, Dan. 4. 33. Belshazzar 's pleasures could not guard him from the hand-writing against the wall, Dan. 5. 5. Dives was in the midst of plenty and honor one day and the next in hell. These lower things are but as cisterns and pipes, that signify nothing, except some waters be conveyed through them; no more do these, unless God let out his love, and promise through them. These heavenly things are not only absolutely good, but every way good; good for every man, in every state; good for poor and rich, for young and old, for all persons, all things; Godliness is profitable for everything, 1 Tim. 4. 8. There is no person or condition, but grace and spiritual blessings are good for, and can convey good thorough: There may be such a case in which nothing of this lower world can help: Riches make them wings and profit not in the day of wrath. In times of trouble and divine wrath, instruments of music carry no sweetness in them but spiritual mercies, they help to comfort in the day of trouble: In the multitude of sad thoughts within me thy comforts refresh my soul, Psal. 94. 19.

Fourthly, Their duration proves them excellent, they are lasting wares; time works no change upon these, the Heavens will wax old, and as a vesture they shall be changed; but heavenly things never perish with the using: indeed our measures and sense of these may change, we may not always have the same degrees of grace or

comfort; but this alteration is not in these things, but in us; as God; so grace and spiritual things, are in themselves the same, yesterday, today, and forever; good in prosperity, and good in adversity; good in life, and good in death: mutability mars all earthly comforts, they are things of no continuance; we may have them, but cannot hold them; like the fleeting Islands about the Tenariff, which persons see at a distance, but when they come near them, they vanish away: The things that are seen are temporal, 2 Cor. 4. 18. We may have them, (faith Seneca) but cannot possess them; and they no sooner please us, but pass from us: but unseen things are eternal: His love is everlasting; the graces of his Spirit abiding: 1 Joh. 3. 9. Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him: The joys of the Holy-Ghost are lasting: That my joy might remain in you: Jer. 31. 3. Joh. 15. 11. Isa. 59. 21. Heb. 10. 34. 1 Pet. 1. 4. Indeed acts of grace may fail for a time, but the habit of grace is never lost; frames, and streams of comfort may ebb, but the Fountain of Joy is never drained dry; Justification is immutable, Pardon of Sin is irreversible, the Saints treasures in Heaven are enduring, and can never fade away: Men may outlive their Treasures here, and see all their Portions go before them; but heavenly Interests, and immortal Souls, are of like continuance, and this greatens their value: Men estimate a little Land beyond a great Estate of uncertain continuance; and such are Wisdom's wares, there's no rotten goods among them.

Reas. 2. Secondly, The heavenly Trade is the best Trade, in regard of the Trader these Merchants deal with: Much of the comfort, safety and advantage of men's Trades, lieth in in the persons they trade with; if these be able, honest, affectionate, it conduces much to the thriving of those they deal with: What mischief comes to Traders, when Sellers are cheating, cruel, and extortioning? and when Buyers are false, and deceitful, and fail of their word? But none of these hazards can heavenly Traders be exposed to, from those they deal

with: Indeed Wisdom's Merchants have to do with many, in the pursuit of their heavenly Trade, both by way of taking in, and letting out; but yet there is one great Merchant, with whom they principally deal, as to the management and issue of their whole Trade, in this Merchandise; they converse with God, Saints and Angels, but all is done through a Mediator; the Goods they receive is upon his interest; they deal with God through him; all their wisdom to trade, and rules to act by, come from him; the good and advantage of all their Trading, is secured by him; and though they may be concerned with many persons and things, (with all that duty and providence calls them too,) and, with the Chemist, are to extract some good from everything they deal with; and, like the Be, gather Honey from weeds; yet this good they get from persons and things, is not in them, but conveyed through them from the great Purchaser with whom they deal; good from everything, to these heavenly Traders, and Heirs of Salvation is made over in the promise; (All things shall work together for good to them that love God, and are called according to his purpose,) Rom. 8. 28. and shall in due time, through these Conduits, be emptied out to Believers, by the hand of Jesus: So that it is properly, and strictly, but with one great Merchant those Traders have to do with for the goods they lay out, or take in; all other things and persons are but ways and instruments of his appointment, through which it shall be delivered; and this makes Wisdom's Trade so good, that the advantage of it is not depending on those secondary Agents, they have to do with but upon one, that is more excellent, both great and good, able and faithful to answer both his promises, and the expectations of those that deal with him. As to his Quality, and personal Grandeur, he is above all, and over all, King of Kings, and Lord of Lord's: He hath a vesture on his thigh, whereon is written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lord's, Rev. 19. 16. He is the Majesty on high, the Glory of Heaven and Earth; he hath Angels to worship him, Thrones and Principalities under him, all creatures in

Heaven and in Earth to serve him. O! how honorable is it to deal with him, to whom Kings and Potentates pay their tribute, and to whom Men and Angels yield their homage? It's taking with Men, to converse with those that are above them, and to manage concerns with Persons of Honor, and Greatness: but here's one (Souls) that offers to trade with you, from whom all creatures receive their glory.

Yea, his Goodness answers his Greatness, and sweetly tempers his personal converse for the encouragement of the meanest Soul, that hath occasions with him: Greatness without Goodness, rather checks than relieves the hopes of those that are beneath it; but such is the sweetness of Christ's nature, as that his Glory doth but render his Goodness the more amiable; and his Goodness represents his Glory the more desirable; he values no man by his own worth, nor despises any for their low estate; the meanest Soul hath as easy access to him, and as gracious a reception, as persons of highest reputation with men: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones, Isa. 57. 15. He is of a sweet and gracious temper, of a free and generous spirit, good to all, especially to those that seek him: this renders persons desirable, who would choose to deal with men of ugly natures, and churlish dispositions: affability and sweetness do strongly invite men to converse with such; and none like to Jesus for excellent goodness and loving kindness, for pity and bounty; goodness is his nature, mercy his delight; he takes pleasure in doing good; none that trade with him, but he will see them to be the better for it.

He is also able as well as good; Some men have excellent natures, but straitened capacities, they are willing to do good beyond their power; but it is not so with the Saints friend; He hath all power in Heaven and Earth, Mat. 28. 18. and can do whatever pleaseth him; he hath

all creatures at his command; all the treasures of Heaven at his dispose; he is infinitely rich, and hath all that good that Souls can need or desire; he hath goods of all kinds of supply his Customers with; it is not so with men, no Merchant can furnish his Traders with everything they need; but one sells this ware, another that; here men sail to one Country for one Commodity, and to another Country for other Wares; they ransack Nature's treasures by Sea and Land, borrow something from every Nation, that hath a peculiar excellency, to make up their supplies, and furnish all their occasions, and pleasures: but the Lord Jesus hath all that in him, and at his dispose, which you need; he can supply all your wants, having all fullness dwelling in him, Phil. 4. 19. He hath that in him which your Souls want, and the command of that you need for your Bodies also: He can give you the desires of your heart, Psal. 37. 4. He is able to make all grace abound towards you, that you always, having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work, 2 Cor. 9. 8. Here's no less than five Alls, that flow from the ability of Christ to Believers; All grace abounding in them, All sufficiency enjoyed by them, All ways, in All things, for All good works: Did Souls but believe the all-sufficiency of Christ, they would not so perplex their spirits when in wants, with, what shall I eat? and with what shall I be clothed? and how shall I get this? and the other mercy I want, when all is offered to Wisdom's Merchants freely? for godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; and these promises are in the hand of Jesus, for all that come to God by him: All things are delivered to me of the Father, Matt. 11. 27. The Lord Jesus is not only able to give you all that you ask according to his will, having all things delivered to him for that end; but he can keep it for you, and secure it to your use: I am persuaded that he is able to keep that good thing I have committed to him, against that day, 2 Tim. 1. 12. This all-sufficiency of Christ, is argument enough to new-Covenant-

federates, for a calm and quiet dependence on him, and holy walking before him, Gen. 17. 1.

And that which is exceeding pleasing to Traders also, he is faithful as well as able; he is one of his word, that makes good all his promises to a tittle, to those that by Faith deal with him: The holy one of Israel cannot lie, or alter the word that is gone out of his mouth; hath he said, and shall he not do it? hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Numb. 23. 19. and Rev. 1. 5. He is the faithful witness; faithful is his name. And he that sat upon the Throne was called faithful and true, Rev. 19. 11. And faithfulness is his nature, in comparison of whom every man is a liar: Let God be true, and every man a liar, Rom. 3. 4. If the Lord Jesus were not faithful to his word and undertaking, the Father would not have trusted him with all the concerns of his glory and people in the world; neither had he been a fit person for the Elect to have committed unto him their souls, and all that is dear to them: Men promise one thing and do another; affirm a thing that is not, and this undoes many, the unfaithfulness of those they deal with; but it is not so with Christ, you may trust on his fidelity; Heaven and Earth shall sooner fail, than one tittle of all that he hath spoken: And therefore excellent is that Trade which is carried on with so excellent a Jesus.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, Weigh the terms on which this Trade is offered unto souls, and it will appear to be incomparably the best Trade. For to such as will set upon this Trade,

1. Goods to trade upon shall be freely given.
2. Wisdom to manage them shall be fully imparted.
3. A blessing on the due improvement of them shall be ensured.

4. To him shall the glory of all be rendered.

First, Wisdom's wares are freely tendered to all that will receive them, without money, and without price: Come buy wine and milk without money and without price, Isa. 55. 1. To him that is a thirst will I give to drink of the waters of life freely, Rev. 21. 6. Here Merchants cannot get or put off goods at that rate; there's no going to the world's markets without money or credit; they that will have men's goods must pay for them, and many times have dear bargains; but the Lord Jesus imparts his treasures freely, he paid dear for them, they cost his heart blood, but he spares them freely; no silver or gold will pass in those bargains. Simon Magus had his offered gold, for the Holy Ghost, thrown back with detestation and destruction to boot, Acts 8. 18, 19, 20. The terms on which this trade is driven are free; it cannot stand with the design of redemption grace, which is to advance the praise of the glory of grace, and to cut off all boasting, that every mouth may be stopped; to admit of anything from fallen man that might look like a compensation of salvation mercies; neither is there anything beneath Christ's merits, that can equalize the worth of heavenly things; and alas what have they to part with who have lost themselves? and to give to God, who have nothing but what they receive from him? It must needs therefore be altogether freely given, whatever is received in order to salvation: O blessed news to poor traders, that their poverty is no bar to this employment; the poorest may receive of Wisdom's wares, as well as the rich, seeing it is a free trade; and whatever makes a difference on the creatures part, is laid aside in the dispensation of spiritual mercies: Here are no Monopolies, or hard impositions upon this trade; no restraint from setting up, or selling out of Wisdom's goods, in any parts of the world. Cities have their enclosures, Corporations their bars to keep out strangers from their privileges; but in this trade all persons, be they who they will that will come over

to Wisdom's Merchandise, have right to carry on this work of godliness in all places wherever they are. The heavenly trade is a free trade, goods freely given, and liberty to set up in all places, and to all persons.

Secondly, As goods to trade upon are freely given; so wisdom to manage them shall be fully imparted: This is a privilege which sellers on earth will not afford; you may have their goods at their price, but not instructions how to dispose them to your advantage; but this great Merchant in Heaven, with his wares, gives skill to use them: I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thou shouldest go, Isa. 48. 17. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: For the Lord giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding: He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea every good path, Prov. 2. 4, 5, 6, 9. The soul that seeketh for Wisdom's wares, shall with it find instruction how to use them: I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shouldest go; I will guide thee with my eyes, Psal. 32. 8. He will be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, Job 29. 15. The Lord Jesus will find all in this heavenly trade, goods, and tools, and skill, and strength, and all: Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.

Thirdly, A blessing on the due improvement of these shall be ensured to all his traders: The wayfaring man shall not err, Isa. 35. 8. His workmen shall not labor in vain, 1 Cor. 15. 58. For his blessing is upon his people, Psal. 3. 8. Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee, and the light shall shine upon thy ways, Job 22. 28. The book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe

to do according to all that is written therein, (this is the heavenly trade, to fulfill after God, and such shall prosper,) for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success, Josh. 1. 8. No Merchant will undertake to make their dealers prosperous; they must trade at great uncertainties, and run the adventure as to the issue of all: Blessings come not out of earthly shops, but from a divine hand, let come what will in the way: Blessings will surely come at the end to those that cast out at Christ's bidding, and trade by his instruction in Wisdom's Merchandise, let men curse, let devils vex, let North-winds blow, and blow down too their earthly comforts, yet God will bless them that fear him, everyone, Psal. 115. 13. He will bless them in life, and bless them in death; and is not this good trading, to be sure of blessings in the way, and blessedness at the end? 1 Pet. 1. 9.

Fourthly, Another Condition in this Trade is, That God shall have all the glory, but they that trade with and for him shall have all the good that comes by it: This is the head Rent which the great Lord reserves to himself, and will not part with to another: My glory will I not give to another, Isa. 48. 11. This is his great design in all works of his hands, and gifts of grace, that he may be glorified: The people shall be all righteous, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified. This is God's great end in bestowing redemption mercies, to have all the glory to himself, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, Ephes. 1. 12. Christians, the Rent must be the Lord's, the fruit shall be yours: Whose keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof, Prov. 27. 18. All the sweetness of the Vine is for those that possess it, and the herbs of the earth for them by whom it is dressed, Judge. 9. 13. Heb. 6. 7. The righteous shall eat the fruit of his doings, Isa. 3. 10. The present comforts of holiness are not mean; Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend

them, Psal. 119. 165. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Religion is the most pleasant trade; no delights like those that are in God, and fetched from him: God gives the world the bones, and keeps the marrow for his laborers; the godly feed on the wheat, the wicked have but the bran; look whatever good, comfort, credit and happiness Religion can afford here, and to all eternity, is their part that trade upon it: Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof, 1 Cor. 7. 9.

Reas. 4. Lastly, The Heavenly Trade must needs be the best trade, because it is the most profitable trade: The advantage that comes by godliness, makes it the best employment in the world. We use to say, three things make traders rich, all which are found in the way of godliness.

1. Great Returns.

2. Sure Returns.

3. Quick Returns.

Now nothing turns to more account than a thorough pursuit of piety; whatever men think, Religion is the most thriving way, in regard of the,

Excellent Fruit of it.

Abundant Fruit of it.

Durable Fruit of it.

First, Great returns will soon make traders rich, when the time and labor they expend is abundantly compensated, and the things they part with, bring in far better: so is it with this heavenly trade; there is

no proportion in their adventures to their returns: their duties are poor imperfect things; when they have done all, they are unprofitable servants, but their reward is great and glorious; their afflictions light and momentary, but the issue, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 1 Cor. 4. 18. It's great profit indeed, when some weak works of faith, and labors of love, a little patience, obedience and duty for a time, shall be rewarded with eternal rest, pleasure and glory: there is no equality between the race and price, this striving and crowning: What's a cup of cold water, to a river of pleasures? a Crown of thorns, to a Crown of Glory? the worlds frowns, to divine smiles? conscience-troubles, to the consolations of God? a few tears, fears, watching's, fainting's, duties, afflictions, to the joys of the Lord into which they shall forever enter?

It's a great bargain to part with base things, for excellent; beastly lusts, for the beauties of holiness; an unclean, for a clean heart; vile affections, for virtuous dispositions; filthy rags, for fair garments; a body of death, for a spirit of life. To let go the world for God, fellowship with devils, for communion with Christ, to lose guilt, and to gain righteousness; to escape Hell, to obtain Heaven; this is great gain. To swap away old things, for new; rotten things, for sound; hypocrisy, for sincerity; lies, for truth, is a good bargain. To exchange empty things, for satisfying; things that are not, for things that are; goods that perish with the using, for things that wax not old; fading trifles, for eternal treasures, is a thriving trade indeed; and such are the incomes of this Heavenly Trade, they are incomparably great and excellent; there's nothing mean, no low price goods, that Wisdom's Merchants deal about; all their riches are pleasant and precious: By knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches; precious faith, precious promises, the precious blood of Christ, precious thoughts of God, are some of this precious substance heavenly Traders meet with in the way of holiness. Besides, this

pursuit of godliness enters souls into an acquaintance and converse with God, and helps them to keep an intercourse with Heaven, and to maintain a life above and beyond the reach of all others; and is not this advantage?

Religion also helps men to blessed experiences of the love, power, greatness and faithfulness of God; and this constant employment about heavenly things, makes the way pleasant and delightful, and fills the soul with much contentment with its lot in the world, whatever the trials, losses and sufferings may be that they are exposed to. Also the driving this Heavenly Trade secures the good and comfort of all their other interests, and sweetens their portion, whether more or less that Sovereign pleasure allots them in the world, bringing all their concerns under divine care and promise for their good, comfort and sufficient supply in their passage home: And are not all these great returns? enough to make the Heavenly Trade the greatest interest and advantage beyond all others in the world.

Secondly, Sure returns make Traders rich: Merchants that drive gainful trades, count if one Adventure to two or three come safely home, they get well: but all regular Adventures in this Heavenly Trade are secured; Their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. not one of their sincere attempts in the way of God shall miscarry; never a pious duty lost; all their sowings to the spirit shall surely spring up into a blessed harvest, Gal. 6. 6. Though they sow in tears, yet they shall reap in joy Psal. 126. 5, 6. Though they go forth weeping, yet if they bear precious seed, they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them: God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love shewn towards his Name, Heb. 6. 10. God is engaged in justice to see the Adventures of Believers safely returned into their harbor; he hath promised it, and cannot be unfaithful; neither doth it consist with his honor, to put

Believers on an unprofitable service: He never said to the house of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain, Isa. 45. 19. Ingenuous men love to see their servants thrive: Will Christ, think you, let his laborers be losers? their works shall surely follow them into their rest, Rev. 14. 13. however they may be out of sight in their passage towards it, seeing God's Word lies at stake for it.

The blood of Christ stands engaged also for the safe returns of the Saints Adventures, that are according to the will of God; their religious labors are part of the travel of his soul, which he must see secured, and they are the pleasure of the Lord, which must prosper in his hand, Isa. 53. 10, 11. He is become a Surety for them unto God, and a Surety for the Father unto them: By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament, Heb. 7. 22. The Covenant is called here a Testament, as relating to the Saints privileges and interests, which by that Covenant becomes due to them, and shall be surely made good to them upon the account of Christ's Suretyship for it; He is the Surety of this Testament or Covenant, and every promise of it; one of which is, That what they sow to the Spirit, they shall reap in glory; their labor shall not be in vain: and to make all the promises good both the condition and blessing to the foederates of this new-Covenant, hath the Lord Jesus laid down his precious Blood, which cannot be lost, Heb. 9. 15. but it would be cast away, could Believers religious duties be in vain.

Another thing that secures the Saints advantages by this heavenly Trade, is this; that their trading is the work and product of his own Spirit; their duties are his work: Thou hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. 26. 22. It is God that worketh in you to will and to do, according to his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, 2 Col. 3. 5. They are his workmanship, created to good works,

Eph. 2. 10. by whose influence they are acted, and let by the Spirit of God, Rom. 8. 14. So that further than the spirit of the living creatures move, their wheels cannot move, nor do anything graciously, further than their works are wrought of God, and by God, Joh. 3. 21. So that Believers labors in this heavenly Trade, are the work of the eternal Spirit; and should their work be lost, the Spirit of God would labor in vain, and his work cast away; which cannot be, Isa. 45. 18.

Lastly The Lord Jesus is an adventurer with them, his Glory and Kingdom is concerned in this heavenly Trade; when his Will is done, his Kingdom is come, Mat. 6. 10. and 1 Thes. 4. 3. Holiness is his will, and a conformity to his Law, and he is engaged to the Father, for the Saints holiness and happiness; for their grace and glory; As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, Jo. 17. 2, 12. The Father hath put all Believers into the hands of Christ, and entrusted him with their graces and glory, both which are included in eternal life: ver. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, &c. that is, this is the way to life eternal, and the beginning of life eternal, even the grace of Faith, and saving knowledge of God: and this grace, as well as glory, is put into the hand of Christ for Believers, to be kept for them; and they are also put into his hand, to be kept by him through it unto glory: and in pursuance of this trust, the Lord Jesus is engaged, to keep his people, their graces, and the reward of them, for them, that they be not lost; the advantages of this heavenly Trade, are secured to Believers by the Lord Jesus, his adventure with them, his truth, faithfulness, and glory, is concerned in their safety: so that their returns are not only great, but sure.

Thirdly, Quick returns, if great, are greatly enriching: Hence comes that Proverb, that light gain makes a heavy purse, it brings great custom, and that occasions quick returns: Now, no Trade brings

quicker returns than the heavenly Trade: Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, Rev. 22. 12. The Lord Jesus not only makes good, but quick payment; as soon as the work is done, he promiseth to make good his word: Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee, Psal. 50. 15. Nay, the Lord Jesus sometimes pays beforehand: And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and whiles they are speaking, I will hear, Is. 65. 24. Men many times are forced to stay for their Money and sometimes lose it at last; but the Believers gain is not only sure, but speedy.

Obj. What's the reason then, the people of God do complain of God's not hearing, and deferring an answer to their requests? And why are Believers advised to patience, and long-suffering, after they have done the will of God, if the return of their Faith and Duties were so quick? This is the experience, and complaint of the people of God in all ages, that God seems not to regard their Prayers, and to delay his coming to help them.

Sol. 1. First, yet are the Saints returns quick; because they are in due time; God never delays to perform his word, when the Believer hath need of it; in the needful time of trouble, he will surely hear; My God shall supply all your wants, Phil. 4. 19. When once the Soul comes to stand in real want, then God will surely pay him; When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, Isa. 40. 17. When once they come to be needy, then God will with-hold no longer, but will help; this he hath promised, they shall not want any good thing, Psal. 34. 10.

Secondly, If the Lord do not pay presently, he will give use for it, they shall lose nothing by forbearance; But when he comes, he will bring his reward with him, Isa. 40. 10. Not only a reward of his work done by them, but a reward of their patient waiting for his promises also,

their mercy shall be so much the sweeter, for their want of it, and waiting for it. O! how welcome are long looked for mercies, when they come, then is every mercy double; God tried Job long by withholding mercy, but see the end of Job; God paid double for what he took, and withheld from him, Job 42. 10. Returns are sure always in the needful and seasonable time; and if God delays, he will pay well for it.

To which I might add this also; Many times Wisdom's Merchants are the cause of these delays, by their unfaithfulness in their trade, or their unfitness for their returns: The diligent hand makes rich, Prov. 10. 4. Souls that are active and faithful in the whole of Religion, shall have no cause to complain of God's slack payment.

So much by way of demonstration of the point, That the Heavenly Trade is the best Trade; no Merchandise like Wisdom's Merchandise.

Now, to come to some improvement of the Point.

Applications

USE I.

First, If the heavenly Trade be the best Trade, then it's strange that so few do set upon this Trade; persons that are to enter upon some course of life, and would fain live in the World, are willing to take the best Trade that is attainable by them, if they can but reach it, and have wherewithal to carry it on: who would spend his time and strength in low, sordid and mechanic services, which cannot maintain, or enrich him; if a brave, generous and wealthy Calling did

offer itself, and might be compassed? and yet such is the folly of most under the Gospel, who are ready to choose anything but Godliness, and to fall in with every proposal for their employment, rather than to engage about the work of Salvation: Men are wise in their generation, and know in other things how to choose the best bargains, only in the things of their Souls are foolish, and can be content to pursue shadows, and let go the substance; to lay out all their desires, hopes and labors about a life that perisheth, neglecting the vast concerns of another World, and the welfare of their immortals Souls: Is not this folly? Poor Sinners, let me reason a little with you, if possible to recover your lost understanding: come, be your own judges; Is it your interest (think you) to adventure your All, for things that cannot abide with you when obtained, nor satisfy you if they stay? things that can but bring you to your Grave, and accompany your bodies to the House of Mourning, and there leave you; unless they show you the way to Hell also. Is it not madness to adventure your Souls for a trade, pleasures and treasures of so short continuance, and little advantage? things that you will shortly be as weary of, as now desirous; and throw them to the Bats and Moles of the Earth, that you may go into the Rocks to hide you from the fury of a Sin-avenging God? Will you spend all upon time, and lay up nothing for eternity? Or, is it rational to think that you should reap where you never sowed, and possess the benefit of that Trade you never drove? Gal. 6. 7, 8. Can you think to reach Heaven hereafter, and never walk one foot in the way to it here? Certainly, what men sow, that they shall reap: Can you imagine the things of Heaven to be so cheap, as to be had without looking after? Alas, things far inferior cannot be so easily obtained; it may cost some of you many tugging's, much sweat, labor and expense to get but a little of this World; and do you think to find this tried Gold without buying, and digging for it? and is it a wise bargain (think you) to purchase your desirable Comforts with the loss of your Souls? and that you may gain but a

little of the World, to part with a possibility of having Heaven? What will it profit you to get the World, (were you sure of every part of it) and to lose your Souls? Mat. 16. 26. And what if you miss of your hopes in this, and fall short of Heaven too? never have what you looked for on Earth, nor a place in Heaven neither; will not your case be then dreadful? O! foolish Souls! that may be happy, but will not; that may get into such a course of life as would enrich you here, and forever; but refuse it, preferring a poor beggarly life before a rich and noble state; choosing rather to trade with Devils than God; to swap away your delightful time, for doleful eternity; your salvation prizes, swinish pleasures. O sad exchange for! to be bewailed, but not remedied: What? to barter away strength for weakness; desires for emptiness; labors for vanity; hope for despair; precious souls for perishing shadows; an open door of grace for a shut door of glory; mercy for misery; earth for hell? O fools in grain! to let go such a bargain, as being had, would forever make you; and being lost, may never be regained; but in the room of it, an eternity to repent your time of folly; when tears and cries will be too late, when mercy shall have no repenting's for you, bowels themselves no roulings over you, nor everlasting arms any help for you, Mat. 25. 10. This is your danger, (Sinners,) this may be your case, who refuse wisdom's counsels, choosing death rather than life: you that would have none of Wisdom's wares, nor work; but have rather valued the Devil's Counters, before Christ's Gold; and the pleasures of sin, that are but for a season, before the treasures of grace and glory, that are eternal; walking after the flesh, and serving divers lusts, till your trading time for Heaven be almost over. Alas, Sinners, there may be, for anything you know, but few Merchandising hours left for you in this World; it may be scarce a Sabbath more between some of you, and hell: in what a case then are you like to be, who never set upon this heavenly Trade to this very day? and should you now go out of this World strangers to this employment, in what a doleful state will your Souls

be forever? when you come to possess the eternal fruit of your bad bargain, then could any lay their ears to Hell gates, and listen at your cries, they would hear such language as this from your trembling lips, Folly, Folly, Woe, Woe, Eternity, Eternity.

USE II.

Secondly, This calls to mourning over the great decays of this Heavenly Trade, in the times and places wherein we live: Loss of Trade is easily resented as an evil case, a matter of trouble. Men use to be affected with hard times, when a death lies on their interests, and their earthly concerns are at a loss; and this is the case of most men this day; all places are full of complaints about their affairs in the world; there's a moth in men's labors and dealings, and it is easily seen and felt; the heavy looks, and heartless carriages of many, do plainly demonstrate a sense of their temporal wastes, and their mouths vent such-language: The times are hard, and the trade of the Nation gone: But alas! where are the mourners of Zion? and who is afflicted at the decays of godliness, and death on this Heavenly Trade? Though there is nothing more visible and lamentable than the falling back in Religion; yet who lays it to heart? and who is rightly affected with this important evil?

Now towards the cure of this insensibleness, and to awaken our hearts to a due apprehensiveness of our evil case, by reason of the decays of godliness; I shall

1. Lay down some symptoms evidencing it to be our case, that there are real and great decays of this Heavenly Trade in the time and places wherein we live.

2. Show why this should be for a lamentation.

First, That this Heavenly Trade goes back and decays, is so evident, that he is a stranger in our Israel, and hath too much of a spirit unconcerned in these matters, who doth not plainly see Religion, and the power of Godliness dying and languishing in most places and persons. Now the better to evince this sad truth, I shall proceed in a plain and familiar method, keeping to the metaphor in the text, and the usual symptoms of decayed Trading.

Six things usually show the decays of earthly Trading, all which are conclusive of the point in hand, and discover bad times for piety, and great wastes of Religion.

First, When the price of things is much fallen, and the rates very low, and goods are worth little or nothing; then men say, it's bad trading: So is it now in this Heavenly Trade; the rate and value of divine things is much abated; Wisdom's goods seem little worth to many: There was a time when Heavenly Wares were highly prized; the Word of God was precious to souls, far better to Saints than thousands of gold and silver; they could have parted with all the world, to enjoy God in Ordinances: estate, ease, credit, were nothing to a place in God's house; and one view of his countenance was better than life: Oh how sweet were the words of his mouth? much sweeter than the honey and honey-comb: Men could let their own ploughs stand still, to set their hands to God's plough; with Mary, they could neglect any business to sit at Christ's feet, Luke 10. 39. leave their appointed food, and most pleasant delicacies, for one draught of Sanctuary-waters; yea but for one sip of divine sweetness, they could break their rest, leave all for Christ's company; bear frowns, threatening's, losses, sufferings, with wonderful ease, for some fellowship with God and his people; they would not lose a praying or

hearing hour, whatever it cost them; they would stick at no hardships; price should never break between Christ and them; subscribe any terms, and count it a cheap bargain too, if at any rate they might obtain grace, and some spiritual good to their souls. But alas! now the case is altered; few will bid much for the precious things of Zion; even they that could have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to the Messengers of Christ, now think it too dear to pluck their hands out of their bosoms to open the door to Christ himself: Now soul privileges are worth little or nothing; Sermons, society of Saints are scarce counted worth the parting with a little time, ease, business, or friend, to enjoy them. A shop, a market, is better than the solemn Meeting with most: few can step over a straw, and forbear to gather a little stubble, though it be to get the unsearchable treasure of Christ: This is the sad temper of most Professors this day, they have lost their estimation of Christ and spiritual things; they do not value (let men talk what they will) God, above the world; Christ, above rest; one day in his Courts, above a thousand elsewhere; his precious Word, above their appointed food: most think it more advisable to take seasons for the world, than for Heaven; rather to baulk many Sermons, than lose a little profit and opportunity, though but of very small advantage in the world: Men are full, and rich, and have goods enough; they think they know enough already; have heard enough, prayed enough; they feel no want of, nor see worth in spiritual things; and therefore offer so little for soul-advantages; and this bespeaks manifestly the decay of this Heavenly Trade.

Secondly, Fewness of buyers argues bad trading: Among men, when Chapmen are scarce, few take off any goods; wares lie on men's hands, and will not off; then men say, Trade is fallen: Thus it is in this Heavenly Trade; there are few buyers of Wisdom's Wares; choice goods lie on sellers hands, and will not off; may not the Lord Jesus

complain as formerly Wisdom did, Prov. 1. 24. I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hands, and no man regarded; you have set at naught all my counsels, and would have none of my reproof. And as the Servants of God in the parable, Mat. 11. 17. We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned, and ye have not lamented. Markets are full in many places; the Lord Jesus hath much goods exposed to sale, and there are many Chapmen, but few buyers; persons come to Religious Assemblies and Sermons, as many do to Fairs, to see, and be seen; to gaze on goods, but not to buy; few will take Christ's wares on his own terms, and come up to the selling-price; God, grace and glory, are too dear for many men's money; they like some goods, but the price is too high; some could be content to have Christ; but to deny themselves, take up their Cross, leave all, and follow Christ; that they think is too dear, and break for price, Mat. 16. 24. Heaven is desirable at last, but the world at present; they could be content to take Heaven in reversion, when the lease of their worldly interests is expired; and to receive their portion there, when all is gone here; but to trade above now, and transport their earthly treasures to Heaven, while they enjoy them on earth, that's too hard for them; such goods, such overtures will not off; persons will not receive the Word of God as the Word of God; they will not take threatening's to fear them, warnings to regard them, promises to believe them, precepts to obey them. May not most Ministers complain, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53. 1. Most like and commend sermons, but few receive and obey them; it's lamentable to consider how little of a Sermon is carried away, remembered and practiced: This is the sin of Professors, and some that pass for more than ordinary, and yet are guilty of this careless, forgetful and unprofitable hearing; persons entertain truths, as they do their acquaintance; when they meet them on the way, shake hands and embrace them; be exceeding glad to see them, and then bid them

farewell; that's the reason the Lord Jesus carries back so much goods from Markets; his wares will not off; men buy not: And hence it is also that Christ turns back their duties; he will not receive the goods of such neither, and this makes bad trading for Heaven.

Thirdly, Want of employment is a sign of bad trading: When Trade is good, every man's hand is full of work; but when men are out of employment, and have nothing to set their hand to, but stand idle in the Market-place, this shows a decay of Trade: And is it not so with Wisdom's Laborers now? Persons professing God were once active in Religion, but are now grown slothful in spiritual business. Where are the works of faith, the labors of love, the fruits of the spirit among Christians this day? who is fervent in spirit? Ephes. 6. 18. who strives in prayer, watching thereunto with all perseverance? Joh. 6. 27. where are they that labor even unto weariness for the bread that endures? Heb. 12. 1. running even unto fainting in the race that is set before them? Rev. 7. 15. Serving God day and night in his Temple, and being diligent that they may be found of him in peace, 2 Pet. 3. 14. What Pharaoh charged on the Hebrews, when attempting liberty to serve God, may be with much more justice reflected on those that profess to serve God; and though they may, yet do not: Ye are Idle, ye are Idle: and hence it is men's hearts go a whoring after the world, and the flesh, with the lusts thereof; it is because they are slothful in spirit; a death is upon their hearts, and this causeth the work of God to cease, Neh. 4. 11. It is but little work most do for God this day; how cold, dead, formal, slightly, are many in duty, doing the work of God deceitfully, their own consciences being Judges? Jer. 48. 10. few labor with their hearts before they come to hear, in hearing, and after hearing, to get some soul-good by it: Men are usually pleased with a Lamp, though there be no oil in it; cannot be contented without some duty, but well pleased with bare duty: To be nothing in Religion troubles them; but to be something, though never so little, satisfieth

them: and if this be Popery to rest in the work done, how many Papists have we amongst us this day? Certainly Professors are generally asleep, or slumbering; they do their work so badly and heartlessly, their work falls out of their hand, as things do from men asleep; active for the world, as if they could never do enough; but soon tired in the work of God; dispatch but little of heavenly work from day today, from one Sabbath to another; little heart-searching, soul-watching work is done; little in-door employment is carried on; the exercise of faith, hope, humility, patience, zeal, self-denial, seems a stranger to a great many this day; not for want of occasions or encouragements to work, (the Lord is still calling upon his Laborers to make haste) but for want of hearts to work: And this spiritual sloth proves that the Heavenly Trade is much lost.

Fourthly, The poverty of Traders plainly shows Trading is not good; when a Trade doth not maintain the Trader, but he still goes back, and becomes poorer, then surely trading is not good: The diligent hand makes rich, Prov. 10. 4. When trading is good Traders usually thrive, and live well upon it, but when they waste and become poor, then trading decays: So is it with Heavenly Traders, when they drive a good Trade for Heaven they grow rich apace towards God, and in their own souls: Wisdom's wares are soul-enriching wares: My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver, Prov. 8. 19. Men account those to be rich who have much of gold and silver; but Wisdom's fruit is better than gold, and therefore must needs be enriching: they that have this gold cannot be poor: Hence it is Christ counsels Laodicea to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that she might be rich, Rev. 3. 1. But alas how poor in spirituals are persons generally this day! Therefore I said, Sur lie these are poor, they are foolish, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God, Jer. 5. 4. Unacquaintedness with the way of God, when men walk wide from Religion, and lose their strict and

close walking with God, they soon become poor and foolish: And this is the case of many everywhere; they give a carnal liberty to themselves, and indulge a freedom to walk after the fight of their own eyes, and not by rule; and where this is, there is soul poverty, which is too visible in most this day. Christians, do but observe your own hearts and others, and you will find this spiritual poverty abounding everywhere. Little thriving's appear under the best of means, choicest Privileges do little more than keep up a name to live; they convey but little quickening's to the soul: A show of Religion, and a mere skeleton of profession, is the common fruit of Ordinances in most places, whereas all the while decays are on the vitals of Christianity; abatements in grace appear every day, and a visible alteration in the whole frame, and internal vigor of the soul, faith, love, humility, patience, self-denial, and every grace becomes weaker every day; Former days were better than now, Eccles. 7. 10. Speak Christian, are not matters worse with thy soul, than they were? and abatements appear in every part.

There was a time when thy mind was beamed over with Divine Light; the Candle of the Lord did shine in thy tabernacle: Thy eye was quick to discern good and evil; thou couldest once see an excellency in the knowledge of Christ; O how choice were sermons! privileges were to thee the uncasking of Jewels, and the opening of hidden glory; thou didst dwell in the Land of Visions, and still some new discoveries of light and grace did meet thee in thy affectionate attendance upon God. But now it is not so; thy Candle burns dimly, and thy right eye is darkened; now thou seest but little beauty in grace, or desirableness in truth: things under thy feet the other day, that seemed nothing compared with Christ; now through the multiplying-glass of thy deceived mind, seem great and lovely.

Formerly thy affections were warm and lively after God, his word and ways: O! how precious were his appointed Feasts, and his Tabernacles amiable? thou couldst delight in approaching to God, and talk of a blessedness in his presence. O the pleasure, sweetness and joy thy heart did find in thy Closet, in spiritual Converses, and Duties, and public Ordinances! thou couldst weep over sin, and bedew thy prayers with tears, and find thy heart burn within thee while Christ was speaking, and melted under the warm beams of divine love. But, alas, now it is not so; now thy affections are dead, thy heart as cold as a stone; all the while thou art speaking to God in Prayer, or God speaking to thee in his Word, thou findest no more savor in Ordinances, Duties, and Christian Converses, than in the white of an Egg, Job. 6. 16. Thou findest not that delight in God as formerly, and the night of thy pleasure is turned to fear unto thee, Isa. 21. 4. This is Soul-poverty.

Again, there was a time also, when thy Will, like the great Wheel in the Clock, could move regularly after God; thou couldst choose God for thy chiefest interest, and Christ for thy only treasure; preferring an interest in him above ten thousand Worlds: thou couldst have voted for communion with God, before thy meat and drink; and one hours fellowship with Christ, beyond all the delights on Earth: thou couldst choose the things that please God, and deny thy own pleasure to give content to him: thou couldst once stick to thy first choice, and find the purpose of thy heart cleaving to God, Act. 11. 23. Thou couldst once resolve, and keep thy resolutions; 'twas easier to take thy heart out of thy body, than to gain thy consent to part with Christ, his presence and ways. But now thy will is hardly drawn after pure and constant enjoyments of God in his ways: O! how difficult a thing is it to persuade thy will to let go all for Christ, to leave everything to attend on God, to part with the world and self to wait on God, to throw all over-board to take in Christ! How hard is it now,

to consent that Christ shall have all the command of thy Soul, and dispose of thy dearest interests! now thou findest it a work above thee, to keep thy heart in order one hour, or to perform the purposes of thy Soul to God and Godliness; thou resolvest, and changest every day; thou vowest, and breakest thy vows continually; there is no steadfastness in thy spirit: this also bespeaks thy Soul-poverty.

There was a time also when thy Conscience was tender, thy heart could smite thee for the least sin; thy Conscience could hold thee to the greatest duty, and bind thee to thy good behavior: thou couldst not go against the light and checks of thy regulated Conscience, were it to gain the whole World. But now 'tis dead and quiet, it can bear the sharpest strokes of the two edged Sword, and not feel it, or bleed; it makes little or no bones of sin against knowledge, and mercy; sins that were before troublesome, now go down easily; it can digest threatening's and terrors with little trouble, and sleep while the arrows of the Lord's wrath fly about its ears; it can let go mercies without regarding, and truths to pass away without entertainment: this is Soul poverty.

This thou canst say too, there was formerly an activity in thy Soul for God, and the spring of thy heart was strong, and it set every wheel a going: thou couldst run, and not be weary; walk, and not be faint: no religious duty was tiresome to thee; no commands of God were grievous, 1 Joh. 5. 3. no journeys seemed long that led to God, nor Sermons tedious that spake of God: thy spirit was all life, when in holy company, and work: did any say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the house of the Lord, Zech. 8. 21. thou wouldst say, I will go also: If God did but say, Seek thou my face, Psal. 27. 8. thy heart would presently answer, thy face, Lord, will I seek. But now a deadness seizeth upon thee, and slothfulness gathers in over thy whole Soul: thou art soon weary of well-doing, and canst not hold

out with God in conflicts and difficulties, as heretofore: thou art not so diligent to prepare thy meat in Summer, Prov. 30. 25. nor to lay in provision for a Winter spending-season: thou turnest on thy bed as a door on its hinges, and takest little pains with thy heart and conversation: thou lovest many an opportunity and advantage for thy Soul through thy deadness and indisposition to good works: And doth not this bespeak Soul-languishing, and poverty?

There are decays and poverty in thy life also, as well as spirit: how unprofitable is now thy conversation, to what it was? there was a time when thy bow did abide in strength, thy lips did disperse knowledge, Prov. 15. 7. thy steps did drop fatness: it was good to be in thy company, few came from thee but were bettered. But, alas! now, how dwindling is thy light? how jejune and sapless is thy converse? thy company little lovely, thy communications little profitable; thy words eat as doth a Canker, it sears as a hot Iron, and deadens those that hear it; thy breath freezes all that come hear it, so unprofitable a burden is thy company. We turn all Religion (saith one) into a discourse, censure or dispute: We can eat, and drink, and talk, and sin as freely. This is a sad case indeed, and bespeaks great decays of godliness, when persons become more poor, and impotent in their Souls.

Fifthly, Small adventures in Traders, do usually bespeak bad Trading; when times are hard, and Goods go not off, Sellers buy but little, and drive a less Trade when improvements fail; men are loath to adventure the principal, but presently contract their Trade, and lessen their dealings. So 'tis in this spiritual Trade, when Souls begin to decay in it, and Trading is bad, they narrow up their Trade, and lay out less of their heart and strength about it; little of their Soul goes out after God, and things above; they cannot adventure for God, as formerly; nor spare time for prayer, hearing, reading, holy

conference, as once they could; the stream of their affections begins to run another way; now they are all for the world, self, and vanity; business and interest eats up all their time; or at least, they say to Christ, as David did to Mephibosheth, (Thou and Zibah divide the Land;) So, thou and the world, thou and pleasures, thou and reputation divide my heart, time and strength: this is too evident; God hath not so much of men's hearts, desires, love, delight, faith, hope, zeal, as heretofore: 'tis low waters all the year long with many; no heart to duty, as the Prophet complains; Whoredom and Wine take away the heart, Hos. 4. 11. So lust, sloth, the world, and self, take away the heart; few breathings after God, when absent; or delight, when present; indisposed to duty, cold, formal in duty; put off God with anything; keep the best of the flock, the prime of their strength for themselves and the world; and turn off the Lord with a corrupt thing, the residue of their wasted affections and strength, Mal. 1. 14.

Sixthly, Breaking shows bad Trading, when men can hold it no longer, but are forced to give over; they go back, and waste so fast, that at last they shut up shop, and are gone. The times we live in are a manifest instance of this truth; men breaking ever and anon, now one, then another; declares plainly Trading is bad. And thus 'tis with Wisdom's Merchants this day; how many that have driven a brave trade of Profession, made a great show of Religion, were famous in their generation for Parts, and seeming Piety; but are now come to nothing, quite fallen and gone; great apostasies from the truth, sad shipwrecks of Faith and Conscience can these late times speak of! Men that seemed like Stars, to give a blaze for a while, and then turned to falling Meteors at last: or, with the Sun, that riseth in a splendor, and sets in a cloud: The visible apostasy, and gross debauchery of men professing God in these latter times, is great; but the secret degeneracy, and backslidings of heart, are much more: many break, but more do warp. 'It is far easier to observe, than to be

affected with men's great declensions in Religion; some in principle, but most in practice; some with the fallen Angels have left their habitation, and fallen from their first state; others falter in their profession, and are fallen in their station: some with stormy winds are shaken down; others fully ripe, and gotten to the height of their profession, loosen by degrees, and drop away: some fall from the tree, others rot where they hang; some trees have lost their fruit, others their very leaves, and are become twice dead: where can you cast your eye, and not see fallings away either from Faith, or faithfulness? Men take up notions, and as easily leave them; most build upon the sand, little rooting's in the truth: how easy is it to draw men from their opinions? little steadfastness in love: how soon doth the labors thereof cease? a little trouble makes men let go their profession, others lose their strictness in Religion, and grow more remiss and lame in duty, leaving their first love, and close walks with God's: And are not these such manifest symptoms of decaying godliness, that he who runs may read, and see that the Heavenly Trade is almost come to nothing this day?

2. And this is cause of mourning, and to be greatly laid to heart; who can see these things and not be affected: If there be any quick flesh, how can it but bleed? if any waters are left, surely our eyes should run down tears, and we pour out waters in Mizpah before the Lord abundantly, for wasting, gasping piety, that is even giving up the ghost: For where this Heavenly Trade decays,

First, There is a growing strangeness between God and such souls: While Trade is kept up among men, there is much acquaintance, converse and intimacy between them; there are ever and anon occasions of writings, meetings and discourses while trading holds; but when once that is let down, then communion ceaseth; they have little business one to another; no more letters pass, or visits given;

seldom see one another, and so at last grow out of acquaintance with each other: And thus 'tis between God and souls; when once this Heavenly Trade is let down, a strangeness begins between God and them, they are seldomer in his company, neither are there such enquiries after God as before: There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities, Isa. 64. 7. They were strange to God, they did not call upon him as they use to do; and if they did, it was in such a general, cold way, that it signified little; they did not take hold of him: The word signifieth, To hold with all their strength, as men do that are drowning that will not let go what they hold: it signifies also (says a Learned Critick) not only to hold a thing, but faster and faster to wax strong in the holding it: But alas! they did not so take hold of God, as such who were like to perish without him: They did not stir up themselves: They did not waken and rouse up themselves: (as the word imports) They were grown more remiss in duty; they did not strive with God for help as they did: And God was strange to them; he hid his face from them; he concealed himself, that he might not be seen, (as the word signifies) he seems not to care for their company: This made the Prophet cry out, Why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring man, who turneth aside to tarry but for a night? Jer. 14. 18. Seldom visits, and short stays, shows strangeness in them that have been intimate; and so 'tis between God and such who neglect this Heavenly Trade; the Lord seldom visits them, nor hath such warm converses with them as before: And is not this cause of mourning, when such a friend as God hath been to his people, and one on whom all their hope lies, and in whom all their help is, shall look strange upon them, and take no notice of them? This is enough to break an ingenuous heart, and one that knows what it is to enjoy God: Neither is it only the present want of God is their suffering; but by this means they are in danger of losing him quite: The Lord is

with you while you are with him; and if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you, 2 Chron. 15. 2. Hence the Prophet, when he apprehended a change in God's carriage towards Israel, the next thing he fears, is his departure from them; he no sooner complains of God's strangeness, but presently prays, Leave us not, Jer. 14. 9. When once it came to a straitening, and loathing between God and his people, then terrible judgments follow; My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred, me, Zach. 11. 8, 9, 'It is in the Original, My soul was straitened in them: God's heart was not towards them as formerly; he could not bear with them as formerly: And then, I will not feed them, that that dies, let it die, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; he matters not what becomes of them: Do but think in what a case are such a people: This should be for a lamentation.

Secondly, Soul-poverty, and wasting's of their spiritual interests, do usually attend neglect of this Heavenly Trading. When men come to spend upon the stock, and have no comings in, they must needs waste apace: So it is where trading for Heaven is neglected; such have no recruits of their wasted graces, nor supplies of their impoverished souls, when the fountain is shut up, and all communication of grace withheld; no intercourse between God and them; he will not receive their goods, nor impart his treasure but all ways of relief are blocked up; then they must needs waste apace in spirituals, and become poorer every day. The way to be rich, is to have store of Christ's tried gold: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, Rev. 3. 18. Laodicea was poor, because she wanted Christ's tried gold, the real graces of his Spirit; and this she lost by letting down her Spiritual Trade; she did not buy of Christ; she did not come to, and deal with Christ in his own ways, and upon his own terms, and that made her poor: And so 'tis with every soul that neglects this Heavenly Trade; he soon comes

to know what soul-wants are: Once let down a life in godliness, and presently poor in graces, poor in experiences, poor in comforts, poor in hopes, want strength, and want peace, fare hard, lodge badly, cast out from among men; as Job describes poor and mean persons: Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and Juniper roots for their meat, Job 30. 4 5. 6. Very mean fare; little pleasing or nourishing food; bitter and salt herbs: some take them for nettles, poor food; and yet the usual feeding in those parts, of those that were low in the world; neither was their lodging better: They dwelt in the clefts of the Valley, in caves of the Earth, and in the Rocks: Suitable also was their reputation; They were driven from among men, they cried after them, as after a thief. Such is the condition of poor persons full of straits, and meanly esteemed; and so 'tis with such as decay in their Heavenly Trade; they have lost their sweet morsels, and marrowy bits; their pleasant fare, and soul-refreshments they once had, and feed on dry bones, and sapless Ordinances: They are not maintained at that rate of comfort and experience they once had: They have hard lodging also; lose that sweet rest and peace they sometimes found in Christ, and in their sincere walking's after him: Fallen in reputation too; neither God nor good men think so well of them as once they did. This is the case of such as fall back in Religion; they soon fall into such poverty, and spiritual wants come upon them, as armed men: In the fullness of their sufficiency they are in straits, Prov. 24. 34. Job 20. 22. And this is cause of mourning; wants and poverty do fill men with trouble, perplexity and grief: Oh the distractions and distressing thoughts that straits commonly beget! and no straits like to soul-straits; Christians, you yourselves be my Judges.

Thirdly, Neglect of Trading for Heaven will blast all other Trading, and breed a moth to consume even your temporal substance: When Israel began to let down their Heavenly Trade, and to mind their own concerns and houses above God's, presently God blasts their

temporal interests; he makes holes in their moneybags, and blows upon their increase: All their tugging's in the world (with neglect of God and his Worship) came to nothing; they sowed much, and it brought in little; looked for much, and it came to little; wrought hard, earned great wages, laid up money, but it fell out again, through some secret hole in their bags, which divine jealousy opened, consuming their substance, to let them know, that men may make more haste than good speed; and they that reckon without God, must reckon twice. And may not this be one thing that cuts this Nation short in their outward interest this day, because they have forsaken God, neglected his service, lost the power of godliness? certainly though outward prosperity be no token of God's favor, nor any Gospel-promise to his people; yet when the Lord does fight against a people by successive rebukes, and send in a secret mildew, wasting and consumption on their interests, and this becomes general and national, it shows displeasure in God, and should be laid to heart; the want of which is set forth as an additional aggravation to such a people's sin: Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his Laws: Therefore he poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not, and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart, Isa. 42. 24, 25. It was the not walking in the way of God, neglect of obedience and practical holiness, a letting down the Heavenly Trade that brought those ruining judgments on Israel; losses on their interests, verse. 21. They were robbed and spoiled, firing their houses, verse. 25. It hath set him on fire round, it burned him. Now in this miserable case there was yet a greater judgment on them, a strange stupefaction and insensibleness of spirit; they did not see God's anger in it, yet, Yet he knew it not; (viz.) Whence it came, and who did all this; they looked to Chaldeans, and enemies, but 'twas God did it; and yet they laid it

not to heart; they were not rightly affected with all these desolations, and their near approach to ruin: And is not this our case? God hath warned us by his Word this many years, threatened us by prodigious signs in Heaven and Earth, begun to execute them already, by Plague, Sword and Fire, dreadful wastes in the great City, and many other places, to the undoing of many families, made a breach upon the Trade of the Nation, to the impoverishing of the whole Land; and yet we are as insensible as Pharaoh and the Egyptians were, as if the Lord had sent the spirit of slumber upon us; impoverished, yet fell it not: This should be for a lamentation.

Fourthly, The decay of this Heavenly Trade, if not cured, is the ready and certain way to ruin: The destruction of the poor is poverty, Prov. 10. 15. Men's poverty fills them with consternation and dejecting fears, and does also expose them to many evils, and take down their external defense from injuries, being made a prey to their oppressors. The rich man's wealth is his strong City, Prov. 18. 11. Rich men protect themselves from injuries; their riches are Advocates for them to men; but poor men lie open to all invasions; when men grow poor every man treads upon them: So is it when the Heavenly Trade decays, and soul-poverty springs out of its ruin; then destruction makes haste to such places and persons: For this the Lord Jesus threatens to take the Kingdom from a people, because they bring not forth the fruit of it, Matth. 21. 43. they did not render to God the fruit of all his dressings and waiting's on them: Barrenness and decays in Religion uncured, are a certain forerunner of Desolation, Luke 13. 7, 9.

Before the Lord brought in that cruel Nation, the Vandals on Africa; the Christians in Spain were much degenerated from their former purity (as Salvian complains) and the power of godliness was much decayed; he tells us, they had nothing left but the name of

Christianity, to which their conversation was most unlike. What is it (saith he) to please ourselves with the name of Christian, when the very name does greaten our guilt, in that we are so unlike to it? Before the Massacre at Paris (saith Mr. Clark in his Martyrol.) such a general stupidity seized upon the Protestants, that their minds were very wavering, and few there were that showed themselves zealously bent to Religion; but all, both great and small, were intent upon worldly matters, building to themselves goodly Castles in the air. It was observed by some, that before the change of Religion and Martyrdom in Queen Mary 's days, there was great unprofitableness under the Means of Grace. What the issues of these great decays in Religion may be amongst us, we know not; but such symptoms have usually foregone great changes, and severe strokes, on such persons and places: And is not this matter of lamentation? Physicians use to cure a Lethargy by a Fever; the one hath been our disease, O that the other, if no means else will do, may be our cure.

Fifthly, At the best decays in this Heavenly Trade will render the Traders account heavy in the day of Christ. Into what straits did the sense of an abused trust put the Prodigal Steward, Luke 16. 13? He had been unfaithful in his place, wasted his Masters goods, and now was in danger of being turned out; a reckoning was called for, and he unable to render it; and in perplexing thoughts how to give in his accounts, and to secure his future welfare: And this will be the case of such as are negligent and unfaithful in their Heavenly Trade; it will expose them to soul-trouble one day, how to answer it before God: First or last God will call for an account how his goods have been improved: He hath given you a stock to trade upon for him: Light, Grace, Parts, Capacities, Gospel-privileges and Opportunities, Liberty, Peace, Experiences, with many mercies and afflictions, which are all your Lord's goods, and must be accounted for; upon the passing of which depends your eternal state, or much of your soul's

peace: The Lord Jesus hath a double audit, or accounting with his servants: In this life in the Court of Conscience; and in the Judgment-Day at the bar of God: In the first your present peace and soul comfort is much concerned, and your eternal welfare in the last: Alas! how will you answer conscience now when that book is opened, and the Lord Jesus brings in his bill of so many mercies expended, with skill and capacity to improve them; and such a charge of debt issuing thence: So much due for such goods, and for other wares; for Sermons, Sacraments, Graces, Comforts, Frames, Prayer Returns, Gracious Providences and Protections; so many personal mercies, so many family mercies, so many bodily mercies, so many soul mercies, so many Church mercies, so many National mercies, sick-bed mercies, health mercies, journey mercies, habitation mercies, caring mercies, sparing mercies, giving mercies, forgiving mercies, seen mercies, unseen mercies; and little or no return yet made for all these: How can the conscience stand up under such a charge, or lift up his face without spot, when it sees its guilt in all, and cannot answer one of a thousand? How shall man be just with God, if he contend with him? How shall he answer him one of a thousand? And if you cannot carry it in the Court of Conscience here, where God reckons by a Proxy; and it may be doth give but a general charge, what will you do at the bar of God, where the Lord will judge righteous judgment, and determine your eternal state, as you are approved or disapproved in that day? What think you souls, will not so much neglect of duty? such decays of grace? so frequent breach of Covenants? so great unfaithfulness in your places and relations? so many days and weeks, and not a stroke of work for God? so much bad work, so much waste of goods; will not all this look whistly upon you, and without repentance and a sealed acquittance, render your case dangerous at the judgment seat? And if so, is it not matter of lamentation? O lay this to heart!

USE III.

Thirdly, If the Heavenly Trade be the best Trade; then this reproves men's too greedy and inordinate pursuit of their earthly Trades and Interests, to the great prejudice and hindrance of this Heavenly Trade: And oh that I could here dip my Pen in tears, as well as gall; and not only write against, but weep over this earthly spiritedness, the great, the common, the uncured disease of men; almost of all men, of good men, this day! With what earnestness, strength of affection, and indefatigable labors, do men pursue after the things of this world, as if all their pleasure, happiness, yea life and eternal welfare lay wrapped up in these things. Jehu did not more furiously drive after a Crown, then men do this day after crumbs. There was a time to some when godliness was counted gain; but now gain is valued beyond godliness. Trade is the great Diana to which most men sacrifice: Profit the wheel within the wheel, which sets all a going: The salt that seasons all things; nothing savors well that hath not this in it. Advantage in the world, is like the blood in men's veins; the soul in the body; that quickens their desires, puts life into their dead hopes; makes the blind to see, the lame to leap and run, the deaf to hear, the lips of them that are asleep to speak. Gain is the whetstone to men's wits, the loadstone to their affections, the spur to their actions: this is the object of men's quickest senses, the center of their liveliest motions. O! the projects, cares, tugging's, sweats, rowing's, ridings, restless labors, that are engaged about this enquiry: Who will show us any good?

Quest. But how may we know when men do inordinately pursue their earthly business and concerns?

Answ. 1. First, When they engross too much of their time: this was Israel 's sin, saying, When will the New-Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth Wheat? Amos 8. 5. They were not contented with their own time but they must entrench on God's time als. they thought the time long till they were at their worldly work, and hoped to get advantage from God's institutions, for their earthly interests; and that the Jubilee-Sabbath, when men must cease from tillage, would help to heighten the price of things, and so further their advantage: therefore the Lord reproves them for their undue diligence about the World: It is in vain for you to rise up early, and to sit up late to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep, Psal. 127. Here (saith Piscator) he doth, by this sudden Apostrophe, inveigh against those covetous Tradesmen and Merchants, telling them; 'It is in vain for them to rise up so early to their work, and sit up so late in their shops, for such poor and contemptible gain: So Rabbi Solomon renders it for Artificers, who rise early to their labors. Excessive pursuits of the World in point of time are here reprov'd as vain and sinful, while hereby they deprive themselves of time for God and their Souls.

Secondly, when they lay out their Hearts on the World; If riches increase, set not your hearts on them, Psal. 62. 10. The danger of a disease lies in its seizure on the heart: Earthly things, under the hand are a duty; but in the heart, a disease. The heart is Christ's Royal Fort, to which the Devil, the World and Flesh lay siege; and if that be taken, all is gone: Earthly things are briars and thorns, and therefore dangerous to come near the heart: the least prick at the heart is mortal; the heart is Christ's nuptial-bed, into which Christ retires; the World is the Saint's servant; now to admit a servant into the Lord's bed, is adulterous: the heart is God's Seat, Pavilion and Throne, into which none must come but himself; like the gates of the Sanctuary, into which none must enter but God himself: This gate

shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter into it; because the Lord, the God of Israel hath entered into it; therefore it shall be shut, Ezek. 44. 2. Such is the heart of Believers, to be kept for God only; to take in creatures into God's room, is intolerable boldness; to let out thy heart to the World, Trade, Interest, Creatures, is to invert the order of nature, as well as grace. In creation, God sets man uppermost, and puts all things under his feet: Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, Psal. 8. 6. Now, to place those things over thy heart, which God hath set under thy feet, is to turn the World upside down, and to overturn the whole course of nature. This is the great sin of this day, men's letting out their hearts on the things of this World: were persons but serious, and willing to be searched, and to know their own state, many that think well of themselves, might find, that notwithstanding all their shows, and seeming hopes, they are in a woeful and dangerous case, in that their hearts are not right with God, but are set on other things, on earthly things more than on God.

Six things discover this, that the heart is set too much upon this World.

First, When the desires are inordinately let out after it: this is one symptom the Prophet gives of an unsound, covetous heart; such a one hath greedy, unsatisfied desires after the World; Who enlargeth his desire as Hell, and is as Death, and cannot be satisfied, Hab. 2. 5. In the former verse he tells us, a carnal unbelieving heart, is a rotten unsound heart: His soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him: but the just shall live by Faith. A carnal heart is all for himself, and his own carnal interest, and not for God; he lives by sight, and not by Faith; and this was an evidence of it, all his desires were for carnal things. Desires are the breathings and outgoings of the heart, and as

the heart is, such are they; where the desires are earthly, the heart is earthly; such a one is never satisfied with any portion of earthly things: as a person in a Fever, always thirsty; so is an earthly heart, always coveting more and more: They join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place, Isa. 5. 8. As long as there is any place left, they covet it: A Field, a House, a Living, is but a morsel that stays a hungry stomach for the present, as soon as that is digested they long for more: this is a certain sign that heart is on the World, whose desires have never enough of it: and alas! where's the person that will say with Jacob, I have enough? Where the heart is set on God and things above, a little of the World will content that Soul; food and raiment, with godliness, is enough; but it is never satisfied with its measure of Grace, and enjoyment of God; the more it enjoys of God, the more it longs for further fellowship with him; one duty doth but edge the stomach for another: the more he hath, the more he desires of God and spiritual things: and so 'tis with a heart that is altogether earthly, the desires are earthly also, never satisfied with what he hath, but still longing for more.

Secondly, A worldly heart hath worldly thoughts; there the mind is wholly taken up about earthly things; thoughts are to the heart as the beams are to the Sun, the streams to the Fountain, which are homogeneous, of the same nature with them; our Lord Jesus tells us, that 'tis out of the heart that evil thoughts proceed, Mark. 7. 21. They come immediately from the heart, (says Mr. Fenner,) nothing comes between the heart and them; other sins (says he) come from the heart, but it is at the second, third and fourth hand; but thoughts come immediately from it: And nothing doth more discover the heart, than the usual, habitual, delightful thoughts of a man do: They are the univocal acts of the heart, which show what the heart is, as shining does the light; Mr. Fenner of the misery of earthly thoughts. Where are thy thoughts mostly? thy pleasing and delightful

thoughts? there is thy Heart: They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, Rom. 8. 5. As soon as they awake, thoughts of their business (as friends) come to visit them; they drive out other thoughts of God and heavenly things, they vanish and disappear at the presence of earthly thoughts, as Clouds do at the rising-Sun; as when a Master comes in to take his seat, Servants rise up, and go their way: no sooner doth thoughts of God come in, but earthly thoughts drive them away, as the Shepherds did Jethro 's Daughters, and there is no Moses to stand up and help them, Exod. 2. 16, 17. An earthly man from morning to night his thoughts are upon the World, as the Dog follows his Master all the day long: In company, alone, at home, abroad, in journeys, in duties; his thoughts are usually about his Trade, Interest, House, Field, Work, and the like; it may be sometimes good thoughts may be cast into the mind, and these make amends for all other thoughts, feeding the deceived heart with conceits that all is well, because good thoughts come in now and then; whereas the main bent of their thoughts have been about earthly things: these thoughts grow out of the heart, they are indwellers; but good thoughts are only guests and strangers that don't stay long; they give a visit, and then are gone, and must give way to earthly thoughts again, which are home-born, household-servants and inhabitants: thy thoughts of God are but occasional, now and then extraordinary, when some special mercy or affliction is upon thee, but thy earthly thoughts are fixed, stated and continued: thy good thoughts are like rain-water, that fall upon thee, or as pump-water that must be drawn out; but thy carnal thoughts are as well water, that runs freely, and springs up from within thee: thy good thoughts are but thy recreation, when thy mind is tired with other things; but thy earthly thoughts are thy work and employment; when men have done their work, they sometimes walk abroad; such are thy seldom thoughts of God and divine things, when thou hast drudged away the strength of thy mind on the World, and thy own things,

then, to quiet conscience, and recreate thy mind, thou givest thy thoughts leave to walk abroad, and give a visit to better things: thy heavenly thoughts are gentle, easy, weak and sickly, and carry out little of the strength and vigor of thy heart with them; but thy thoughts of the World are strong and lively, the first-born and strength of thy heart; they are spending thoughts, working, plotting, carking, studying thoughts: Ah souls! deceive not yourselves with fancies of your good estate, from some fits and good moods in you (which hypocrites may have) and all the while the strength and bent of your hearts, the constant, lively, prevailing thoughts of your souls are carnal, selfish and earthly.

Thirdly, Persons restless labors after the world, plainly show their hearts are upon it: Where the heart is set upon a thing a person is restless till he hath it; he leaves no stone unturned; sets wit, hands, friends, and all on work to get it. When Shechem 's heart was set on Dinah, Jacob 's daughter, he sticks at no proposals so he might but obtain her: Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me, I will give; the Land shall be before you, dwell and trade therein, and get you possession therein, Gen. 34. 10, 11. No terms were counted too hard; take up profession, undergo painful duties, punishing circumcision; part with anything so he might but have the desire of his heart, What hardships did Jacob undergo for his beloved Rachel? twice seven years service, consumed with drought in the day, and frost in the night, and his sleep departed from his eyes: Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle, and thou hast changed my wages ten times, Gen. 31. 40, 41. And yet all this he could bear to enjoy the object of his love.

So 'tis with earthly minded men; all their capacities are engaged about earthly things; their chiefest strength is laid out about their

Trades, callings and businesses in the world, seldom minding soul-concerns, little employed in religious duties; now and then hear, read, pray, as may stand with interest; cold, sleighty, formal, sleepy in duty; but all life when about the world; ready to complain prayer is too long, preaching tedious; too much time spent in duty; what need this waste? Matth. 26. 8. All seems lost to flesh and blood which is spent on Christ and his service, [Mr. Trap:] But all too little for the world; weary themselves for very vanity; stick at nothing that will help them to their desired interests; undergo any hardships; turn the back on any duties; adventure health, reputation, the displeasure of God, with all their spiritual mercies; yea and the eternal welfare of their souls also, rather than lose an advantage in the world: This is the spirit of too many this day: Men that seem to be somewhat, bid fair for salvation, with the young man in the Gospel; like the terms well; come up to everything but this; cannot part with the world for Christ; come up to everything, only with Naaman, must be pardoned in this, that they have a Rimmon to bow to, 2 Kings 5. 18. In everything else they will consent to follow Christ, but in this they must be spared: when their farms, their merchandise and profit calls for them, then the concerns of Christ and their souls must stand by; and affections like a flood run over all that lies in their way; take no notice what Scripture or Conscience say; deaf to all arguments that thwart interest: This is the case of a worldly heart; his chiefest strength is laid out about earthly things; these must be followed and sought after, whatever becomes of the soul and spiritual things. What is that so great hope (saith Seneca) what so great necessity, that stoops man who was made upright, to contemplate Heaven, and buries and drowns him in the deeps of the Earth, to get out that gold which is not got with less danger than 'tis kept, Sen? A little strength for duty will serve the turn; but a great deal of time, care and labor must the world have: Surely the world rules that heart that comes and goes at its bidding, and can leave all to follow it at the command

of interest. You will judge him another man's servant, who, whatever he is doing, will leave it all when his Master calls him, and follow him. Let men think what they will, God hath no part for the present in that soul that can do more to enjoy the world, than God; and counts anything more necessary than to converse with, obey and serve him.

Fourthly, The delight and pleasure men take in earthly things, declare that their hearts are let out upon them: Where the heart is, there will the delights be. Love is the very life of the soul, Alsted. Theol. nature. p. 613. When Jonathan 's heart was knit with the heart of David, 1 Sam. 18. 1. as an evidence of it: Chap. 19. 2, Jonathan Saul's Son delighted much in David: Delight is the rest of desire, in the fruition of that good the heart is set upon, which satisfies the desire; [Reynolds of the Passions, Cap. 19. Pag. 197.] One calls it, the Sabbath of our thoughts, and that sweet tranquility of mind which we receive from the presence and fruition of that good whereunto our desires have carried us: If then men's delights in the world exceed their pleasure in God, 'tis a sign the world is their chiefest good. Wicked men delight in their abominations, and that proves their ways to be of choice. Isa. 63. 3, They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations: Try thy heart by thy pleasure; what is sweetest to thy taste, God or the World? What is most delightful to thee, to wait on God, though with the loss of the world, or to pursue the world, with the want of God? Men cheat their own Souls, when they say the enjoyment of God is better than the world; and yet for every trifle, and smallest advantage, can upon choice, baulk the enjoyment of God in his appointments, and cannot adventure the least loss and prejudice to their interest, though it were for the nearest fellowship with God: certainly that which is the Souls greatest pleasure, that will it make after when left to its liberty: Canst thou leave the snow of Lebanon for the waters of Assyria? Pass

by a walk in Christ's gallery, to sit down and solace thyself on the dunghill-comforts of this life? then are not thy chiefest delights in God: Psal. 27. 4, One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple: If the beholding of God in Ordinances be thy delight, it will be the one thing in thy desires and endeavors; also all other things are nothing to that: If thy chiefest pleasure be in God, then nothing but a conviction of duty can make thee upon choice decline an opportunity of waiting on God; and even then also, when obedience to God sets thy hand to the world; delight in God will engage thy longings after him, and make thy greatest comforts thou art then pursuing, a weight and a burden to thy soul, because they stand between thy heart and communion with God. Thy affections will be like the Kine that drew the Ark to Bethshemesh, that lowed after their Calves as they went, 1 Sam. 16. 12. When thou art constrained to draw in the Cart of thy duty-employments, even then will thy desires bellowing after the comfort of thy relation-interest in God. How is it soul? speak; Is not a good Fair and Bargain sweeter to thee, and doth more affect thy heart, than a sermon and a duty? Dost thou not use to follow the world with thy back on fellowship with God and Saints, and not the least regret in thy spirit, or cloud on thy comforts? if so, thy heart is not yet supremely set on God.

Fifthly, Loathness to part with thy earthly comforts and interests tells thee, thy heart is too much upon them. Jacob 's unwillingness to part with Benjamin, was a sign his heart was too much set upon him. Judah tells the Governor of Egypt, That his Father's life was bound up in the Lad's life, Gen. 44. 30. The Spouses affection to her Beloved was seen in this, that when she found him, she held him, and would not let him go, Cant. 3. 4. I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him, and would not let him go. Such is the testimony, that if men's

hearts are on the things of this life, they hold them fast, and will not let them go: Most men are too tenacious of their interests, to be dead to them: close hands argue cleaving hearts to the world. Alas! with what reluctancy do men that have the abundance of this worlds goods, lay them out again for God! how hard is it to draw any proportions of charity from them that have this worlds goods? what arguments and reasons will men be pleading for their sparingness in parting with the Mammon of this world? and how much beneath their measure do most men expend their earthly things upon the calls that God gives them? This shows plainly, their heart is bound up in the fruition of these things. Covetous men will sooner part with their flesh, than their gold (saith Augustine) shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men whom I know not whence they be? 1 Sam. 25. 11. (saith covetous Nabal.) Covetous persons cannot endure to part with what they have. The covetous man, while he holds fast his riches, is held fast by them; and in preying on others, he himself becomes a prey, August. They are like a net, which takes in all the fish that comes at it, but lets out none again, except some small ones that are little worth: Earthly minds are seen in nothing more than in their tenacity, and close keeping of what they have; like dying men, whatever they take hold of, they let not go: This is the temper of many, they cannot scatter for God, nor honor him with their substance: There is that withholdeth more than is meet, Prov. 11. 24. That's the character of one whose heart is on the world. He is not only covetous that takes away other men's goods (saith Augustine) but he that covetously withholds his own, and will not let them go when God hath use for them: Certainly, if Believers themselves are not their own, then they will one day know their estates and interests are not their own, but the Lord's, and to be at his dispose. How will the owner of that Colt Christ sent for, rise up in judgment against many! no sooner did the Disciples say, The Lord hath need of him, but straightway they let

him go, Luk. 19. 33, 34, 35. Shall one that pretended not so much to Christ (for ought we know) readily part with so much at the first request; and they that profess much love to Christ, refuse to lay out lesser things for him? This doth manifest the world is dearer to such than Jesus Christ.

Lastly, Then are men's hearts upon the world, when their trust and dependence is upon earthly things. We are apt to put confidence in friends, and therefore the Lord cautions Israel against such dependencies, as false deceiving things: Trust not in a friend; put ye not confidence in a guide, &c. Micah 7. 5. The Spouse came leaning upon her Beloved in the wilderness, Cant. 8. 5. No sooner had the rich man store of goods, but he places his confidence in them, Luke 12. 19. I will say to my soul; soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years, take thine ease; eat, drink and be merry. 'It is natural to men that choose the world for their treasure; to choose it also for their trust: They that dare adventure their supreme affection on things, dare also take up their dependency on them. Men choose not a tree they think will rot, Isa. 40. 20. If riches be thy choice, thou thinkest them worthy of thy reliance; or thou actest irrationally. Men that have wealth, have inward thoughts that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their Lands after their own names, Psal. 49. 11. 'It is hard to have the good things of this life, and not to expect too much from them; so inviting is their appearance to a dependency on them: Earthly things are fair in promise, but false in performance; like quagmires covered with grass; men think them firm ground, but when they tread upon them, they soon become their graves. The Evangelist calls all that glorious pomp with which Agrippa so amused spectators, but a mere show, Acts 25. 23. When Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, 'tis with much fantasy and external show: All the glory of this world is but a pompous show, that cheats beholders, and allures them to a

deceived expectation: They that have much visible comfort in creatures, live little by faith. How rare is it for men that have estates and riches for their posterity, to commit them to divine care, by an act of pure recumbency on the promise, and to believe upon a naked word for all their supplies and needed comforts: Such is our expectation whither we flee for help, Isa. 20. 6. An earthly heart is known by carnal trust and dependency on earthly things. Ah souls! put your hearts into this scale, and see whether they do not press down to this present world: Speak soul, who shalt shortly be weighed for eternity in the balance of the Sanctuary; are not thy desires, thy thoughts, thy restless labors, thy delights, thy close adherence to, and dependency, all engaged about the things of this life, with the neglect of God, and heavenly things, thine own heart being Judge? And if so, then,

Thy State is dangerous,

And thy Folly great.

First, Thy State is dangerous; thou hast not a dram of true grace in thee: Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 Joh. 2. 15. Do not flatter thy soul into perdition; if thou lovest the world, thou dost not love God: For the friendship of this world is enmity against God: Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God, James 4. 4. He whose heart and mind is set after the world; he that will be rich, the bent and design of the heart is for it; that's the Butt he levels at, whatever he professes; That's his great business and project: Thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, Jer. 22. 17. He maketh haste to be rich, Prov. 28. 20. drives furiously after the world; his heart is reconciled to all the means and ways that lead to it (be they never so clashing with soul-advantages) that man,

be he who he will, is a friend to the world, and an enemy to God, let him make the highest profession possible: So did Judas get into the Church of God; so did Demas pray, preach, and so may hypocrites for a time; yea make many prayers, Isa. 1. 15. Doth he profess love to God? so did the Jews; and yet their hearts went after their covetousness, Ezek. 33. 31. Is he of a lovely spirit, and unblameable conversation? so was the young man in the Gospel; his great desire was to inherit eternal life, Mark 10. 17. that was his business to Christ; he desired to know how he might be saved; he seemed to be all for Heaven; his life also was unblameable: All these have I observed from my youth up, verse 20. He was of a sweet, lovely spirit: 'It is said, Jesus beholding him, loved him, verse 21. and yet could not part with the world for Christ; had his heart knit to earthly things all the while, and went away sorrowful; he could not consent to sell all and give to the poor, ver. 22. no marks will serve that Soul's turn, whose heart is glued to the World, and cannot give up all to Christ's dispose: God and the World cannot dwell in that Soul, godliness and gain cannot keep house together: where the grace of God comes in truth, it teacheth men to deny worldly lusts, Tit. 2. 11, 12. He that hath no power to deny the cravings of a worldly heart, never yet received the grace of God in truth. Grace (saith one) may stand with some transient acts of naughtiness, but never with covetousness: Adams on the 2 Epist. of Pet. p. 9. 16. Noah was once drunk with Wine, but never with the World: Lot twice Incestuous, never Covetous: Peter denied his Master thrice; it was not the love of the World, but the fear of the World brought him to it; for he had denied the World before he denied his Master: Once David was overcome with the Flesh, never with the World. Why did not these purge themselves from Adultery, Anger, Contention, and the like? because into these sins the infirmity of a Saint may fall; but if once into Covetousness, there is nothing of a Saint left, not the very name. Luther acknowledges there was scarce a sin to which he had not been

tempted, save to the sin of Covetousness. The Lord Jesus tells us that his Disciples are not of this World: some derive the word, Holy, from Earth, and a privative particle, in that redemption from the earth, is the great work of holiness: All they that partake of the Cross of Christ, are crucified to the World, and the World to them, Gal. 6. 14. Not a jot of the benefits of Christ are treasured up in that Soul where the God of this World dwells; and if without Christ, without hope; thy case is desperate if thy heart be earthly, under the ruling power of this World; thou art yet in a graceless state, and no grace, no glory; if thou mindest earthly things, destruction is thy end, Phil. 3. 19. If thou art one of this World, whose heart is after thy covetousness, thy portion is in this World, Psal. 17. 14. All thy Heaven is on this side the Grave: For this ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an Idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God, Eph. 5. 5. 'It is joined with the most abominable sins, Thievery, Drunkenness, Adultery, Idolatry, Extortion, for which things sake, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, Col. 3. 5. 6. The Scripture calls covetous men, cursed children, 2 Pet. 2. 14. A heart they have exercised with covetous practices, cursed children; really cursed with a detestation, such whom God abhorreth, Psal. 10. 3. And the wicked blesseth the covetous, whom God abhorreth. A woe is pronounced against them, Hab. 2. 9. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil: One would think this a duty, or at least very commendable, to provide for our Family, and get what we can for our children, and to endeavor to secure our houses from any suffering and calamity; but if this be men's end, to set their nest on high, to get great things for themselves, and so to manage their affairs, as to avoid all sufferings for God, there's a dreadful woe hangs over their heads, and disappointment of all their design in the issue; for instead of honor, they are brought to shame in the end: Thou hast consulted

shame to thy own house, and sinned against thy own soul, verse. 10. They are unworthy of any society with men: I have written unto you not to keep company; if any man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one, no, not to eat, 1 Cor. 5. 11. and shall be cut off from communion with God to all eternity: Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God: be not deceived, neither Fornicator, nor Idolater, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10.

Secondly, as thy state is dangerous, if thou art one who lovest this present World; so thy folly is great, to set thy heart upon the World.

After thou hast been convinced of the evil of such a spirit and practice, and hast felt the smart of it in thy own soul.

After thou hast been arraigned at the bar of thy Conscience, and condemned in thy own heart for this Sin, (as every truly convinced Soul is,) if ever the spirit of bondage hath been at work in thy heart, (as thou hast confessed) then hast thou found this sin more bitter than death to thee; and now to return again to such courses as will break thy bones again, and put thy soul to greater torture than ever, (as all relapses do,) this is folly indeed.

After thou hast chosen God for thy portion, Christ for thy treasure, Godliness for thy gain, the inheritance with the Saints for thy Land, a mansion in Heaven for thy house, Christ's tried Gold for thy Money, a conversation in Heaven for thy Trade, the Father, Son and Spirit, for thy All here, and forever, (as thou hast done, or fearfully belied thy profession,) that after all this thou shouldest turn again to these beggarly elements, and exchange God for the world, a Crown for crumbs, a Throne for thorns, a Dowry in Heaven for a dunghill on

earth; an eternal weight of Glory for a burden of thick clay; fellowship with God for defiling converse with dirt and bespotting trash; a Burgeship in Heaven for a name written in the earth; is not this folly, folly? Not that one who had real interest in God & things above, can ever fully and finally forfeit them, and lose them again; (for, once in Christ, and ever in Christ) but those things thou didst once seem to choose for thy chiefest interest, and hast professed hopes of a certain title to these supreme treasures; and now, to sell thy hopes of God and Glory for that vomit thou hadst spewed up, and mire thou hadst been washed from, this is madness indeed.

After you have seen so often the vanity and uncertainty of these things below, that they are empty, and will not satisfy; they cannot quench thy thirst, or fill thy hungry soul; cannot afford the least rest to thy weary heart; but are still short of thy expectations; thou lookest for peace, and behold they give thee trouble; thou thinkest to gather Roses, and they prick thy fingers; and when thou hopest to find rest in them, and sayest, Soul, take thy ease in thy full bags, and fair estate; thy pleasant house, near relations; then they prove swords to pierce thee, or briars to rend thee; or at the best, but wind that does but swell, not nourish thee. Thou hast also found them fading things, that will not stay, rare ripe, fruit that soon rots; a moth, an East wind take off all; they are a pleasing gourd one day, and withered the next, Jonah 4. 7. God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. A sickness comes and takes away thy child, and all the hopes of thy house perish with him: Thy Customers break, and thou art impoverished: The fire burns down thy house, and thou art undone: Thy Heir it may be proves a Prodigal, and all thy gatherings are scattered; so uncertain, empty, perishing, are these things, and thou knowest them to be so, and hast found them such, and yet thy heart runs after them; and with the Dog in the Fable, thou leavest

substance to catch at shadows; neglecting unseen, sure, sweet, satisfying and eternal things, for things that are not; and is not this madness? [The world perisheth, and yet thou seekest after the things thereof, Petrarch.]

After you have found better things, and tasted the sweetness of them, you have experienced the light of God's countenance to be beyond all corn, and wine, and oil; his loving-kindness to be better than life; a day in his Courts to be more eligible than a thousand elsewhere, Psal. 4. 6, 7. O how sweet hath his Word been to thy taste, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb! how often hath God cheered, quickened and strengthened thy heart in thy approaches to him, that thou hast said (as David of Goliath 's sword) there is none like this: And as the Disciples when with Christ in the Mount, 'tis good being here; Lord evermore give me this bread: and yet after all this, that thou shouldest upon choice, leave these for the world, and prefer thy shop, thy trade, thy field, house, money, before these divine and approved treasures: This is madness.

After so many confessions of this sin before the Lord and his people, and so many prayers and cries to God against it, and for grace to subdue thy earthly heart with many promises, and declared purposes to turn no more to this folly; that thou shouldest so easily, so speedily be reconciled to the world again, and reassume thy affections to these old lovers after all; this is madness, and will exceedingly greaten thy guilt and torment, when the Lord shall make inquisition for these things; when thy convictions, prayers and vows shall return as so many Serjeants upon thy back, to arrest thy guilty conscience, and as so many witnesses to prove God's charge against thee; that at such a time and such a time, in thy closet, in the Congregation of the Lord's people, in days of humiliation and preparation-seasons, on thy sick-bed, under such a word and rod,

thy heart did melt over thy sin, and thou didst solemnly renew thy Covenant against it; and now to have thy prayers, and tears, and promises; yea, and God too against thee, for thy Apostasy after such Lovers as thou thyself wilt loath another day, and be ashamed to own in the presence of God, Saints and Angels; this is folly, folly.

Now when God is punishing thee for this very sin, by stripping thee of thy Idols, and pouring out the vials of his wrath upon this Euphrates, thy riches, interest, trade, and earthly comforts, over which thou hast carried away thy heart from him, that now while the Rod is upon thy back, thou shouldest hold fast thine iniquity, and refuse to return; this is desperate and incorrigible folly. And this is the practice of most this day; God blows upon their trades and interests for following them, and letting his house lie waste; and yet they pursue them still: The Lord takes out the bottom of their bags, and yet they put in more money into them. God smites men for the iniquity of their covetousness, and yet they go on frowardly in the way of their heart, Isa. 57. 17. God is hedging up the way of men's Lovers, and yet they break thorough to overtake them: So it was with Israel, God had hedged up her way, made a wall that she should not find her paths; and yet she followed after them. Hos. 2. 6. And she shall follow after her Lovers (O incorrigible wickedness!) but (saith God) she shall not overtake them: The Lord is plucking down men's bricks, but they build with hewn stone; the Sycamores are cut down, but they change them into Cedars, Isa. 9. 10. Providence pulls away unduly pursued interests, but men catch at them again: This is daring wickedness, and a telling God to his face, they fear him not, neither will they return. Jer. 5. 3. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a Rock; they have refused to return: This is our case, and should it not be for a lamentation?

Lastly, when nothing but ruin and destruction is before our eyes; manifest danger of losing all, even Interest, Gospel, Life, and all that is dear to us seems to be a going; and yet to pursue these things, with neglect of our souls, is madness beyond parallel, and a dangerous symptom of approaching ruin. If men are not given up to a spirit of blindness, they must needs see that wasting destructions are upon us; gray hairs are here and there, and we see it not, Hos. 7. 9, 10. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, gray hairs are here and there, yet he layeth it not to heart; and the pride of Israel doth testify to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him for all this. They felt the pain, but did not acknowledge the cause and fountain of all those evils, (saith Zanchi;) and this showed they were desperate and incurable, in that they were convicted of their evil case, and yet would not return to the Lord. No spot more dangerous than continuance in sin under utmost means of reformation and confessed danger of ruin. If our transgressions and sins be upon us, and we pine away in them; how shall we then live? Ezek. 33. 10.

USE IV.

If the Heavenly Trade be the best Trade, &c. Then this offers counsel and exhortation to five sorts of persons.

1. To such as are strangers to this Heavenly Trade.

Counsel 1. Such as are strangers to this Heavenly Trade; you that never were acquainted with this high Calling, but have spent all your time about things that perish, trafficking about Hell and Damnation. Be you exhorted to set about this choice, rich, and blessed Trade.

There are four Arguments that usually sway with rational persons in their choice of earthly Callings, which are also weighty inducements unto all not yet concerned to speed upon this Heavenly Trade.

Arg. 1. First, Necessity puts men on employments, and none are greater than theirs who are without this Divine Calling. Sinners, you that are yet without God in the World, you are miserably poor, and ready to perish; you are worth nothing but sin and misery; He is a poor man that hath nothing to live upon; and such are you, while without this line of communication, and strangers to these supreme concerns: You are spiritually poor, and have nothing (as yet) for your Souls to live on here, or to all eternity, Rev. 3. 17. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Poverty is one of the miseries of all unchanged souls; and that which aggravates it, is this; that they think themselves rich, and yet have nothing; no Food to fill them, but empty husks, and swine's meat; no Rayment to cover them, but filthy rags, and confusion, no House to shelter them from the storms of Divine wrath; or any Habitation to receive them, but an infernal Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and a receptacle with damned Devils; not a friend to help them; not an eye to pity them; There are none so poor in the World but they have something or other to help them, something in hand, or something in hope; something of their own, or something of others: if they cannot dig, yet they can beg; if they have not interests to maintain them, yet they find pity to relieve them: But a Christless Sinner hath nothing to supply his immortal part; nothing in hand; nothing in hope; nothing of his own; nothing of others, that can contribute the least good to his undone Soul, whatever he lives on, is nothing but wind and emptiness; He feeds on ashes, a deceived heart turns him aside, Isa. 44. 20. He crams his starved Soul with filthy dung and excrements, (so loathsome are all the pleasures of sin he lives on,) Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers from

the Covenants of Promise; having no hope, and without God in the World, Eph. 2. 12. This is your condition, Souls, while without this Heavenly Trade; you are miserably poor, whatever you have in the World, you have nothing in God; whatever your Bodies and Families have, your Souls have nothing: 'It is little profit to enjoy all things, and miss that one thing by which only we come to use them; Aug. You labor for vanity, and lie down in sorrow; and have you not reason to look out after some course to help you, and to embrace this overture of a Calling that will maintain and enrich you here, and forever? The Lepers case is thine; if thou sit still in thy condition, thou diest: In the World's fullness is famine; in thy security and false hopes, is death also: If thou adventure an offered grace, it may save thee; however, thou canst but die, 2 Kin. 7. 3, 4.

Again, you are not only poor, but Bankrupts; your poverty is of your own procurement, and the issue of your prodigality; you had once a fair Estate, but lost it; God, Grace and Glory was yours by the first Covenant, Luke 15. 30. but you have trifled it away for forbidden-fruit, and spent all you had on Harlots; you have consumed your Lord's goods also in riotous living, and wasted a large stock committed to your trust, and now must give an account of your Stewardship; were it only your personal wants that your folly hath brought upon you, (though that be heavy,) yet 'tis comparatively tolerable; but restitution must be made, and that is inconceivably distressing. A dreadful word, sinners, lies against you! (how can you bear it? how can you eat, drink, talk, or sleep in peace? much less rejoice when the handwriting is against the wall?) 'tis this, Give an account of thy Stewardship, Luke 16. 2. A review of thy past time must be expected, by what means thou didst reduce thy miserable Soul to this low estate, and an account of thy Stewardship will be required; and then when too late, thou wilt say with the Steward, What shall I do? ver. 3. and is it not more advisable now to take this

counsel of Eliphaz, to acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee, Job. 22. 21. to return to that Trade which thou hast left, and recover the Treasure which thou hast lost, that so thy account may be comfortable in the day of Christ?

Nay further, you are not only poor, and bankrupts; but deeply in debt; debtors to God, to whom you owe yourselves and all that you have, by the Law of Creation and Covenant-obligation, but never yet discharged that due to this very day. You are in debt to God for all your mercies in Creation and Providence, patience-mercy, preservation-mercy, preventing-mercy, bounty-mercy; there's never a moment but God is laying out some new mercy upon thee, of which thou hast never made retribution to this day.

Debtors to the Law of God, which hath its full and just claim on you, a Law that is just, righteous and good, and to which you owe obedience by just and unquestionable ties, and yet have never yielded any right subjection to it all your days, but have violated all its righteous commands every day and moment of your life, both in thought, word and deed; For he that keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one point or iota, is guilty of all, Jam. 2. 10.

Debtors to Conscience, whose Law is in force against you, and by which you shall be judged. Rom. 2. 14, 15. These having not the Law, are a Law to themselves, which show the works of the Law written in their hearts; their Consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another; and yet you have broken these Conscience-bonds, casting its cords from you: how many ties hath Conscience laid upon you which you have broken, going against the light and dictates thereof!

Debtors to all the World, to whom, in some respect or other, you are obliged. There are duties you owe to all men, to love them, and pray

for them: to all your neighbors and acquaintance, to do them good as you have opportunity, and to seek and endeavor their Salvation to your power, which you have not done to this day. There are duties you owe to your relations, friends and family, which you have neglected, and have been increasing your Original debt, by running on new scores every day, which can never be canceled, or a power obtained to discharge your duties acceptably, till you come to Christ, and enter your souls into his new and everlasting Covenant, setting upon those great and Evangelical duties of it.

Your slavery is also great till you come over to this blessed work: You are in bondage unto Satan: Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, Rom. 6. 16. You serve incomparably the worst Lord; a cruel Lord who hath no mercy, but delights in the misery of fallen man; A roaring Lion that goes about seeking to devour, 1 Pet. 5. 8. A cursed one cast out from God, cursed above all creatures; reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day, Gen. 3. 14. Jude, verse 6. Thine implacable enemy that hates thee with a perfect hatred: An Accuser, that never speaks well of any: A Murderer he was from the beginning, Rev. 12. v. 10. and the original cause of all the destruction in Earth and Hell: A false and deceitful creature, that never kept his word with any: A Liar, and the Father of Lies, Joh. 8. 44. one that will be too hard for you, and cheat your souls into destruction: A miserable poor creature; one that hath lost all his glory and excellency, and hath nothing to give you for all your service, but some of the same flames in which he must fry forever: This, sinners, is your Lord, whom you have chosen and served all your days: And as you serve the worst Lord, so you do the worst work; base, filthy, shameful, cursed work: Such are all thy actions whiles in an unchanged state; you do hard work; no service like it; you work, and have no food to refresh you, which is the cruelest

bondage: Israel in Egypt wrought hard, and yet had fleshpots, Onions and Garlic to relieve them; but you have nothing to feed your hopes and affections, but lies and vanity; you work, and have no raiment to cover you, all your employment makes you naked; you labor, and have no rest; weary and heavy laden, and yet feel it not, Gen. 3. 7. Other Laborers have their successive quietude's, but you have none; the hireling hath his shadow; the laborer hath his evening to give over his work; his bed to sleep on; but your work admits of no rest; 'tis never done; you do the Devil's work day and night, waking and sleeping; nay, while you eat and drink your work still goes on; O sad servitude! You work and have no wages: All earthly Laborers have their penny, something or other to compensate their pains, money or maintenance; but you have nothing in hand or hope, here or hereafter, but death and damnation; the fruit of your labors here, is more bitter than death; and the wages at the end of your day, wrath and vengeance, worm and fire, Mark 9. 44. And is not this bad employment? and is it not time sinners, to change your calling, and to accept this offer made you of this excellent Trade?

Arg. 2. Secondly, The danger that attends your present state should put you on a timely relinquishment of it: You are poor, and that exposes you to scorn and contempt, to oppression, treading down, and crushing, to devouring and destruction; you are not safe from ruin one moment; the next knock at thy door may be a call to Judgment Prov. 17. 5. Amos 4. 1. Hab. 3. 14. Prov. 10. 15. When thou liest down, thou mayest make thy bed in Hell; when thou awakest, thou mayest see God on the Throne, thy Soul at the Bar, thy Accusers at thy right hand, the Evidence in thy own breast, the Sentence written in capital letters, Go ye cursed: Under thy feet a bottomless lake of fire and brimstone; round about thee cruel Devils ready to seize upon thee, and lodge thy guilty condemned soul in thine eternal

home, Matth. 24. 51. You have been Prodigals wasting what is not your own, and are in danger every day of a charge against you.

You are deeply in debt, and in danger of an arrest every hour; when you go forth, death may be at your heels; when you return, destruction may enter with you: O the uncertainty of thy time sinner! the danger of thy eternity, the absolute ruin of thy immortal soul, if thy reckoning begin before thy work: and hast thou not reason then to hasten about thy great concern, and to burn no more daylight in works of darkness?

Arg. 3. Thirdly, Thy duty should quicken thy undertaking in this great employment: Religion is not your Liberty, but your manifold debt: The Law of Creation binds you unto God; you will confess you were made by him, and God will profess you were made for him, Isa. 43. 21. This people have I formed for myself, that they should show forth my praise. Your fall from the Covenant of Works, is not your liberty from the essential duties of it; neither is your incapacity to perform it, a dispensation of your obedience: 'tis still your duty to return from whence you fell; to take the Lord to be your God, to love him with all your heart, and with all your might; to trust in him; to fear and obey him. A draught of these Covenant-duties did God place in your conscience by which you shall be judged, Rom. 2. 12. 15. though the counterpane you have defaced; yet the Original Deed is with God, and will be brought forth in the day of Christ against such as have not taken the Lord for their God.

You are also maintained by God, and that obliges you to him: 'Twas the argument the Apostle urged to the Masters of Reason in that age, why they should seek the Lord, because 'twas from him they had their subsistence, Acts 17. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being. If God maintains you, 'tis rational he should have the use

of you: 'Twas the reason Moses used to prove God's right to Israel's all, Deut. 32. 9, to 15. The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance; why? He found him in the desert Land, in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about; he instructed him; he kept him as the apple of his eye: As an Eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him: (And therefore no reason they should leave him for strangers.) He made him ride upon the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the field; and he made him to suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty Rock: Butter of Kine, and milk of Sheep, with fat of Lambs and Rams, of the breed of Bashan, and Goats, with the fat of kidneys, of wheat, and thou didst drink the pure blood of the Grape. Mercies are cords and bands by which the Lord obligeth men to himself: I drew them with cords of a man, and with bands of love, Hos. 11. 4. All thy life (sinner) hath been full of these constraints of mercy and love, to take the Lord to be thy God.

The Gospel of Grace which you profess to own and receive, binds you to seek first the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, Matth. 6. 33. to do the work of God, to labor for that bread which endures to eternal life; to work the works of God, Joh. 6. 27, 28. to be no more your own, but the Lord's, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. Cease to call or think yourselves Christians; tell the world you do not believe or hope to be saved by a crucified Christ, or else come over to him, and be disposed by his sacred Will. This is your duty.

Arg. 4. Fourthly, Weigh the unspeakable gain that will surely accrue to you, if you set up this Trade of Godliness. I have already shewn in the demonstration of this point, the great profit that this Heavenly Trade will turn unto, to all that deal thoroughly in it, to which I

advise you to cast back your eye, and take three or four considerations more, to convince your understandings that Religion is eligible on grounds of greatest interest: For,

First, Religion will maintain you in the hardest times: So will not other Trades; there may be seasons when earthly employments will turn to no accounts: You have heard that riches profit not in the day of wrath; and some of you have seen the time, when they that work could yet scarcely eat; but God's work is meat and drink, when daily bread fails, Joh. 4. 30. I have meat to eat that you know not of. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. 4. 8. God careth for the righteous; and when the Lions lack, and are hunger-bit, they that fear the Lord shall want no good thing, Psal. 34. 10. They shall be sure to be provided for, whoever wants: God hath past his word for it: All things are theirs by purchase, who are Christ's by choice; that is (saith Piscator) All earthly things are designed of God for your use, and the furtherance of your salvation: Not as if the Saints had a right to other men's interests. The Apostle doth not speak here (saith Pareus) of civil possessions, but of that divine order by which all things ought to serve the good and advantage of the Church of God. The Earth is the Lord's, & the fullness thereof; all which is given into the hands of Christ for the good of his people: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, Ephes. 1. 22. The whole Earth is but God's Kitchen, for the maintenance of his house; and if he will feed his servants and slaves, much more his children: He gives to all their meat in due season, and satisfies the desires of every living thing: Much more will he care for, and give food convenient to his living in Jerusalem. Indeed Believers are not of the world, and therefore have not their portions in the world; they are the Heirs of Heaven, and have no promise of more on Earth than will comfortably carry them home, and suffice for the discharge of

those offices assigned to them here: They are Servants, not Heirs, who carry the cloak-bags in their journey. Persons of grandeur bear no more about them than for present use: Surely, were earthly treasures good for heaven-born souls, he that gives better things would not deny these: But God knows enough is as good as a feast; and so much the Saints shall have in their passage home. No man sends his servants a journey, but he allows them enough to carry them thorough; and so will God to his: If he maintains idlers and enemies; much more will he feed his faithful servants and laborers: He hath promised to supply all their wants, Phil. 4. 19. and is able to make it good: If he thinks it not much to give them a Crown, he will not deny them Crumbs: If God should let his work-men, want, his work would cease; his own interest, as well as his promise, obliges him to look after such; his Love, Truth, Glory, with all his Attributes, are concerned to maintain his people in his work; and therefore nothing more sure than daily bread, and sufficiency in all things to such as serve and obey him.

Secondly, Godliness will secure you in dangerous times, Prov. 3. 23. Thou shalt then walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble; when thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet, v. 24. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. The way of duty is the way of safety: whatever men think, the greatest security is in the boldest Adventures for God (if regular;) where his Sun does guide you, there his shadow will cover you; who shall harm you if you are followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3. 13. Men may threaten you, but cannot injure you; they may spoil your estates, imprison your bodies, but cannot do you any real harm; while men keep with God, God will abide with them; his presence shall fence them, his favor shall shield them, his Angels shall encamp about them; all his Attributes shall guard and secure them: God's people that cleave to

him in duty, are as the Hebrews in Goshen, as Israel in the wilderness, as Noah in the Ark; they only are safe from ruining evils, when others are exposed to destroying judgments.

Thirdly, Nay, Holiness will not only maintain and secure you; but it will also enrich you, and fill you with the best Treasures, the true Riches, Luke 16. 11. the tried gold that cannot be corrupted or defrauded, Matth. 6. 20. It will furnish you with the unsearchable riches of Christ: the world hath its treasures; and so hath Christ his precious substance, to bestow on all that trade with and for him; as hath been already shewn.

Fourthly, Piety will cheer and delight you; no comforts like theirs who walk with God in truth: This was Hezekia 's cordial when under a sentence of death, Isa. 38. 3. Remember O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart: And Paul 's rejoicing, that in all simplicity and godly sincerity he had his conversation in this world, 2 Cor. 1. 12. The purest pleasures flow down from the Throne, and steam in thorough Sanctuary-waters into the soul: Alas! what are those drossy comforts that run thorough the worlds channels, which only leave a slime behind, and then empty themselves into the dead Sea of perdition, perishing in their using, Col. 2. 22. Carnal mirth hath a pleasant entrance, but an ill farewell, Prov. 14. 13. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness: But Religion breeds the best contentment's, and most satisfying pleasures, Psal. 36. 8. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures.

Fifthly, Wisdom's Trade will make you truly great and honorable, and give you a place to walk among those that stand by, Zach. 3. 7. That is (saith Junius) I will place thee in the same dignity the Angels

of God enjoy in Heaven, and thou shalt dwell in the same Church among those Myriads, Prov. 4. 8. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her. V. 9. She shall give to thine head an Ornament of grace, a Crown of glory shall she deliver thee. How contemptibly soever the world looks on the ways of Godliness, and those that espouse them; yet all true greatness lies on the side of piety. All the world's glory is but a Pageant, a mere show of honor, compared to that which is on the head of every true Believer: Saints have the noblest extraction, born of God; the highest dignity, made Kings and Priests unto God, Rev. 1. 6. Ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests, Exod. 10. 6. Cloathed with the richest Ornaments, perfect through divine comeliness, Ezek. 16. 10, to 15. appointed to a Kingdom that is everlasting, assured of Thrones and Crowns with Christ for evermore. Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father in his Throne. A sure Throne shall Believers have above, as certain as Christ is now upon his Fathers Throne; and the same Throne that the Father gives to Christ, specifically, though not gradually: A Crown fitted to their heads; indeed Saints cannot wear the Crown Christ doth; his is the Redeemer's Crown; theirs the Redeemed, made of the same glory: Joh. 17. 24. Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, 2 Tim. 2. 12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. O blessed glory, and greatly to be longed for! whose measure is incomprehensible, whose duration is undeterminable.

Now, Sinners; If these Arguments convince you that 'tis your necessity, interest and duty to set upon this great employment, and you find your hearts really willing to come up to the proposed terms of this high Calling, and embrace any counsels that lead thereto. Then;

Direct. 1. First; You must get a capacity for so excellent an undertaking: Heavenly work is too high for earthly natures; and special service for common endowments: They that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8. No creature can act beyond its being, 'tis above the sphere of unchanged nature to carry up the Soul to things above, there must be a spiritual principle before there can be a heavenly operation; you must first be God's workmanship before you can do his work; and be created to good works before you can walk therein, Eph. 2. 10. 'It is a sad thing (saith Mr. Caryl) to see a bad man do that which is bad; yet it is a sadder sight to see a bad man continuing in his state, to go on doing good; this is the acting of the new creature's part in the old creature's state, and what will that avail? To set upon Religion in an unregenerate state, is labor in vain; the dumb may as well speak, the blind see, the dead walk, while they remain such, as they that are evil do good: Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? Mat. 7. 18. Or a Fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Jam. 3. 11. No more can an unsanctified Soul do holy work. The person must be gracious before the work can be good; God had first respect to Abel, and then to his Offering, Gen. 4. 4. The ungrafted Cherry-tree brings forth but harsh fruit, let the soil and dressing be never so good; so is the Soul under the highest privileges and performances without implantation into Christ: The root must bear the branch before the branch can bear fruit; a breaking off from the wild Olive with a participation of the fatness of the good Olive-tree, is absolutely necessary to true faithfulness, Rom. 11. 17, 18. Four things are needful to make an action Evangelically good; a good Principle, Matter, Form and End: neither of which is consistent with a man in his natural state: 'It is dangerous also as well as vain, for persons to set upon doing good, and never care to become good; for this deceives their own Souls, making them think their condition safe when they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, Rev. 3. 16. and not only feeds an

error in their state, but strongly hinders the cure, while these unprofitable duties consume Salvation-time, and destroy Salvation hopes; despair is usually the issue of presumption; and they that conceit too soon that all is well, shall conclude when too late, that it shall never be better: This then is your first work, (Souls) To be sanctified and made meet for your Masters use, and prepared to every good work, 2 Tim. 2. 21. Labor to get your natures changed, and hearts quickened; you must be born again, or cannot see the Kingdom of God: Be looking to Jesus to create in you a new heart, a renewed mind, will and affections, to have a saving principle put into your hearts, and a disposition of Soul towards the whole will of God: Cry mightily for the Spirit, and wait for his moving's upon the face of Sanctuary-waters, and for a mighty power of God in the Gospel upon your Souls: Get under the healing-wings of Christ, and rest not looking unto Jesus till virtue go out from him to heal your Souls: If this be thy restless desire, thou canst not let Christ alone, running after him, crying, Jesu, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me; he will turn again, and have compassion, and give the holy Spirit to them that unfeignedly and incessantly ask him, Mark 10. 47, 48, 49. Luke 11. 13.

Direct. 2. Secondly, cease from your own works. Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy: The first step in returning to God, is departing from sin and self; Neither can we (saith Calvin) hold converse with a holy God, till we be estranged from our unholy self. When the Apostle advises the Ephesians to put on the new man, Eph. 4. 24. He first exhorts them to put off the old, with his whole conversation: verse. 22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt: Grace builds not on an old foundation, neither does it adorn, but reform the former conversation of called Saints; there is no clothing upon in

regeneration-work, the old garments must off before the new will come on: Religion is not a covering for, but a stripping off a sinful life, neither can you be free to set on God's work till you leave your old works. Rom. 6. 20. For when you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness: You had nothing to do with holiness, you had no freedom to do God's work while you were Sins servants: He speaks of their actual liberty from grace, not their legal freedom, saith Pareus;) you are not at liberty to do the work of holiness, while under the command of sin. No man can serve two Masters: Mat. 6. 24. that is, two contrary Lord's, How can the same man (saith Grotius) follow godliness as his work, and at the same time be distracted with cares about getting and keeping earthly things? 'It is a vanity for persons to dream of a compliance between sin and holiness, whose work is too inconsistent for one Soul at one time; ruling iniquity and grace, are two contrary states, which cannot meet in one person and time: Never think of setting up on the Heavenly Trade, till you are freed from hellish servitude, and invested with the liberty of the Sons of God, a freedom from the love and service of every sin. Godliness calls for the whole of a man's heart, strength and time, and requires a person void of any inconsistent obligations; resolve to break from every way of death, if ever you think to enter into the way of life.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, Make over yourselves to the Lord in an Everlasting Covenant; they that will be Masters of a Trade, must first be bound to the service of it, and resign up their persons, wills, capacities and time to the instruction and government of another in order to their fitness for such a calling: And so must souls that will learn Wisdom's Merchandise, they must bind themselves to the Trade, and make over themselves and their all to God in Christ, to be taught and enabled to set up this excellent work. Jer. 50. 5. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join

ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that cannot be forgotten. Sin had made a separation between their God and them, and brought a death upon their mercies and Temple enjoyments: but now the Spirit of Prophecy breathing on these dry bones, moves them to a vital union with the fountain of life, (the only regular way to their new work and mercies) they must first be joined to the Lord, before they can be rejoined to one another, and reenjoy their lost privileges; and this union lies in a hearty acceptance of offered grace, a taking hold of God in Christ, and a Covenant-surrender of the whole soul and its All to him again: [O for arms to embrace him, saith Mr. Rutherford!] This is called a giving up of one's self to the Lord, 2 Corinth. 8. 5. But this they did not as we hoped, but first gave themselves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God: They exceeded our hope: We only expected some part of what was theirs, but they gave themselves first to God, and to us (to be directed and governed by the will of God, to be placed in the fellowship of his Gospel) as well as their interests to the service of his people: 'It is also a giving away of one's self to the Lord wholly, unreservedly and perpetually, to be no more his own, 1 Cor. 6. 19. And ye are not your own. This surrender of yourselves to God (souls) must be in judgment, understandingly, and ariseth freely on choice; universally, without the least reservation; absolutely, without any limitation or conditions of our own; eternally, without any expiration and term of this grant, and to be attested by all overt acts within your power, Isa. 44. 5. One shall say I am the Lord's; another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Jacob. Whatever may most fully ensure and express an absolute devotedness unto God, must be done by those that ever expect to thrive in grace and godliness. Verse 3, 4. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring, and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows

by the watercourses. When once this implantation into Christ is dispatched, then will the Lord give prosperity to that soul; then are you in a sure way to success in all your holy undertakings, and like to speed well in this Heavenly Trade when you become entirely the Lord's in order to it: O be not satisfied till God be yours: [The King's Son or no Husband, Rutherford.] The rational soul (saith Augustine) being capable of God, can be satisfied with nothing but God.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, Come over into the family of Christ, if you would drive on this Heavenly Trade to purpose: Apprentices are household servants, up-rising, and down-lying; and so must Wisdom's Traders be; they must be members of Christ's family, and dwellers in the house of God. Psal. 65. 4. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts; we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy Temple. Those whom God chooses for himself, he brings to himself, and makes them dwellers in his Courts: Such a one is entered into his family, that he being a sound Believer, may spend his life among the holy Citizens of Heaven. Those whom the Lord takes into Covenant, he takes into communion; not only with himself, but with his people. Jer. 3. 14, 15. I am married unto you, and I will take you one of a City, and two of a Family, and I will bring you unto Zion, and I will give you Pastors according to my own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding: This was intended of Gospel times and Churches: When all the Nations shall be gathered to the Name of the Lord to Jerusalem, verse 17. And the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, verse 18. which began to be fulfilled upon the breaking down of the partition wall, and the bringing in of the Gentiles unto Christ, Ephes. 2. 14, 15, 19. When Believers should be no more strangers, and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God. The Apostle hath reference to the 12th verse, where souls out of Christ are said to be aliens from

the Common-wealth of Israel, strangers to the Covenant of Promise; but now having access to God by one Spirit, verse 18. Ye are no more strangers and foreigners. (a) In respect of the Church of God you are no longer strangers (saith Zanchi) but fellow-citizens with the Saints; and in regard of the Covenant of God, you are no more foreigners, but of the household of God. In whom all the building fitly framed together (that is, every stone in the building) groweth unto a holy Temple in the Lord, verse 21. The Church of God is his Temple where he is rightly served, Rev. 7. 15. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple: which is his Church (saith Mr. Durham) here begun by fellowship in his Ordinances and in Heaven completely. Ezek. 20. 40. For in my holy Mountain; in the Mountain of the Height of Israel (a type of Gospel-Churches) saith the Lord God; there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the Land, serve me; there will I accept them, there will I require your offerings: Plainly intimating that God hath no acceptable service, but in the Churches of his Saints; I mean as to public worship: Persons cannot give God his full instituted worship, till they come into fellowship with his people, seeing Church-fellowship is itself an institution of Christ. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Acts 2. 41, 42. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Mat. 18. 17, 18, 19. The Church of Christ is his body, where he hath set his members, 1 Cor. 12. 18. That being fitly joined together, they might increase with the increase of God, Ephes. 4. 16. Col. 2. 19. His Vineyard where his work lies, and into which he sends his Laborers, Isa. 5. 7. Matth. 20. 1, 2. His Garden where his Lilies and Beds of Spices are. Cant. 6. 2. His Family where he feeds and instructs them; where he guides and governs them. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Ephes. 3. 15. His Sanctuary where he hides and secures them. Psal. 78. 69. His Galleries where he walks, and is held by his Saints. Cant. 7. 5. His Golden candlesticks where his Lamps are burning: The Firmament and Heaven where his Stars are shining, and the Sun of Righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings. Rev. 2. 1. There's his

Granary where he lays up his provisions, his manna, marrow, fat things, and spiced wine: Isa. 25. 6. There's his School where he instructs his Disciples, and makes them wise to salvation. Isa. 54. 13. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children: There are his Oracles and Secrets. Rom. 3. 2. The Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises, Rom. 9. 4. There's his Nursery where his tender plants are set to grow, where he brings in those that shall be saved. Acts 2. 47. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. His converting the Gentiles is called a persuading them into the tents of Shem, that is the Church of God, Gen. 9. 27. Yea the House of God is the gate of Heaven. Gen. 28. 17. This is none other but the House of God; this is the gate of Heaven. By the gate of the Church (saith Augustine) we enter into the gate of Paradise: How goodly then are these Tents of Jacob? How amiable are those Tabernacles of Israel? As the valleys they spread forth, as gardens by the Rivers side, as the trees of Lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as Cedar-trees beside the waters, Numb. 24. 5, 6. To your Tents then O Israel, 2 Sam. 20. 1. Fly to your windows O ye Doves, Isa. 60. 8. Love the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honor dwells, Psal. 26. 8. Where are such pleasures, treasures, light, life? where are your chiefest interests, your privileges, your work, your Lord, the first-fruits of your eternal glory? if you have taken Christ for your Teacher, you must take his Church for your School; you must dwell where he dwells, where you may sit at his feet, and receive his Doctrine.

Direct. 5. Fifthly, Be mortified to this present world; get your hearts loose from things below. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier, 2 Tim. 2. 4. He does not lay ties and snares about his feet, which throw him down, and hinder the course he engages to

follow. Christianity is a Warfare, and Race; earthly things in the heart are as entanglements about the feet, which hinder this undertaking; you will have no liberty to heavenly things, till redeemed from the Earth; nor can run the race towards glory, till you lay aside the weights that press you down, and the sin that doth so easily beset you, Heb. 12. 1. If you will set your affections on things above, you must first take them off from things beneath, Col. 3. 2. He that sets his face towards Heaven, must turn his back upon the world, Phil. 3. 13. Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before: The world is one of those things Christians must leave behind them, if ever they think to reach Heaven We should (saith Luther) with a certain greatness of mind contemn this life, and world, and with a large heart breathe after the future glory of an Eternal Life. Till you are brought to a contempt of this world, and can count it as dross and dung, you can never value Heaven, or pursue things above with an even and uninterrupted heart. That soul which designs to make Religion its work, must be ready to attend it at all times, and to have the heart composed and fitted to all the instructions that lead to it, which an earthly heart cannot do: A light and mutable spirit, now for God, and then for the world, is unfit for this great employment. He that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is unmeet for the Kingdom of God, Luke 9. 62. And such is a heart under the command of earthly things; 'tis never steadfast with God: the things of this world fill the soul with wind, and make it light and trifling about the things of God: The heart of man is like that Jewel (I have read of) that one gave to Alexander, that while it was kept bright, weighed down the choicest gold, and most precious stones; but if once it fell into the dust, and took rust, it was lighter than a feather: And so is the heart, if it falls into the dusty things of this world. The Church clothed with the Sun, hath the Moon under her feet, Rev. 12. 1. The more a soul is filled with the pure knowledge of God, and shining in its

conversation, the more it is lifted up above the world: The nearer Heaven, the farther from Earth. The more separate from the world (says Mr. Greenhill on Ezek. 3. 23.) the more fit for communion with God: Ezekiel must leave his house, and go into the plain, and there the Lord will talk with him. The King's daughter must forget her own people, and her Father's house, ere the King would greatly desire her beauty, Psal. 45. 10, 11. And Abraham must leave his Country, and pleasant habitation, before he could get into a way of frequent communion with God; and so must a soul in heart and affections sit loose from the ensnaring things of this world, if ever he thinks to drive this Heavenly Trade. By so much the more (saith Augustine) doth any one cleave to God, as he ceases from loving his own interests.

Direct. 6. You must resolve on this also, To submit to all the instructions the Lord Jesus gives you; to go through all the labors, and bear all the burdens that this Heavenly Trade calls you to; every Art and Calling have their principles and rules, by the knowledge and obedience of which they are attained to; and so hath Religion: And as Piety is the highest and noblest profession; so are its principles more pure and mysterious, and with greatest difficulty attainable. Acquired knowledge furnishes men with light sufficient for all earthly undertakings; but to this Heavenly Trade both infused and acquired understanding is needful; both rules, and an eye to discern them must be given, if ever this Art be obtained: For this end the Lord Jesus is given, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, that they may see, Isa. 42. 6, 7. and for a Prophet, to teach and instruct them the way they should go: and to hear and obey him as such, is the absolute duty of all that have given themselves up to his conduct and government; Acts 3. 22. A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. He hath

undertaken to inwise them that obey him, and to show them what they must do, Acts 9. 6. And if they go on to know, they shall know the Lord: if they sit at his feet, and hear his Word, Deut. 33. 3. he will shine out to them, and send out a fiery Law for them: In order to which instruction your duty is to hear him, to watch daily at his gates, and to wait at the posts of his house, Prov. 8. 34. when he calls, say with Samuel, Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth, 1 Sam. 3. 10. And whatsoever he saith (said the Mother of our Lord) unto you, do it, John 2. 5. Slight no directions, stick at no difficulties in comporting with his pleasure, 'tis for the life of your souls; obedience is so necessary in the Disciples of Christ, as that without it no true knowledge can be attained here, John 7. 17. (if any man doth his will he shall know the Doctrine) nor salvation hereafter, Heb. 5. 9. (he became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him:) His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, Prov. 8. 5, 6. Prov. 3. 17. He enjoins you nothing but what is needful, profitable, excellent, and pleasant: Hear and your souls shall live, Isa. 53. 3. Shall the servants of men come, go, do this or that, when they are bidden? Matt. 8. 8. Yea, shall the Devil's slaves do the greatest drudgeries, run most desperate adventures; throw themselves from pinnacles; yea damn their souls at his bidding? and the servants of Christ so disobedient (when 'tis for their own concerns, their mercies and advantages are wrapped up in it) and that to so rational and easy injunctions? The consideration of this prevailed with a Heathen to obedience, when against his inclination. 2 King. 5. 13. His servants came near and said; My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? (seeing it is for thy life and health) how much rather when he saith to thee, wash and be clean? If his commands seem grievous, let love sweeten them: If his yoke seem heavy, let his rest at the end of it render it easy: when duties seem burdensome to flesh and blood, his burdens heavy, losses for the Gospel's sake great, think thus; better smart once than ever; to

undergo troubles in the way, than at the end; to have my bad things here, rather than be tormented hereafter, Luke 16. 25. and what pains and hardships will men undergo for gold that perisheth, 1 Pet. 1. 7. yea for counters that cheat them; and shall not I for an inheritance that fadeth not, reserved in Heaven, 1 Pet. 1. 5? What strivings have some to obtain a Crown that is corruptible; and shall I be weary that am in pursuit of one that is incorruptible? 1 Cor. 9. 25. without labor, no rest; without bearing the heat and burden of the day (when called thereto) no penny at the end, Matt. 20. 12, 13. without striving lawfully, no crowning, 2 Tim. 2. 5. without doing the commandment, no eating of the tree of life, Rev. 22. 14. without enduring to the end, no salvation, Mark 13. 13. comfort yourselves with this, that Heaven will make amends for all; when your wet and weary sowings shall end in a pleasant and eternal harvest. Gal. 6. 9. Let us not be weary in well doing, for you shall reap in due time, if ye faint not: Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Direct. 7. Lastly, What you do, do quickly: Time waits not your leisure. There are but twelve hours in the day, and how many of them have been slept and sinned away, and how few of them may be before you, who knows? What if your Sun should set at noon day? or a summons meet you in the midst of your work: Give account of thy Stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer Steward Luke 16. 2. What will you then do? Some of you are in your afternoon, & what time is that to set forth such a long journey as the way to Heaven is? and yet will you gain (by your delays) some of this time also, for the Devil, World and Flesh? others of you are in your morning, (the best time to put forth in your travel towards glory:) O! lose not your season for eternity: Make much of time, (saith Aquinas) especially in the weighty matter of Salvation: O! how much would they that now lie

frying in Hell, rejoice, if they might have the least minute of time wherein they might get God's favor: the young man hath death at his back, the old man before his eyes, and that's the more dangerous enemy that pursues thee, than that which marches up to thy face: Christ's work admits of no delays, his injunction allows not of too morrow, but while 'tis called today: Heb. 3. 7. Today if you will hear his voice, verse. 13. Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin: Seek the Lord while he may be found, Isa. 55. 6. [Haste, haste, the tide will not bide, Rutherford.] 'It is now or never, while the Light shines, the Lord knocks, the Angel moves on the waters, while the Lord delays his coming: Salvation-work is quick work, God's racers must run, his Doves must fly, his Servants be diligent, that they may be found of him in peace, 1 Cor. 9. 26. Isa. 60. 8. 2 Pet. 3. 14. You that have stood idle in the market-place all your day hitherto, hasten into the Lord's Vineyard, Matt. 20. 6. [Love is sick to hear tell of tomorrow: Mr. Rutherford.] What Jonathan said to his Lad when David 's life was in danger, let me advise you: And Jonathan cried after the Lad, make speed, haste, stay not, 1 Sam. 20. 38. I rue nothing (said precious Mr. Welch when on his sick-bed) but that I was so long in beginning: O, saith David, that I had wings like a Dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest: I would hasten my escape from the stormy wind and Tempest, Psal. 55. 6, 8. Sinners, you are in danger of stormy tempests while in your unchanged state; O hasten to your strong holds ye prisoners of hope. When Brenz was like to be given up to the enemy, one writes him this note; Fuge Brenti cito citius citissime: Fly Brenz quickly, more quickly, most speedily. Souls, 'tis for your lives, make all possible haste about the work of your Salvation: And you that are entered on this heavenly work, double your diligence that you may finish your course before God finishes your time: methinks the word of God, and his providences this day; yea, everything seems to thrust you forward,

and do to you as Pharaoh's Task-masters did to Israel: Exod. 5. 13.
And the Task-masters hastened them, saying, fulfil your work.

TO PROFESSORS.

Counsel 2. Secondly, if the Heavenly Trade be the best Trade; then you that profess this Calling, be you exhorted to follow it; keep up and improve your Trade for Heaven: what's an employment without improvement? the most profitable Calling not followed, turns to little advantage: The day we live in gives men sensible experience of this truth, that they who intend to live in the World, must attend their employments: The idle person suffers hunger; they must be careful and diligent in their business, that think to make anything of their earthly interests: and so 'tis in this Trade of godliness; they that will be saved, must work out their Salvation. A Trade is a man's business, and course of life, which he pursues and carries on from day today; 'tis the subject of his thoughts, counsels, and considerations; of his time and strength, and daily work; where he ends one day, he begins the next, and contributes his utmost wisdom, parts and labors to the most vigorous prosecution of it: And so must it be in this Heavenly Trade, (Christians,) it must be the impending business, and principal concern of your whole life; that which commands your thoughts, purposes and capacities; which engrosses your time, care and strength, and to which every other business must give way, and every occasion and occurrence must be subservient: it must be followed, and driven on every day, in everything, place and company; whatever is neglected, that must go on, and give no place to intermissions, no, not for a moment: You must not say to godliness, as Felix did to Paul; Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee, Acts 24. 25. Stops in the way of God are not easily recovered; one days neglect brings all out of order: Prosperity in Religion admits of no Parenthesis in its work, or consists with allowed interruptions; Piety must be as the blood that

runs through every vein of your life, and affair in the World: In eating, drinking, talking, thinking, buying, selling, you must be still driving on Wisdom's Merchandise. Christians, follow your work, or lay down your Trade; 'tis vanity, yea, the way to beggary, to profess a Calling, and not pursue it.

Quest. But wherein lies this Heavenly Trade, which I must so make my business? what do you drive at by all these Arguments for Heavenly Trading?

What I intend by this metaphor, I shall open to you under these seven general Heads, as the main duty of a Christian, and to be carried on in the whole course of his life.

1. To have and keep up a heavenly spirit.
2. To secure your interest in heavenly things.
3. To get in more and more of heavenly Goods.
4. Every day to drive on heavenly work.
5. To be heavenly in your thoughts and meditations daily.
6. To keep up heavenly converses every day.
7. To improve everything you have, meet with, and do, to heavenly ends and advantages.

First, If you will drive on this heavenly Trade, you must have and maintain a heavenly spirit; this is the spring of all heavenly actions; as is a man's spirit, so will his thoughts, words and conversation be; look what way the spirit of a man goes, that way the man goes: They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; and they that

are after the spirit, the things of the spirit; That is, they that are altogether led by their carnal affections, (saith Willet) following the ducture of the flesh, (saith Pareus,) who are governed by a carnal spirit, they mind and pursue carnal things; and they that are after the spirit, who are under the rule and government of the spirit, who are spiritually minded, these do savor and make after spiritual things. What the Prophet Ezekiel speaks of the motion of second causes according to the direction and influence of the first cause. Ezek. 1. 20. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; (that is the wheels,) for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels: The same may be said of the actions of men, that they are according to the motion of that ruling spirit that is in them: they that live in the spirit, walk in the spirit, Gal. 5. 25. Caleb 's fulfilling after God, was the fruit of that other spirit he received, Numb. 14. 24. 'It is said of those that built the house of God, Ezra 1. 5. that God had raised up their spirits to the work, as birds stir up their young to fly. Then rose up the chief of the Fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the Priests and Levites, with all those whose spirit God had raised up, to go up to build the House of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. They that set about the work of Religion, must be persons of raised spirits, capable of ascending to things above. The reason why no more do set upon this Heavenly Trade, is, because they want this heavenly spirit, their spirit is earthly, and that (as leaven) seasons their whole souls, and makes their conversations earthly: 'It is contrary to nature, for a carnal mind to savor spiritual things; Such are not subject to the Spirit of God, neither indeed can be, Rom. 8. 7. 'It is as natural for the stone to ascend, and waters to run back, as for an earthly heart to love and pursue heavenly things. A heavenly spirit suits heavenly things, and does as naturally incline the soul to things above, as the fire moves upward, and the water carries all that is in it to the Ocean. A heavenly spirit savors heavenly things, and stirs up heavenly desires and motions to divine things. A heavenly spirit conveys out

heavenly influences and strength to the soul, and is as good blood and spirits that strengthen the body. A heavenly spirit is influenced by heavenly arguments, and prevailed with by heavenly motives taken from the love of God, the excellency of Christ, the suitableness and advantage of spiritual things to the nature of the soul, the pleasing and glorifying of God; all which signifies nothing to an earthly and carnal heart, which only understands, savors, and is acted by carnal reasons and considerations. 'It is therefore a principal part of a Christian's business in this Heavenly Trade, (and that which is leading to all other duties) to take heed to his spirit, Mai. 2. 15. to get and keep that pure and heavenly. If the fountain be corrupt, the streams cannot be good: Get your minds beamed over with heavenly light, to discern heavenly things, their nature and worth; this Paul begs for the Saints at Ephesus; Eph. 1. 17, 18. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his Calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints. There are great hopes and glorious riches made over to Believers in the Gospel, the knowledge of which is necessary to cheer the heart, and engage the soul with all its strength to make out after them. One thought of Christ (saith Mr. Ball) reaching the heart, is more to be valued than all Creature-contentment's whatsoever, though they should be enjoyed in their fullness for a thousand years without interruption: 'Twas this kept alive the Apostles hearts, under the dying's of the Lord Jesus in their bodies, and filled them with such courage & joy, that they had an eye to see glorious and eternal things. 2 Cor. 4. 10. 13. 16. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And this was their great work by the Gospel, to make men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which

from the beginning of the World was hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 9. And having got this spiritual eye, a Christian's duty is to keep it open, and fixed on things above, to preserve it from the injury of Sin and Satan, to take heed of the vapors of a carnal heart, and the dusty motes of this lower World, that they fall not in and weaken this sight: to get eye-salve from Christ, and pure anointings of the spirit on it every day, that they may see things invisible, and those great things of the other World they are engaged about: The most discerning eye on this side the everlasting Hills sees but darkly through a glass, and knows but in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. 12. How carnal are the minds of most Christians in this World? the very Disciples (though their eyes were blessed with peculiar sights,) Mat. 13. 16. yet had carnal apprehensions of spiritual things, even after the Lord Jesus had spent all his pains about them. Acts 1. 6. Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom unto Israel? knowing souls have sometimes their eyes held that they cannot see Jesus, Luke 24. 16. nor bear discoveries of his glorious truth, Joh. 16. 12. that the Lord Jesus may say to all in this life; O fools, and slow of heart to believe, Luke 24. 28. David, after he had been long a learner, yea, after he was wiser than his teachers, yet cries out for more light. Psal. 143. 8. Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk. Psal. 119. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law. We may sail here (saith Mr. Hooker) in daily search, and when we know, there is something still beyond our knowledge, as men that travel in the main Ocean, they see nothing but water, and yet see neither side nor shore, brim nor bottom, and there is more water to be seen. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, and he keeps the keys in his own hand and bosom. Be often looking unto Jesus for clearer sights of him, and the things freely given of God, with the way to them. Knock often at the treasury-door, till he answer and open, and send you away enriched with the knowledge of him: this is part of your

Trade, to know Goods, and the worth of them, and how to buy and sell to best advantage. Alas, to what purpose is it to deal in Commodities that men know not? and heavenly things are hidden things, beyond the search of Men and Angels. 1 Pet. 1. 12. Which things the Angels desire to look into; They bowed and stooped down to pry into those hidden secrets, and as it were to peep into the mysteries of the Gospel; as the word signifies; to look a-squint with cross eyes, every way, and with quickest observance, as through a Casement at one that passeth by; and this they did with an earnest and restless desire. The Apostle alludes to the Cherubim placed over the Mercy-seat, with their faces looking towards the Mercy-seat, and through it to the Ark (a type of Christ and Gospel-mysteries) Exod. 25. 20. as things worthy, and yet hard to be known, which call for an inward and spiritual eye under fresh anointings every day. Christians, this is your daily work, to follow on to know the Lord; to be much with the Sun of Righteousness for healings and beaming's on the eve of your mind, that you may be more capable to understand the whole counsel of God concerning you. This is a Heavenly Spirit or Mind enlightened with Heavenly Wisdom to eye and understand heavenly spiritual things.

Another property of a Heavenly Spirit is this; 'It is a Spirit that savors as well as sees heavenly things; it tastes a sweetness in divine things; there is nothing in all the world that so pleases a spiritual mind, as spiritual things: so much is included in that word, Rom. 8. 5. Do mind the things of the flesh: that is, do savor and relish them; so 'tis rendered, Matth. 16. 23. For thou savorest not the things that be of God; it includes the affections as well as understanding. A heavenly spirit takes delight in heavenly things, and is an active principle that carries out the soul after God and things eternal: And that's your work too, to get and maintain a delight in God, and divine things; to cherish breathings after heavenly things, and preserve your spiritual

senses in exercise, that your souls may be ever quick in seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling, the joys and pleasures that are in things above: By this means Religion will be desirable, Christ's yoke easy, and his ways pleasant, and his commands not grievous, This is one of the most difficult pieces of Christianity, to maintain the inward principle and spring of holy actions pure and lively: 'It is far easier to set on any external duty, than to keep the heart in a fit active frame for God, which is apt to languish and grow out of order every moment, if not kept and maintained by continued supplies from above. Prov. 4. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of Life. Now if you would keep up a heavenly spirit:

First, Beware of those things that weaken it: A Heavenly Spirit is a very tender thing, and must be charily kept, or will soon suffer loss; 'tis like the apple of the eye, that is liable to injury from every dust or stroke that comes nigh it; or like a Venice-glass, that is down and broken with every little touch. You cannot be too choice and tender in watching and guarding this Spirit from everything that is contrary to it.

Take heed of carnal lusts, these stand between God and the soul, and these resist the Spirit, Gal. 5. 17. and fight against the soul. 1 Pet. 2. 11. Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul. Water is as consistent with fire, sickness with health, death with life, as unmortified lusts with a heavenly spirit; and you may as safely dwell with thieves and bloody murderers, as suffer fleshly lusts to harbor near your hearts: These suffered to hover in the soul, will devour your sacrifice; and like water, quench this sacred fire; and with the Ivy, eat out the nourishment of this heaven-born spirit. When Alexander asked Diogenes what he would desire of him; that you (saith he) would stand aside a little from between me and the warm Sun: so a soul

that knows what the views of God are, will desire nothing more than the remove of what stands between him and the warming sight of this heavenly Sun. Carnal lusts are as venomous breath, that soon seize on, and weaken the vitals of godliness: Never expect peace or welfare to the spiritual seed, till the bondwoman and her Son be cast out. How soon have excellent frames been all lost, and the candle of the Lord well-nigh put out by these filthy damps that ascend from the deeps of unclean and unmortified affections. This wrought such changes in Israel; now they sang his praises, and then presently forgot his works, Psal. 106. 12. Those divine raptures could not abide, and what was the cause? why 'twas unmortified lusts that had dominion over them. V. 14. They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the Desert, and he gave them their requests, but sent leanness into their souls. This soon brought the Jews from being conquerors, to captives, that they did not pursue their victories, and drive out the Canaanites out of the valleys, as well as the mountains, Judge. 1. 19. ch. 2, 3. This want of mortification in Believers is the cause that their corruptions do so often give check to their graces, and make their choice heavenly frames so short-lived and mutable. [O cursed pleasures! O damnable ease bought with the loss of God! Rutherford.] O Christians! guard your spirit from those filthy and fleshly lusts, as Physicians do fortify the spirits against malignant vapors, if ever you will maintain a gracious and heavenly spirit.

Earthly things also admitted too near the heart, prove the bane of a heavenly spirit: these, like a stone at the bird's leg, pluck it down when it attempts to be upon the wing: Worldly affections, when they exceed their bounds, are like waters that overflow the banks; they carry down all heavenly motions before them. Earthly things are the Devils lure to professing Christians, which draw down their lofty meditations, when they are in chase of things above; as the Fowler

allures down the towering Lark when hovering aloft in the gentle air. The Devil deals with earthly men, as Naturalists say men do with Bees; when they swarm and are flying away, they throw up dust, and they scatter again: So doth Satan when their thoughts are up upon heavenly things; he casts in the dusty thoughts of this world, and they scatter them again. Demas hath forsaken us, having loved this present world, 2 Tim. 4. 10. Earthly things draw away the heart from God, his work and interest: How often do those interrupt, if not countermand the most serious thoughts of gracious souls? and where they cannot as a Master command, they will as neighbors be often coming in, and hinder the soul in its most weighty business, if the door be not locked against their unseasonable visits. Worldly lusts must be denied, as well as ungodliness, by those that intend to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world, Tit. cap. 2. v. 11, 12. Earthly things are good servants, but bad Masters; useful in their place; as fire in the hearth is profitable, but in the thatch dangerous; and as unruly Servants, and untamed Colts are serviceable when reduced to their place, and kept under government. Worldly thoughts are as some roots that must be often trod down, or they will spill up and seed in our hearts. Christians, have a special strong guard against the encroachments of your earthly affairs, if ever you will secure the thriving's of a heavenly spirit,

Take heed also of grieving the Spirit of Grace, which maintains and relieves this heavenly spirit: As the spring is to the streams; so is the holy Spirit to this heavenly spirit in Believers, that feeds and supplies it from his own nature: Now to grieve this Spirit, is to provoke him to withhold his gracious communications to the soul. Ephes. 4. 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption: Which implies, that this Spirit of Grace being grieved, suspends its comforting sealing influences towards the souls of Believers. This Scripture is taken from Isa. 63. 10. But they rebelled

and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them: They grieved his Spirit, as the word signifies; and this broke that amicable accord between the Spirit and them, that he became their enemy, and cut off all succors from them; yea, comes forth against them: And that which grieved the Spirit of God was, the abuse of its kindness. V. 9. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. Nothing does more grieve the Spirit of God, than the abuse of his kindness and tender mercy to his people; when the Lord hath been opening the bowels of his pity to souls in saving and redeeming-mercy, and hath been shedding abroad his love upon them, bearing with, and carrying of them for a long time; and all this is slighted and contemned, and the soul takes no notice of all this grace, but still perseveres in its evil course; this grieves the Spirit, and causeth him to withhold his tender mercy, and quickening influence from the soul, and it becomes weak as water, and withers in all the leaves of her spring, Ezek. 17. 9. Psa. 104. 29. As the member languishes when it can no longer receive influences from the head; and the branch withers when the root communicates no sap to it: so is it with the soul when the spirit ceases from all its gracious communications, as it does when grieved by those he loves and labors with; not as if the Divine Spirit could be capable of passions and perturbations, as creatures are: But then may the holy Spirit be said to be grieved, when gracious souls do that which is enough to grieve one that tenderly affects us, and by all means seeks our eternal good. Now two things usually grieve such a one: First, Injuries from a friend. Secondly, The sufferings of a friend. Unkindness from those we love, does usually sit nearer our hearts, then any injuries from strangers or enemies: we usually expect more regard from such, and therefore are more troubled at disappointments: And such is the tenderness of the Spirit to Believers, that want of love, or injury from

such is more abusive, and carries in it all that which in its nature is grieving. Again, we usually grieve at the evils of those we love; and such are the sins of Believers, they are injurious to themselves, and enemies to their own souls: This the Spirit of God sees that gracious souls, by their carnal affections, and sensual passions, by their corrupt communications, and fleshly lusts, do not only resist him, and frustrate his work in them; but these also injure and endanger their own souls; by these they lose many a mercy, and draw upon them many afflictions and fatherly displeasure from God against them; and this grieves the Spirit to see; and this removes his presence, and hinders his comforting, quickening operations, by reason of which their spirits fail, and become cold and weak to every heavenly action, Your work Christians, is to be tender of the Spirit; to take heed you be not unkind to his person, that you do not undervalue his gracious communications, or resist his internal operations: Take heed of unthankfulness for his kindnesses, of slighting his counsels, of unsuitable walking to his rules and mercies, if you would not grieve him, and so deprive yourselves of his quickening influences on your spirits. That's the first: Beware of those things that weaken this heavenly Spirit.

Secondly, If you would maintain a Heavenly Spirit; get all the nourishment you can for it: As the body is nourished by food, and the animal spirits by contributions of joy and contentment; so is this Heavenly Spirit by all the means and helps God hath appointed to this end, 1 Tim. 4. 6. nourished up in the word of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. The Word and Ordinances are to the inner-man, as nourishing food to the outward, which strengthens the spiritual part, and maintains its vigor and activity. Timothy had imbibed the Doctrine of the Gospel together with his milk (saith Calvin) and had made continual progresses in the same to that day, which did so greatly strengthen and nourish him in his faith

and graces. The Word of God is suited, sent and commissioned to the service and advantage of your graces; 'tis the way by which the Lord Jesus maintains and increases spiritual life and growth in the new-born soul. 1 Pet. 2. 2. As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby. Attend upon all the Ordinances of God, where they are purely and powerfully administered: Be much in reading the Scriptures, and such help as the Lord gives you for your instruction and quickening. 1 Tim. 4. 13. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. V. 15. Be thou in them: as the words are; that is, exercise thyself with these continually, constantly, and with all thy might; let not a day pass without reading, meditation, and secret prayer, that the inner-man may have all the recruits that are needful and appointed for its strengthening. Your bodies can better want their appointed food, than your souls their daily bread: The want of constant feeding, and sound digestion of spiritual provisions, is one cause of that soul-leanness, and spiritual languishing that abounds everywhere this day.

Thirdly, If you will keep up a Heavenly Spirit; be much in communion with the Father of Spirits. Fellowship with God puts a stamp of Heaven upon the soul, and leaves an impress of the Divine Nature on it. 2 Cor. 3. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Views of God, though but through the glass of Ordinances, have an assimilating virtue, and do transform the mind into his own likeness. When Moses was taken up into a nearness to God, he gets some abiding beams of his glory upon him, and comes off with divine shines on his countenance, Exod. 34. 35. When the Lord Jesus was got on to a high Mountain apart, and had more near fellowship with Heaven, 'tis said: He was

transfigured, and his face did shine. Nearness to God does wonderfully warm and quicken the heart, as approaches of the Sun do the body. With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light, Psal. 36. 9. As the being of spiritual Life lies in union with-God in Christ by faith; so is its wellbeing maintained by communion with him in the Spirit, who supplies the soul with quickening's, as the fountain doth the vessel that's put under it, with waters: God is in himself the Essential Life, and to his people the fountain of Life. Thou Lord (saith one) art life by thy Essence, and the fountain of Life by communion; from thee all Life flows out, and runs down incessantly. In fellowship the Lord Jesus lets out Himself, Love and Spirit; and this attracts the heart after God, and strengthens the soul's motions after him. Every act of fellowship with Christ here (saith Mr. Reyner) is a step Heaven-ward: By it the heart is raised after God, sweetly refreshed and strengthened with spiritual strength. To live in fellowship with God (says the same Author) is to live at the highest rate under Heaven, next to Heaven; yea as in a corner of Heaven, to live in the highest Region of Christianity, —'tis the Life of Paradise, an Evangelical, yea Angelical and Celestial Life, in comparison whereof the most men and women are dead. Communion with God does wonderfully nourish the Heavenly Spirit, and fatten the spiritual part of Believers: Such (saith Reyner) suck a honey-comb, eat fat things full of marrow, and drink wine on the lees well refined, spiced wine. O Christians; press after nearness to God in Ordinances and Duties; rest not in highest privileges without spiritual converse with God in them, and communications of his Love and Life through them.

Fourthly, Cherish heavenly motions in your hearts, and be tender of all the breathings of the Spirit upon you. It may be the Lord comes in upon the heart with some Spiritual Light or Life, in a Sermon, or in a Duty, or when alone, stirring up thy desires, and warming thy

affections, making some offers of grace, and help to thy dull and languishing soul; take heed now how thou slightest or stiflest these: this is one step to the quenching of the Spirit, and impeding its gracious assistance, and vital operations on thy soul: 1 Thes. 5. verse. 19. Quench not the Spirit. He that will kindle a fire, gathers up every little coal, and makes the most of the least spark. The shavings of gold are gold, and the smallest breathings of the Spirit are to be highly prized: He that checks the first motions of the Spirit, may never meet with the second; and he that slights the least gifts of grace, may forever miss of its larger doles. O to what a height might grace come in thy soul, if every stirring of it were improved! God despises not the day of thy small things; how unreasonable is it thou shouldest overlook his! The Lord Jesus (Christians) doth nourish and cherish the least good that is in you, Ephes. 5. 29. O be tender of whatever communications come from him to you! This will abundantly help on the enlivening's and enlargements of this Heavenly Spirit.

Fifthly, Dwell much in the meditation of Heaven; this will heavenlize your spirit: 'Twas this made the Apostles persons of such heavenly spirits; they did often look to things above. 1 Cor. 4 18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. No affliction could discourage them from owning and professing Christ; nor earthly comforts allure their desires and delights from Christ; and that which so strongly guarded their hearts from either of these dangers, was a firm persuasion of an interest in future glory, and a diligent observing eye upon this glory: a levelling look at this mark does wonderfully raise the heart towards it, and put in a new spirit and life into the soul, strongly engaging all its attempts towards the enjoyment of it: Frequent contemplations of Heaven do much wean the heart from this Earth. If thou rememberest thou art not of this world, earthly things shall only be admitted into the Court of the

Temple, not into the heart, which is the Holy of Holies, Burg. on 17. Joh. How contemptibly did those Worthies of old look on this world, when once they got sights of Heaven! Heb. 11. They counted themselves strangers and pilgrims on the Earth; were not mindful of their own Country; went out from it; would no more return to it; sought a heavenly Country; were persuaded of those great and glorious things above, and embraced them; laid hold of them by faith; and made after them: and that which did so powerfully work over their spirits to these things above, was their believing sights of them. V. 13. These all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off; that is, the things promised, (viz.) heavenly things, of which Canaan was a type. So Pareus refers the participles here to the things signified of the promise, that heavenly Country which they only desired. Things nearest Heaven (saith one) take least care of the Earth: The Fowls of the Air neither plow nor sow. The glory of the world seems little to one that dwells much on the believing views of Heaven. 'It is said of Fulgentius, That when he beheld the splendor and joy of Rome, the glory of the Roman Nobility, the triumphant pomp of King Theodorick, he was so far from being taken with it, that it raised up his desires after heavenly joys the more, saying, How beautiful may the Celestial Jerusalem be, when terrestrial Rome so glittereth! If such honor be given to lovers of vanity, what glory shall be imparted to the Saints, who are lovers and followers of truth! Serious thoughts of Heaven will inflame the desires after it: Our Conversation is in Heaven (saith Paul) whence also we look for the Savior, who shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of his glorious body, Phil. 3. 20. We wait, hope for, and expect Heaven, to be where this blessed Country is; the breadth and length of which we now look into by faith. If your thoughts be much on Heaven, your longings will be much for Heaven. I have read of one being in his journey towards Jerusalem, thought he saw famous Cities in his way, and met with many friendly

entertainments; yet would often say, I must not stay here; this is not Jerusalem: So will thy heart say (if thou conversest much in Heaven now) when thou meetest with the most desirable comforts of this life; yet this is not Heaven; my affections must not stay here. Allow time every day to take some turns in the upper world, and to get thy heart held in the galleries above; where are the sweetest delicacies, and most delighting views to take thy heart, and sublimate thy affections to these pure and eternal things?

Sixthly, If you would keep up a Heavenly Spirit; be much exercised in heavenly actions: As is men's employments they are mostly versed about, so usually is their spirit: Actions strengthen habits: Men that are much taken up about earthly things, are earthly-minded; their spirits being tintured with the things they have much to do with: Such are heavenly actions to gracious souls; they draw forth and exercise their graces: use makes men ready, and adapts their spirits to their work. The Apostle makes this an evidence of strength in grace, that such are much in the exercise of it. Heb. 5. 14. Strong meat belongeth to them who are of full age; even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. The more you are conversant about holy things, the stronger will be the bent of your spirit to them; the more facile and pleasant will Religion be, and the indisposition of your spirit to it more abated. Prov. 10. 29. The way of the Lord is strength to the upright. The more you walk in it, the less weary will you be; the more pleasure will you find in it, and the more propense will your spirit be to it. This is the first work in Wisdom's Merchandise; to get and keep up a Heavenly Spirit.

Secondly, Another piece of your Heavenly Trade is, to secure your interest in heavenly things. This is part of men's business in the world, to secure their interest in the things they have: they mark

their goods, and brand their cattle, and set their names on the things they have, that their interest in them might be known: And this is the great concern of Wisdom's Merchants also, to make good their claim to, and prove their propriety in the things of Heaven and Glory: These are worth the securing, being things of infinite moment, and eternal duration; other things are not. O what folly is it to strive for shadows, and lose the substance; to get and secure Houses, Lands, and Reputation for your Children, and to lose your souls! As he that complained when he was to die; That he must burn in Hell forever, for getting an estate for his Son, and neglecting his own soul. What will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matth. 16. 24. To make all things else sure, and leave God, Grace and Glory to an uncertainty. As Caesar Borgia bewailed when too late, saying when he was near death; I have endeavored to secure me against every danger but death; and having never thought of death, must now die. Things eternal will then appear the greatest when men come to die; then an interest in God, pardon and salvation will be valued beyond ten thousand worlds: And is it not worth the looking after now?

And what can compensate the loss of that soul, who miscarries in his All, and hath nothing left but the tormenting sense of what he hath lost, and the intolerable burden of what he hath found, as the fruit of his often cautioned folly? 'It is a dreadful thing to be disappointed of salvation-hopes: What if thou shouldest miss of glory at last, and thy end should be to be cut off, and to have thy portion with Hypocrites in that Lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where the worm never dieth, and the fire is never quenched? Mark 9. 44. How couldest thou bear, if when thou thinkest to enter into the joy of the Lord, then in a moment to be thrust into the place of torment? and when thou dreamest of carrying up into Abraham 's bosom, where is

eternal pleasures; to fall into the hands of God, who is a consuming fire? this is fearful.

And yet this may be thy case. Think how possible, nay how easy 'tis for men to be deceived in lesser matters, and that they who have had the highest confidences of a future blessedness, have been mistaken at last, and all their hopes have expired as a falling Meteor, and come to nothing, Job 27. 8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite though he hath gained much, when God taketh away his soul? Men may think themselves to be something, and yet be nothing, Gal. 6. 2. Come with confidence to the Bridegroom's doors, and demand an entrance as the foolish Virgins did, and yet rejected. Mat. 25. 11, 12. Afterward came also the other Virgins, (that is when the door was shut) saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answered and said; verily I say unto you, I know you not. They may seem to have some reason for their claim, and produce evidences of their hope, and yet be turned away as workers of iniquity. Mat. 7. 22, 23. Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? have cast out Devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity: The heart is deep and deceitful, who can know it? none but he who searcheth the deep things of God can reach this bottom, and bring to light the hidden things thereof: The work of grace is a secret full of mysteries, that none can open and fully know, but the eternal Spirit that formed it in the womb of a Believer's heart: Seeming grace hath so near a resemblance to saving grace, that it puzzles the most curious and searching eye (if not enlightened with a beam from Heaven) to discern the difference: besides, the slender measures of the Spirit that most have attained to in this life, with the subtle insinuations, the false representations, and treacherous prevarications of that bloody and irreconcilable enemy of mankind, all which conspire to put a cheat upon the professing Christian, and render his Salvation

exceeding doubtful. And suppose thy state should be safe, yet how perplexing and full of anxiety is it, to have the least suspicion of thy unsoundness? To have the life of thy precious soul hang in suspense, and to be unresolved in that great case, whether thou must live or die to all eternity! O! how tormenting and heart-sinking is this! An awakened Soul that cannot rest in sin, nor yet hope in grace, or upon any Scripture-warrant come to a determination about his real interest in God, and things eternal, is like a troubled Sea that cannot rest; Instruments of Music cannot allay its disquietude, no Creature comforts can charm its heart to a peaceful composure: who does in reality but suspect his eternal welfare, and but think he reads this hand-writing on the wall: Mene, mene, tekem upharsin: Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting, Dan. 5. 25. 27. Nothing in all the World can be a Plaster broad enough for such a wound, no Cordial can cheer that heart, till Grace decides the controversy, and assures the Soul of an unquestionable title to the Heir of all things, and to the inheritance with the Saints in light: And have you not reason than to be restless till your propriety in these glorious treasures be attested; which, though difficult, yet is possible and feasible to all that follow Wisdom's counsel in order to it? The eternal truth hath opened a way to the decision of this question, whether I have eternal life or no, and laid down certain marks of a Soul entitled to things above. 1 Joh. 5. 13. These things have I written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life; Vers. 12. 19. Chap. 3. 14. The Lord hath charged this to be the duty of all that profess their hopes of glory, to make their Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. To examine themselves whether they be in the Faith, 2 Cor. 13. 5. To prove their own work, that they may have rejoicing in themselves, Gal. 6. 4. which he would never have done were it impossible: He hath also promised the Spirit to help them in this work, and to lead them into all truth, bearing witness with their spirits that they are

the Lord's, Joh. 16. 13. Rom. 8. 16. And upon this very account exhorts them to holiness, that they might not impede this sealing work of the Spirit, Eph. 4. 30. And upon the arrival to this certainty, hath ensured great consolation and advantage, 2 Pet. 1. 8. 10, 11. All which words signify nothing, and reflect unrighteousness on the spirit of truth, were not an evidence of right to these heavenly things obtainable.

Quest. But how may I come to the knowledge of this desirable truth; that Heavenly Treasures are surely mine, and that I may make a warrantable claim to God, to Christ, and these things of the other World?

Sol. 1. First, By your conjugal union with the Heir of Heaven: All things in Heaven and Earth are Christ's, he is the Heir of all things. Heb. 1. 2.—Hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things: All things in Heaven and Earth are his by donation, purchase and inheritance juridically conferred over to him in the new covenant, and actually put into his hand, upon the finishing of his meritorious work and victory over death. Matt. 28. 18. All power is given to me in Heaven and Earth: Lawful power, right, privilege and authority, (as the word imports,) and with this is the Lord Jesus invested, and hath all things put into his hands, and all creatures under his feet, Heb. 2. 7, 8. And all right to true riches is derived from him, through union with him. 1 Cor. 3. 21. 23. All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's: If you are Christ's, then all things are yours, not else; your title is founded on your marriage-relation to him. Gal. 3. 29. And if you are Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and Heirs according to the promise: A title to these glorious treasures is made over in the new covenant, which covenant is confirmed in Christ, and made in him, and through him to all that are his: He is the way, there's no coming to

these treasures but by him; he is the door, no entering into them but through him: He is the treasury itself, in whom all the riches of grace, all the fullness of pleasures and satisfaction lies; you must have the treasury before you can have the treasures; the well itself before the waters are yours: He that hath the Son hath life; hath him by way of possession, as an owner and proprietor: If you have Christ, you have all that is his, his person and purchase go together: Rebekah must consent to go and marry Isaac before she could be invested with that substance and wealth which was his. This new covenant which interests a soul in the Lord Jesus, and his unsearchable riches, is a marriage-covenant. Hos. 2. 19, 20. And I will betroth thee unto me forever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee to me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. Ezek. 16. 8. I entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine; this was a marriage covenant. Jer. 3. 14. Turn O back sliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married to you. If you would see your title to heavenly treasures, try your conjugal union to the Lord Jesus the Heir of Heaven. Every relation to Christ is not a conjugal relation. There is a general relation, as dead branches to the tree: Joh. 15. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away. A person may be in Christ as the luxuriant branch or sucker is in the tree, that sucks the sap of privileges, and gets some nourishment of frames, and comforts, but brings not forth fruit, it sprouts out of the stock, as proud flesh grows on the wound, but hath no right union with the root, or nourishment from the head: Such are obtruders and hang-bies, which take the place of children, but are strangers, who climb up as the thief to steal, but comes not in by the door to dwell with God: they are retainers to Christ's House, that now and then do some service for him, and have some scraps and favors, but are no abiding members of his house; like the Apricot, that leans on the wall, but is rooted in the earth.

There is a temporary Relation also; as of a Servant to a Master, where there is a propriety for a time: The servant comes into the house, enjoys privileges and protection, and doth some service, is very useful for the family, and it may be beloved too: (as a servant.) And such is the relation of some to Christ; but this differs vastly from that union which entitles to the person and purchase of the Lord Jesus; he is mercenary in all he doth, and hath by-ends in his entrance and continuance; he does not anything from pure love to Christ, but for self-respects and advantage: his welfare is not wrapped up in the welfare of the family, to stand or fall with it; to embark his All in the prosperity of that house: he lives in the family, and upon his Lord, but to himself, and is as the Planets which are carried about with the primum mobile; but yet have a distinct motion and course of their own: he is in the family, but not of the family; and as his relation is but titular, so his station is but temporary; he abides not in the house forever, Joh. 8. 35. And when he goes away he carries off nothing but his own; not a jot of the inheritance is his; he hath fared well, and had a great deal of credit and comfort for a time; but goes as he came, and is the same person as he was.

There is also a Concubine-Relation to Christ, which gives the soul some use of his kindness, but no right to his person. A Concubine is one that is contented with ones bed, but hath no conjugal love to his person; neither doth she pass into the husband's family, or are her children counted legitimate: She is one that either by constraint or consent, comes over into an external communion with another for his use and bed; but is never married to his person, or hath chosen him for her husband, to become one flesh with him, to take up her delight in him, and to do all from a principle of love to him: And as she hath not the properties; so she hath not the privileges of a wife, for intimacy and entertainment, in respect of power and maintenance. Such is the relation that many have to Christ; they

consent to have some enjoyment of Christ, but have no marriage-union with him; he is not theirs by choice, but either for necessity or advantage, to enjoy their own pleasures by him, and receive some profit from him: they never saw an excellency in him, or were ever unhearted by him, as he is by his Spouse. Cant. 4. 9. Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes; with one chain of thy neck: Thou hast unhearted me, or snatched away my heart: These never consented to all his proposals in order to union with him; they never heartily gave up themselves to him, nor entered into covenant with him, and became his. And as they are strangers to an espousal-state; so are they to a Spouse-like disposition; they have not the temper and carriage of a wife, nor the privileges that such use to have; they are not acquainted with his secrets, nor the openings of his heart, and those amorous embracement's peculiar to such a relation; they are not invested with any Authority or Rule; they have no power over their corruptions, nor command of their spirits and affections, that should be in subjection to them: Grace bears no sway in them; sin and self does all in their souls; neither were they ever enrolled in his family, or owned by the Lord Jesus as his Hephzibah 's, nor have the allowance and special provisions of the King's Bride, and Lamb's Wife; and as to their conceptions, and those births they seem to have by Jesus Christ, they are spurious and illegitimate, and never owned by the Lord Jesus as the genuine products of his own Spirit. This is the case of those that have not marriage-union with Christ; they have no right to him or his Treasures. Try then your Espousal-relation to Christ.

Quest. How may I know whether I am married to Christ or no?

Answ. 1. First, If you are married to Christ, you are such as have special acquaintance with Christ; you know him as none else do. The

wife hath the most peculiar and distinct knowledge of her husband of any: Others may know something, yea much of him; but none knows him so much as the wife; she hath acquaintance with all his excellencies, and all his infirmities; she has the largest tastes of his love, and experience of his sweetness, and intimate converses with him of any in the world. So 'tis with the Spouse of Christ; she dwells in his presence, and lodges in his arms; she sees him within the veil uncloth'd of those coverings that stand between him and the eyes of strangers, and conceals his amiableness from common beholders: He puts aside his glorious Robe, and shows her his naked breast, and lays her hand upon his tender heart: she is much alone with him in his chambers, where he expresses intimacy with her, as Isaac did with Rebekah, and discloses the secrets of his heart, and the greatest unveilings of his love: He tells her what thoughts he had upon her from all eternity; when he was in his Father's Kingdom, his heart was working after her, and he thought the time long till he came down to see her; and no sooner did he cast his eye upon her (though then she lay polluted in her blood, and cast out into the field, to the loathing of her person) but his heart did burn within him towards her; and it was the time of love: He tells her all the time of his hard labor in the world for her, seemed but a few days; and the unsupportable burden of her sins, and the Father's wrath upon him for her sake, seemed but as nothing for the love he bore unto her. In these converses he assures her of his Love, Person and Kingdom; and however he may seem in his carriages, yet his heart is fixed upon, and faithful to her, and swears he will never, never leave her, but after a little absence come and receive her to himself, and she shall be forever with him. Thus he manifests himself to her, as he doth not to the world; by reason of which she becomes so well acquainted with him, and knows his voice, and by faith sees his sheep; she can tell by experience who, and what her Beloved is, and how far better than other Beloveds. There's never a soul that's married to Christ, but

hath his time, when he makes out some special discoveries of his love and self to it; and it can tell some stories of what Christ did once say and do unto her: what slights she hath had of him, and gifts from him: such a soul can tell, how when he was dead, Christ quickened him; when he was lost, Christ found him; when he was in prison, Christ set him free; he washed him when in his blood, and poured in Oil into his wounds; healed his backslidings, and loved him freely: He can say with Rebekah to her Brother Laban; Thus the man spake to me, and showed the ear-rings and the bracelets, Gen. 24. 30. And with Judah brings forth the signet, bracelets and staff, Gen. 38. 25. and tells with the blind man how Christ opened his eyes, and what he said to him, Joh. cap. 9. ver. 15, 35, 37. And though by his sin and unbelief he may lose the sight of him for a time, and be under a suspense of his discovered kindness; yet if the Believer would be true to his experience, he can discover such an acquaintance with Christ as no Hypocrite ever had.

Answ. 2. Secondly, Another thing that will prove your marriage to Christ, is your conjugal-love to him. Jer. 2. 2. I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness in a Land not sown. The Lord convinceth Israel of the great decay and change of their Love to what it once was; there was a time when their affections were high towards God, when he called them out of Egypt, took them from the Iron furnace, and married them to himself; then nothing was too hard for them; they could follow God in a wilderness, where there was nothing but God alone to satisfy them; creatures were wanting to allure them, and yet they could stick at nothing; no difficulties should part God and them: Whence came this warmth of their affection? why it was their nearness to God that created them: The Lord had taken them into a marriage covenant, and carried them in his bosom; and this inflamed their hearts after him. When the Lord brings a soul into an

espousal-state, he gives them espousal-love; and that is the greatest love: O sweet! saith Rutherford, were that sickness to be soul-sick for him; and a living death it were to die in the fire of the love of that Soul-lover Jesus. The Apostle makes this an essential duty of a married state, to have conjugal affections: The Husband to love his Wife as his own flesh, and the Wife to love her own Husband as herself, Eph. 5. 28. Tit. 2. 4. And the Prophet reckons this love to God as the certain fruit of their Covenant-relation to him. Isa. 56. 6. That join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the Name of the Lord. As soon as Paul had espoused the Lord Jesus, it appeared in his supreme love to him; he valued none like Christ: He counted all things dross and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ his Lord, Phil. 3. 8. To be found in him, not having his own righteousness, v. 9. To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, v. 10. Conjugal love is a personal love; pure love to Christ is set on Christ himself for himself, not for his gifts that come from him; but for those excellencies that reside in him; 'tis love to his person, not to his patrimony only; 'tis love springing from his love. 1 Joh. 4. 19. We love him because he first loved us. True affections to the Lord Jesus are the births of his own love to us, a coal kindled from his fire.

Conjugal love is also peculiar as well as personal love; so far as 'tis conjugal, 'tis to him, and none but him; or if to others, 'tis for his sake: Espousal love to Christ affects none like him: If there be any person or thing thou lovest more than Christ, or equal with him, thy affections to him are whorish, not conjugal: He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me: He that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me, Mat. 10. 37. Yea, he that doth not hate Father or Mother, or anything, so far as it is inconsistent with love to Christ, cannot be his Disciple, Luke 14. 26.

True love to Christ will let none in all the world share in that love which Christ hath; 'twill take none into his bed but himself; 'tis chaste love.

Again, Conjugal-love is not only to Christ, but 'tis such a love as longs to be found in Christ, not in himself; it would have all his glory and excellency in Christ; it reckons Christ for all that's truly honorable as to him; it would get as near to Christ as possible; yea it never rests till in him: To be found in him. 'It is also such a love as conforms to Christ: Love is of an assimilating spirit; it would be like to its peculiar object. The affectionate wife conforms as much as may be to her Husband: so 'tis with the Spouse of Christ, she would in everything that is imitable resemble him, and 'tis her great trouble she is not more like him: what would such a soul give if his heart was like Christ's heart; if he had such a spirit and life as the Lord Jesus had on Earth? it would be holy as Christ is holy, and cannot set up a stand short of that: 'It is true, the soul hath not such a spirit as Christ had; 'tis too proud, vain, carnal passionate, earthly, selfish, and that troubles him; but it can never be quiet, till he comes nearer to the pattern in Heaven, and to a full resemblance of his well-beloved Jesus.

Answ. 3. Thirdly, A soul espoused to Christ will leave all for Christ; that's the condition of marriage between Christ and his Bride. Psal. 45. v. 10, 11. Hearken O Daughter and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him: As if he should say, weigh and consider the terms on which this match is to be concluded between Christ and you. If you will be his, you must leave all for him; you must forsake all your other lovers, friends, interests, comforts for Christ, so far as these hinder your love to Christ, your communion with, and serviceableness unto him.

When the woman comes to be married, she leaves her friends, Father's house, Country, and all to come and live with him that shall be her Husband. Rebekah left her Father, Brother, Friends and Country to go to Isaac, Gen. 24. 58. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, wilt thou go with this man? and she said I will go. That soul that cannot consent really and considerately to part with all for Christ, never yet came up to marriage-terms: The treaty between Christ and that soul never went far enough for a conclusion; and if it go no farther; if thy soul cannot seal to this, to part with all thy interests, thy dearest comforts; yea thyself for Christ, the match must after all be broken, and Christ and thee part at last, yea part forever. O soul! try thy heart in this; here lies the knot, the vertical point; this is the most difficult of all Christ's proposals, and that the soul is longest consenting to, even the letting go all for Christ: His person may please well enough; his estate is desirable for a reversion; but now to take leave of, and to go with Christ, this is the hard saying: Persons would have Christ and the world too, Christ and friends too, Christ and reputation, peace, liberty, pleasure, and self too; and if this will not be granted, break the bargain: but if ever Christ and you have closed, and you are his, and he yours, you cannot count anything too dear to part with for him, or to let go at his bidding: If Christ calls for Estate, Husband; Wife, Children, an Isaac, a Benjamin, a right Eye, a right Hand, all must go; and you must part with them freely and cheerfully, as Abraham did with Isaac. Gen. 22. 3. Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his Asses, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his Son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him: Not as Jacob did part with Benjamin; by constraint, and grudgingly, Gen. 43. 11. If it must be so now, do this, &c. He was almost starved before he would consent to part with Benjamin; and when he did, he lets him go last of all: he parts with the best fruits of the Land, Balm, Honey, Spices, Myrrh, Nuts, Almonds, double

money, anything first; at last Benjamin was screwed out too: Many must have their comforts wrenched out of their hands before they will let them go; but this is not love to Christ. A soul married to Christ will say with Mephibosheth concerning his Land; Let Zibah take all; for as much as my Lord the King is come again in peace to his own house, 2 Sam. 19. 30. So, let God take all my estate, strength, liberty, comforts, seeing the Lord Jesus is come home to my soul in peace: Houses, Lands, Friends, Credit, Peace, Life, may be dear, but Christ will be dearer if he and you are one flesh. All Bavaria (said George Carpenter) is not so dear to me as my Wife and Children; yet for Christ's sake I will forsake them cheerfully. Do you think me such a fool (said Ogvier to one that tempted him with life and preferment) that I should change eternal things for temporal. Loss of goods is great; (saith Hooper) but loss of God's grace and favor is greater? Love is never thoroughly seen till it comes to parting: O the tugging's, holdings, shifts and reasonings that men will have before they will part with that they dearly love: Now it will appear (saith Philpot) what we love best, for to that we love we will stick: If Christ have most of your hearts, you will let fall everything out of your hands to hold fast Christ: I have (said Mr. Bale) exiled myself forever from mine own native Country, Kindred, Friends, Acquaintance, which are the great delights of this life, and am well contented for the sake of Christ..

Answ. 4. Fourthly, A Soul married to Christ, stays, and lives on Christ. The Wife casts herself upon her Husband's love and care for her supplies, and lives on his allowance for all her provisions: 'tis suspicious for a married Woman to be maintained by strangers, and to live on other men for what she needs; 'tis the Husband's duty to provide for his own, and to nourish and cherish his Wife as the Lord the Church, Eph. 5. 29. and 'tis the Wives duty to go to and rely on his faithfulness for it: So 'tis with the Soul that hath espoused Christ;

it is to live on Christ for all it needs: they that take Christ aright, take him for their All, not for better or worse for richer or poorer, as Women take their earthly Husbands, (for Christ is always best of all, always exceeding rich, and full of unsearchable treasures,) but to take him for their only and sufficient portion at all times, and in all estates. Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I trust in him. Lord, (said Paulinus, when his City, Gold and Silver was taken away) let not the loss of these things trouble me; for thou art all, and more than all these to me; [Shaw 's Tombstone, p. 33.] Christ is the Believer's All in the way, and God his All in All at the end. It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and under him all things should be put, 2 Col. 1. 19. Heb. 2. 8. And this is for the supply, comfort and blessedness of those that are his. Eph. 1. 23. Which is the body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all. Whatever Christ hath (as Mediator) is the Churches for her use and profit: If men have plenty of liquors, they fill their vessels with them; if they have much riches, they place them in their treasury, so doth Christ dispose of his fullness for his Churches good; hence 'tis the Spouse of Christ comes leaning on her Beloved from the Wilderness, Cant. 8. 5. and dares adventure her All on the love and sufficiency of her loving and lovely Lord; she is full of failings, but she lives on him for righteousness; many are her weaknesses, but she goes to Christ for strength. Isa. 45. 24. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: She is sensible of many wants, but casts herself on the promise; My God shall supply all your wants, Phil. 4. 19. Her backslidings, temptations, dangers, troubles and fears are many, but she stays on the Lord Jesus, whom she hath chosen for her only friend in Heaven and Earth, and there she lays herself down in his bosom, when wearied with difficulties and doubts, and embarques herself in his faithfulness for all she stands in need of, for life and godliness, for grace and glory.

Answ. 5. Fifthly, Fruitfulness to Christ proves Marriage to Christ: Hence the Spouse is set forth by metaphors that express fruitfulness; a Garden, not a wilderness; a well-watered Garden, which is usually most fruitful, where the Spices flow out, where the Graces of the Spirit are more operative and abundant, and Souls become more fruitful in manifested holiness; An Orchard planted with choice and pleasant fruits, Camphire, Spikenard, Saffron, Calamus, Cinnamon, with all trees of Frankincense, Myrrh and Aloes, with all the chiefest Spices, which signify the preciousness, variety and abundance of grace and holiness in those who are savingly united to the Lord Jesus: A flock of Sheep, whereof everyone beareth twins, and not one is barren, Cant. 4. 12, 13, 14, 16. Ch. 4. 2. 'It is compared to the Palm-tree, the Cedar, the Vine, the Fig-tree, a green Olive, plants famous for flourishing, growth, clusters of fruit, constant fruitfulness; 'tis said of the Fig-tree, it bears fruit all the year long, and in many places they shall always find green figs on it: Such is the Spouse of Christ, compared with the world and hypocrites fruitful and flourishing: A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, Mat. 7. 17. The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit, Prov. 12. 12. Wherever the grace of God is received in truth, there it brings forth fruit, Col. 1. 6. As sin brings forth fruit unto death, so doth grace unto life, Rom. 6. 22. No sooner doth the Lord Jesus espouse a Soul, but he heals it of its barrenness: He maketh the barren Woman to keep house, Psal. 113. 9. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, Joh. 15. 2. A barren Christian is a monster in Religion, no living member of Christ's body; indeed there are Winter seasons when fruit may not appear, but even then 'tis in the seed and sap; and there is a preparative for fruit, which appears in the season, but to be always without the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, Gal. 5. 22, 23. is a sign of one that never had marriage-union, and intimate communion with Jesus Christ, but is the certain mark of a fruitless

Fig-tree, in danger of cutting down, and the character of that ground which is cursed, and nigh to burning, Luke 13. 7. 9. Heb. 6. 8. Souls, try your state, 'tis for your lives, your All depends upon your marriage-union with Christ: Had you never any special acquaintance with Christ? Have you no conjugal love to Christ? Cannot you consent to leave all for Christ? Do you usually live and stay on other things for life and salvation, and not on Christ? Have you been ever barren souls, that never brought forth the fruits of the Spirit unto God? then were you never married to Christ, nor have any true title to heavenly treasures.

Mark 2. Secondly, your interest in heavenly things is known by the naturalness and supremacy of your love to them; Where the treasure is, there will the heart be, Mat. 6. 21. If heavenly things be yours, your heart is there; worldly men have the World set in their hearts, Eccl. 3. 11. Their heart is but the World copied out: so heavenly souls have Heaven set in their hearts, which are but the counterpane of Heaven; everything hath a natural love to his own, the World will love his own. Joh. 15. 19. No man ever hated his own flesh: Eph. 5. 29. What affections have brute beasts for their young, and will venture their lives to defend and maintain them. 'It is storied of the Storks, when the Town of Delph in the low Countries was on fire, and the Storks perceived the fire to come near their nests, they endeavored to carry away their young, but when they could not remove them, they fluttered over them with their wings, covering them from the flames till they all perished together, [Belg. Com. wealth.] So strong is natural affection to its interest, and the natural issues of itself; much stronger should gracious affections be to their interests: O how I love thy Law! (saith David) 'tis my meditation all the day long, Psal. 119. 97. Whence came this affection? it was from his interest in those great and lovely truths. Psal. 119. 111. Thy testimonies have I chosen as a heritage forever, for they are the

rejoicing of my heart. Souls risen with Christ, and born to the inheritance above, will set their affections on things above, Col. 3. 1, 2. Where is thy heart, Christian, in Heaven or Earth? what things are dearest to thee, and sweetest to thy taste? canst thou prize the light of God's countenance better than life? hadst thou rather be a door-keeper in God's House than dwell in the Pavilions of this World? Is a little of Heaven better than a great deal of Earth? and can thy heart consent to be at any loss in the World to enjoy God in his Ordinances, and to be enriched with spiritual blessings in heavenly places? Then heavenly things are thine.

Mark 3. Thirdly, if heavenly things be yours, it will appear by your heart-cares for them, and vigorous pursuits of them; how careful are men of their interests, to secure and enlarge them? Phil. 2. 21. All men seek their own: If the things of Heaven be yours, your greatest care will be to get and keep them; when Kish thought his Son Saul was lost, he left caring for the Asses, sorrowing for him, saying, What shall I do for my Son, 1 Sam. 10. 2? Christians, if heavenly things be yours, they will lie nearer your hearts than all the World besides; the sense or fear of losing them will more trouble you than all losses besides; the world, relations, creature-comforts will be forgotten; when you apprehend a death on your heavenly interests, you will do more, and part with more to get Heaven, than the World and dearest comforts of it. Many will pretend desires for Heaven, as the young man in the Gospel; but Christ will say to them as to his Hearers, Mat. 5. 47. What do you more than others? Souls, you would have Christ here, and Heaven hereafter; but what do you for it? what do you more than hypocrites and common professors, whose portion is in this life? can you leave the world for God? can you deny yourself for the pleasing of Christ? and part with your right eye, and right hand; throw away your Idols of gold and silver, the world, and fleshly lusts, and honor God with your time, strength and substance? Can you let

your Plough stand still to follow God's; and stick at no pains and hardships to enjoy the least spiritual good? Then are heavenly things yours.

Mark 4. Fourthly, Then are you interested in Heavenly Treasures, when your hearts and spirits are suited to them; when the Lord hath let in a heavenly tincture on your hearts; and inlaid your spirits with heavenliness, and a mind that answers to heavenly things, as face answers face in the water: When God intends men for Heaven, he doth in time fit them for it; and where he gives a title to mercy, he gives a capacity also; where he makes over the riches of glory; he makes that soul a vessel fit for glory. Men do not purchase Pearls for Swine, and build Schools for brute beasts. God did not make the Heavens for fishes, and the Sea for beasts, but suited every creature to its element: They that are his Adoption, are his new Creation also, Ephes. 2. 10. and when they are designed to a blessed end, they are principled for it, and have a disposition put into them to move towards it: They that are set apart for Heaven hereafter, do bear the image of their heavenly Father here, 1 Cor. 15. 49. There is a stamp of glory upon the Heirs of glory, though it may be so covered with dirt, and worn out with the rust of corruption, as not to be easily seen at all times. Whose is this image and superscription? Matt. 22. 20. Caesar's coin hath Caesar's stamp; and the Children of Heaven have their Father's mark upon their foreheads, Rev. 14. 1. If Christ's Treasures be yours, you are his Treasury; though earthen vessels, yet treasures, vessels and bags that wax not old. Do you hope for spiritual blessings? what manner of spirits are you of? Do you savor heavenly things? What things do best suit and please your spirits, the things of Heaven, or the things of the world; grace, or goods; righteousness, or riches; spiritual things, or carnal? What goes down easiest, or when down, sits easiest on your stomachs? The Heirs of Heaven are Non-conformists to this world, but transformed into the

Spirit of Heaven, and the renewing of their minds to their new estate, blessedness and glory, Rom. 12. 1. That's a second thing wherein this Heavenly Trade lies, in securing and clearing up your interest in heavenly things.

Thirdly, Another thing wherein this Heavenly Trade lies is this; in getting in of heavenly goods: This is a great part of Traders business, to be furnishing themselves with wares fit for their employment and advantage; the Artificer in making; the Merchant in buying in goods that are vendible and will turn to profit. So must Wisdom's Merchants get themselves stored with Wisdom's wares, that they may be able to drive on her Trade: Only in this lies the difference; earthly goods are either the products of men's labors, and effects of their industry; or else the purchase of their money and treasures: But heavenly goods come not in this way, as the proportionable reward of their labors, or return of their money: Indeed heavenly bread must be labored for; but when all is done, the Son of man gives it to them, Joh. 6. 27. Salvation must be wrought out, as if it lay at their fingers end; and yet this very will and power to work wrought in them. Phil. 2. 12, 13. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. No sufficiency is found in the creature, before saving grace helps, to embrace its overtures, no more than a dead body to receive life. Ephes. 2. 1. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, Joh. 15. 16. The soul's choice of Christ is the effect of Christ's first choosing him; and its love to God the product of God's first loving him, 1 Jo. 4. 19. and the soul's fruitfulness is the effect of Christ's purposing and appointing it thereunto. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him, Joh. 6. 44. Not only morally by persuading the will with potent arguments; but physically, by working to will, by a powerful inclining and disposing the will to

come to, and choose Christ, through the irresistible operation of the Spirit: So then, 'tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, Rom. 9. 16. Salvation-grace both of righteousness and holiness, is freely given to the thirsty soul through and with Christ, Rev. 20. 6. and the inclination and power to receive as freely bestowed also. Phil. 1. 29. To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. Faith itself is the gift of God, both the power and will to believe, not given to every man alike: For all men have not faith, 2 Thes. 3. 2. because the Father was not pleased effectually to bestow it. Deut. 29. 4. The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear to this day: Who hath made thee to differ? or what hast thou which thou didst not receive? 1 Cor. 3. 7. If the differencing of one man from another, as to his improvement of grace, lay in his own inclinations and natural freedom of his own will, then there was something in the creature that made this difference, contrary to this Scripture; and a foundation laid in a man to glory, which wholly overthrows the design of Redemption grace, which is to take off all boasting, 1 Cor. 1. 29. Rom. 3. 27. and to lay all the praise and glory of man's salvation on special grace, Eph. 1. 5, 6. neither is the first grace only freely given; but more grace also, all sufficiency after (conferred for every good word and work; yea, for every thought that is good) comes from the same grace that first called you, which must also perfect every good work to the day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 3. 5. our sufficiency (who have grace) to think or do the least spiritual good, is derived from the same fountain-fullness that is in Christ, Jam. 1. 16. Eternal life, with whatever leads thereto, is the gift of God, Rom. 6. v. 23. As Christ, so all things with him are freely given, Rom. 8. 32. not only the seed of grace, but the growth of grace; not only the habit, but the act of grace; all comes from Christ in the way of Redemption-grace. Get your hearts well established with this grace, that nothing in you, or done by you, can merit or procure anything of the Father,

but upon the account of Christ, and his grace, and promise in him to all that by the Son do come unto him. Goods you need for a daily Trade, but no money and price will pass for them, Isa. 55. 1. they are freely given, and yet you may boldly come for them: Go you must with empty sacks, your friend in Heaven will fill them, and return your money in your sacks mouth. Christians, a considerable part of your work (and that which lays the foundation to all your Trade) lies in getting your souls furnished with heavenly wares: You will drive but a poor Trade for Heaven, if you do not often receive goods from Heaven. Alas! what can you do in Christianity without continual supplies from Christ? Laodicea could not do any good in Religion, for want of goods from Christ: She had none of his tried gold, and therefore grew soon poor and miserable: If goods fail, trade falls, and livelihood with it: What advantages doth the Tradesman miss, and what losses doth he sustain, by wanting goods to furnish his Customers? So do Christians when they want grace to serve their occasions, necessities, temptations and duties; what advantage might souls get, had they but grace, when they come under Ordinances and Duties? and what losses do they meet with for want of grace, under afflictions, trials and employments? how pitifully do they carry it under troubles, and providential exercises, and are oftentimes sadly foiled for want of grace and wisdom to manage such trials? You have daily need of more grace, as you have of bread for your bodies: Your occasions, temptations and work are spending, and without fresh supplies from the Treasury, you will soon be empty and impoverished: Neglect but your spiritual recruits one day, and you will feel it: 'It is your interest, if you are Traders, to keep your shops full, and to be often sending for more goods: Grace will never lie long on your hands; other goods may: You will have still occasions to exercise grace in your dealings with God and men; you can never be over-stored with Wisdom's wares.

'It is your duty also to make use of Christ continually: In everything to make known your requests to him: To draw waters out of this Well of Salvation every day: He is a Fountain sealed for your use; he is made of God to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption too; for this end, that they might live upon him to these ends: This is to live by the Faith of the Son of God, which is the Christians daily duty: He complains as being injured when his people will not come unto him that they might have life, Joh. 5. 40. He is troubled when his Children will not make use of him: Hitherto you have asked nothing: Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full, Joh. 16. 24. Never was a full breast more pained for want of drawing, than the Lord Jesus is, when his people receive not from him that fullness that is laid up in him for their use.

'It is your advantage also to be often at Christ's door, and to be continually fetching in supplies for your souls: This is the way to grow rich apace; to get in more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ, Rev. 3. 18. This is the way to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, to be more thoroughly furnished unto all good works, to the glory and praise of God, 2 Tim. 3. 17. Phil. 1. 12. This is the way to do everything better, and to abound in the work of the Lord, and to be more complete in all the will of God, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Col. 4. 12. By this means you will become more serviceable unto others, and useful in the place where you live, and in the Societies where God hath placed you; the more full of grace, the more able to profit others. Rom. 15. 14. That ye always are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 2 Cor. 1. 4. That we may be able to comfort them with the same comforts wherewith we are comforted of God. They that freely receive, will be able freely to give; and that's a blessed thing, Acts 20. 35. And till you receive you cannot give. Christians, get in more grace every day for your own use, for the glory of God, and the good of others: Labor to be furnished

with every grace, especially those graces which the Lord hath more use of, and the time, condition and place you are in, do more especially call for, Heb. 12. 28. 2 Pet. 1. 5.

Be sure to be well furnished with Faith; that's a useful grace at all times (for we live by Faith, Heb. 10. 38.) but especially in evil times, in times of temptation and affliction. Faith is an eye, a hand, a foot at all times; 'tis a grace always useful at every turn; you cannot be without it and be well; 'tis a working grace, and that's good for Traders; you cannot work without it, 2 Thes. 1. 4. A building grace, Jude, v. 3. 20. A nourishing grace, 1 Tim. 4. 6. A soul-enriching grace, Rom. 4. 12. A soul strengthening grace, Ephes. 3. 16, 17. But 'tis especially needful in evil times, it being a cheering grace, Rom. 15. 13. 'It is a soul-keeping grace, and that's good in dangerous times, 1 Pet. 1. 5. 'It is a soul-saving grace, that saves in troubles, and out of troubles, Psal. 27. 5. Jam. 5. 15. 'It is a heart-establishing grace, 2 Chron. 20. 20. A world-contemning grace, Heb. 11. 26. A world-conquering grace, 1 Joh. 5. 4. A soul securing grace, Heb. 11. 23. By faith Moses was hid three months. It secures a person in troubles: 'tis a breast-plate to preserve the heart, 1 Thes. 5. 8. And a shield to cover the head, Ephes. 6. 16. It leads a person through trouble, Heb. 11. 29. By Faith they passed through the Red. Sea, as by dry Land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. O get in plenty of this precious unfeigned Faith, for that's the great trading-grace of a Christian; for it gets in, and lays out every grace. Faith is the receiving grace; it receives in Christ, Eph. 3. 17. and it receives from Christ, John 1. 16. Faith is the key that opens Christ's Treasures; the hand that takes out his tried gold: Faith is the carrying, and recarrying grace: Faith comes up to the market-price, and never breaks with God on terms, but subscribes to all the demands of Christ, and so never returns empty. Christians, you will never want goods for your Heavenly Trade, if you can but keep Faith in exercise;

your shops will never be empty, as long as Faith can stir up and down, and keep up its Journeys to Heaven: If there be any goods in the promises, any wares in Heaven, Faith will have them down, as long as the soul needs them, and it be for God's interest to part with them: O then get faith! Alas, what pitiful Trade do some drive for want of Faith! Choice goods will not off; precious promises, pertinent instructions, persuasions and encouragements lie on Christ's hands for want of faith in them that hear.

Christians, you will make nothing of Religion without Faith, in the days we live in; you will soon shut up shop, decay and break when troubles come to purpose, without store of Faith. Faith will fill your store-houses, do your work, put off your goods, get in your rights, pay your debts, and maintain you richly on the incomes of your Trade.

Patience is another grace that will much serve you in your Spiritual Trade; you have need of Patience to do the will of God; no working without Patience. 2 Cor. 12. 12. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all Patience. Rom. 5. 4. Patience worketh experience. Souls are apt to be weary of well doing without Patience, and to tire in running, without this long-breathed grace of Patience. Heb. 12. 1. Let us run with Patience the race that is set before us. No receiving the fruit of Ordinances and Duties without Patience. Luke 8. 15. They on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it; and bring forth fruit with Patience. The Lord usually tries his people's Patience before they come to the fruit of Promises, and bring forth the obedience of Precepts; there's a winter between seed-time and harvest; many wet, weeping days between sowing and reaping, *ut enim segetem in agro pluvias, nives, glacies, pruinas, grandines, & tempestates ferre necessarium est antequam maturescat, & fructum ferat, ita hominem*

fidelem intus & extrinsecus multa pati mala oportet. Stell. The seed must lie long, it may be, underground, and when 'tis come up, be nipped up with frosts, and covered with snow and hail, and bear many a storm before it ripens, and brings forth fruit, and this calls for Patience; yea many times longsuffering. The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain, James 5. 7. Patience is needful to suffer, as well as do the Will of God. Rev. 13. 10. Here is the Patience and Faith of the Saints: To endure captivity and cruel Death for the sake of Christ, Patience to wait for the promise, Rom. 8. 25. and Patience to receive it. Heb. 10. 36. Patience (saith Seneca) is a salve for every sore, that only which alleviates our burdens; without it we cannot be men or Christians: (saith another) 'tis the grace that makes a complete and well accomplished Christian, Manton. James 1. 4. When reason is at a stand, and hope almost at an end, and all refuge fails; Patience steps in, bears the burden, and calms the soul.

Hope is a necessary grace to this great undertaking, reckoned among the three Cardinal virtues that wonderfully adorn a Christian's spirit and conversation. 1 Cor. 13. 13. Now abideth Faith, and Hope, and Charity: Hope is the offspring and refreshment of Faith; 'tis begotten by Faith, and (says one) As a good child relieves its father Faith in time of need. Hope is an expectation, Faith a persuasion. Faith eyes the promise, hope the thing promised, as sure though future, which comforts the soul under the present want of desired mercy; and this is needful to cheer the soul under its exigencies and disappointments in the way of its Christian conversation. Hope keeps in the fire, and keeps up the house. Heb. 3. 6. Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm to the end. Were it not for Hope the house would fall asunder; Hope keeps it together, till the Lord new build it in Heaven: Hope anchors the soul in a storm, and

makes it steady under shaking tempests, Heb. 6. 19. Hope maintains a Christian in a hard winter, while the seed is under clods, and till the corn come to the barn. 1 Cor. 9. 10. He that ploweth, ploweth in Hope (that is of a good harvest) that will compensate all his labors. Hope secures the soul from shame and disappointment under temporary forbearance, Psal. 34. 22. It helps it to rejoice in tribulation, Rom. 5. 2. and compasseth him about with mercy, Psal. 32. 10.

Humility, Self-denial, Goodness, Temperance, Gentleness, Love, Zeal, Holy Fear, are all good goods that will off well, and turn to the Trader's profit, if well improved: Get your souls well stored with these graces of the Spirit, also if you ever think to drive a good Trade of godliness,

Get your minds filled with knowledge, as well as your hearts with grace; that's part of the Christian's Treasure. 2 Cor. 4. 6. We have this Treasure (that is of the knowledge of God in the face of Christ) in earthen vessels: In whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom, Col. 2. 3. Saving knowledge is a Treasure laid up in Christ for Believers, and to be fetched out for their use and comfort. The riches of the full assurance of understanding, and acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, Col. 2. 2. The Gospel is a mystery, a secret, hid from the natural eye, and cannot be known but by the revelation of the Spirit. To have an inward, clear, sensible, experimental and certain apprehension of the glorious truths of the Gospel, opened and confirmed to the eye of Faith, is a high attainment beyond what any reach to, but those that have the anointings of the Spirit, and to whom 'tis given by the Spirit as the fruit of prayer, and faithful attendance on his teachings in the Gospel and Ordinances of Christ: This is called a rooting and establishment in the Faith, Col. 2. 7. and growing in knowledge, 2 Pet. 3. 18. alluding to trees that being well planted do take deeper root in the

earth, and in time come to greater settlement and strength against shakings: And as children that gradually grow and increase to higher statures; so this spiritual knowledge is gradually increased; 'tis not the privilege of new-born babes, of persons at their first conversion, to have this deep fathoming of Gospel-mysteries: But of stronger Christians, who by constant attendances on the Means of Grace, and in progress of time, by Faith, Humility, Prayer and Attention to the Spirit, do at length come to higher measures of this illumination, and full assurance of truth. As Gerson reports of a godly man he knew, who at first was exercised with many doubts and fears, and shakings of Faith; but at last through humiliation of soul, and a captivating of his understanding to Divine Truth, together with the illumination of the Spirit, came to a wonderful clearness in the matters of Faith, and of his soul-estate, with such a settlement of spirit, and certainty about his salvation, as to have no more doubts remaining in him. Christians, content not yourselves with some notions of truth, and shallow cold apprehensions of the great mysteries of salvation; but labor to get in greater measures of spiritual understanding, both objective, as to the Truths to be known; and subjective, as to the discerning of them: Alas, we know as yet nothing as we ought; there are deeps in the knowledge of Christ for Elephants, as well as shallows for Lambs; and there are greater beaming's on the souls eye to be obtained, and more certain understanding, and familiar acquaintance to be had with the same Truths we know. Your business, Christians, in the Heavenly Trade is to get more Divine Wisdom, to be led farther into all Truth, and to enter into the Mysteries of the Gospel; wading farther and farther into Sanctuary-deeps; to know more of God, of the way to him, and the things freely given of him, and to know better what you know: Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes. There's a secret in Gospel-truths which the wisest men in the world can never by their greatest Wisdom come to see, without the special

revelation of the Spirit: As none can come to see the spirits, salts, and occult virtues, in herbs and minerals, till by Chemistry they are extracted: Others may discern and receive the things themselves in the gross and bulk of them, and yet never see or taste those choice spirits hid in them: So 'tis with such as are strangers to a spiritual knowledge, they apprehend Truths in the bulk and letter of them. A carnal man (saith Hooker) may hear the sound of the Word, understand the signification; his judgment may see the evidence of the argument, and force of reason in them; and yet the reality and spiritualness of that Divine good never apprehended. The world by wisdom knew not God, 1 Cor. 1. 21. There's no proportion between a spiritual object and a carnal eye: The carnal mind cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God, neither can they know them, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Labor to see the beauty and amiableness of Truth; to see your propriety in Truth, to taste an inward sweetness, and ravishing pleasure in Truth, to feel the sense of special love to your souls in discovery of light, and to find a mightiness going out in every Truth on your souls, changing you into the very Spirit and Image of Truth: To grow in knowledge extensively, into all Truth; and intensively, in deeper and more sensible, spiritual, powerful apprehensions of truth; the want of which right knowledge makes so many cold, dead hypocrites, and barren professors in this day of light and parts.

Get also your Consciences stored with the Peace of God, which passeth understanding. This is the salt that seasons everything, condition and duty, Mark 9. 50. This will shoe your feet to travel through the rough and tiresome ways of affliction, temptation and persecution you must meet with in the pursuit of your Heavenly Trade, Ephes. 6. 15. This will calm your hearts in storms, and maintain a Summer within, when 'tis Winter without, and nothing but tempests and troubles in the world, John 16. 33. This will

preserve you when all is going, and keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, Phil. 4. 7. This will guard your hearts from those slavish fears, darksome doubts, and dreadful troubles that many are filled with this day, and make you triumph over sin, trample upon the world, and smile in the midst of all the frowns of men and Devils. O get and keep this rare Jewel of inward Peace, which will help you to draw near to God with boldness, and cheerful serenity in every duty, Heb. 10. 22. Get your consciences bathed in the blood of Christ, and the evidences of your sincerity cleared up every day; this will help to maintain a feast of inward peace under the temptations of Satan, and the view of your daily failings and stumbling's.

Get your hearts warmed, and affections quickened with the sense of divine love to your Souls: this is a choice part of heavenly treasures, and will abundantly conduce to the lively carrying on of this divine Trade; affections raised by the application of redemption-grace, will be to your Souls as spread sails to the Ship, to carry you strongly along against wind and storm, and fill you with pleasant gales within, and give you a speedy and comfortable passage through the waves of this World, 2 Cor. 5. 12. 'It is the Soul's wing that mounts it up towards God, and carries it aloft above the entanglements of sin, the world, and flesh, in the warm pursuit of God's commandments, 2 Cor. 5. 14. His commands will not be thought grievous, or his yoke heavy, where this love of God hath left a savor on the heart, Psal. 119. 32. Rom. 13. 10. It will exceedingly sweeten the bitter waters of Marah to you, and make the paths of God's Providences, as well as his Precepts, pleasantness and peace.

Take in also the consolations of the Spirit, and the joys of the Holy Ghost, these will be useful to cheer your hearts under tribulation, and strengthen and cordial you under heart fainting's and qualms

you may meet with from those ill vapors of this lower World, and want of creature-comforts, 2 Cor. 7. 4. Rom. 15. 4. This spiritual comfort will also help to drown your carnal joys, and to prevent a surfeit with the pleasures of this World, (another danger that Wisdom's Merchants are sometimes liable to.) Acts 2. 28. Make me full of joy with the light of thy countenance. Spiritual joy, where it is, fills the heart, and leaves no room for carnal delights; as the heat of the Sun puts out the fire, so will spiritual consolation extinguish carnal joy: 'Twas the comfort which Moses, by Faith, fetched in from the views of an invisible God, that made him choose reproaches with the people of God, before the pleasures of sin that were but for a season, Heb. 11. 21. 25. This spiritual comfort is a notable way to stability in every good work, 2 Thes. 2. 16, 17. to help on your Souls edification and growth in grace and holiness, Acts 9. 31.

O! what work have Christians to do, besides the World, and minding their own things? were Religion followed to the purpose, persons would have no leisure for sin and vanity: O! what need have gracious Souls of a diligent hand to make them rich, and to be taking in spiritual goods every day.

Quest. But how should I do to get my Soul furnished with these heavenly goods? If my heart deceive me not, I would fain be enriched with every grace, capacity and accomplishment, for the discharge of my duty, the pleasing, honoring, and enjoying of God, and for the welfare of my immortal Soul: But how to attain this longed for mercy, I know not.

Sol. 1. If you would be enriched with heavenly treasures, and get in those goods; Then,

1. First, maintain a constant sense of your own wants and emptiness: That which is wanting cannot be numbered, Eccles. 1. 15. Look over

your souls every day, and see your poverty; look into your understandings, and see how little light is there; into your minds, and consider how little spirituality lies there; how little warmth and heavenly heat in your affections; little truth and sincerity in your spirits; little tenderness in your consciences; little flexibleness in your wills to divine things: little faith, love, humility, meekness, fear, zeal, life, strength, faithfulness, steadfastness in your souls: were this really seen, and felt, and the excellency of these spiritual perfections discerned, and the soul's great concern and interest that lies wrapped up in them, with the absolute necessity of having every grace, in order to duty, peace, comfort, prosperity and salvation; persons that had any life at all, could not lie still, or be content, till utmost means were used to obtain supplies: 'twas a false conceit of a self-fullness that kept back Laodicea from seeking after Christ's treasures, Rev. 3. 17, 18. And that blind opinion the Pharisees had of their good estate that so prejudiced them against the convictions and counsels of Christ towards their cure, Joh. 8. 33. 39. 41. 48. Had not the Corinthian Saints been so full and rich in their apprehensions, they would not have had such sleighty thoughts of instituted means towards their Souls good. 1 Cor. 1. 12. And have been contentious with one another, when they should have been contending for higher measures of grace and godliness, verse. 11. 'It is the poor are the laborers in God's Vineyard, Zech. 11. 11. And they that feel their daily need of soul-relief, that will be at any pains to enjoy it, Isa. 41. 17.

Secondly, Get a believing sight of Christ's grace and fullness, that he is able to enrich you, and willing to help you. Heb. 11. 6. This brought Naaman to the Prophet Elisha for cure of his leprosy; he believed his servants report, that he was able, and cherished hopes that he was willing to heal him. 2 Kin. 5. 3. And she said to her Mistress, would God my Master were with the Prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy: One told this to her Lord, and

hereupon he goes and adventures: ver. 5. And he departed. A persuasion of Christ's ability, brought the Leper to him for cleansing. Mat. 8. 2. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean: He was persuaded that Christ was able, and had hopes that he was willing, or would never have come to him. A thorough belief of Christ's ability to help, will make a soul to cherish hopes of his willingness also. So the blind men, Mat. 9. they believed Christ's ability to help them; ver. 28. And they had hopes of his mercy too, that he would do it: ver. 27. Thou Son of David have mercy upon us: and this hope made them not only to come to Christ, but to follow after him: whatever persons pretend to a believing in Christ's ability to save and sanctify them, they have not this faith, who question his willingness to satisfy the longing soul, and save all that come to God by him: you confess he is able to furnish you with all you can want or desire; believe his willingness also to supply all your wants, who sincerely wait upon him.

Quest. But how may I know that Christ will furnish me if I come for these heavenly treasures? there are many come, and go without their errand: Some ask, and have not, Jam. 4. 3. run, and receive not; strive to enter in, and are not able, 1 Cor. 9. 24. Luke 13. 24. There are some the Lord threatens he will not hear, Prov. 1. 28. Isa. 1. 15. Zech. 7. 13. And I have sought these spiritual blessings many a time, and God hath not answered: How may I be sure Christ is willing to give these treasures unto me?

Sol. The Lord Jesus hath made an offer of grace to all sensible Sinners, who feel their need, and thirst for supply, Isa. 55. 1. Joh. 7. 37. and called upon them to come and receive it without exception, Matth. 11. 28. Now it cannot stand with his divine goodness and truth to offer mercy, and not intend to give it; he cannot deceive, or be deceived, who is the faithful one; nor invite his creatures to an

expectation, and then fail them. Now he hath called all to come, and required no other condition but their coming, and receiving him and the things he hath offered. He hath also promised, as well as offered, to give to him that thirsteth. Rev. 20. 6. I will give to him that is a-thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. I will give, (not sell) or let out on any terms of self-worthiness; for if there be anything to make the creature worthy, 'tis not a gift, but debt, Rom. 4. 4. [To him that is a-thirst,] nothing else is required but a pinching sense of souls need, and an unsatisfied desire of supply. [I will give freely,] out of no respect to anything in the creature, but his necessity and misery; the moving cause is his own grace and free mercy to Sinners, as Sinners. [I will give liberally too,] let him drink freely, take as much as he needs, or is capable to receive. [I will give suitably,] such things as you desire and need, and such things as are capable of satisfying you, (of the fountain of the waters of life.) Matth. 7. 7. Psal. 36. 7, 8. Joh. 6. 37. Isa. 41. 17. You will find nothing in these Scriptures required in the person, but sense of his need, seeking satisfaction, coming, believing, and a real subjection to all God's terms, and a pure designing of his ends. I disclaim all; the Port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness through his blood; Ruth. Now, if he hath promised to give to them that seek, he must be willing to give; For the holy one of Israel cannot lie, Numb. 23. 19. He hath received all his Mediatory fullness of purpose for the giving out to those that come unto him. Joh. 1. 12. Psal. 68. 18. Thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them: He is the Angel, Messenger and Mediator of the new Covenant, the Trustee and Feoffee entrusted with that great estate for the use of his people that need it, and come unto him for it, Mal. 3. 1. Heb. 9. 15. And therefore is said to appear in Heaven in the presence of God for them, as an Advocate to follow their cause. The Lord Jesus is wonderfully pleased too, in giving to his needy seeking ones. Mic. 7. 18. He delighteth in mercy. Psal. 35. 27. He hath

pleasure in the prosperity of his servants: the more he gives, the more he sees of the travel of his soul, and is satisfied. Isa. 53. 11. The more he gives, the more he receives: The gifts and graces of God are as the rivers that flow from the Sea, and return to the Sea again. 1 Chron. 29. 14. Of thine own have we given thee: The more Christ gives to his people, the more he receives; his talents come in again with improvements, Mat. 25. 27. The more he gives, the more he is glorified, Joh. 14. 13. Answer these questions before you doubt Christ's willingness to part with spiritual goods freely to all that truly seek them. Do you think really that Christ can dissemble, offer mercy, and have no mind to give it? Do you think that the Lord Jesus can break his word, or become false to his promise? Can you imagine he will be unfaithful to his trust? Can he delight in giving, and yet not willing? Doth he gain by giving, and yet not willing to give? Is he glorified by giving, and yet be loath to give? then would he not care for his own name. Suspect your willingness to receive, not Christ's to give you all that grace you need and seek of him.

Fourthly, Another thing wherein this heavenly Trade lies, is, to carry on heavenly work, and to be daily driving on the great business of godliness. Religion hath its work as well as the world; every Trade hath its employment, and so has godliness. Christianity is not a notion or opinion, a name to live, and no more: 'It is a miserable vanity and cheat for a person to think a bare Lamp will light him to Heaven, and a few lazy wishes bring him to glory, though he travel not the way to it. Alas, to espouse the principles of Piety, without the practice of it, to get over to privileges, and be strangers to Purity, to profess Faith without works, and love without labors, will signify nothing towards salvation. Will Opinion make a man an Artist, or imagination enrich him, or hunger fill him, or reading the way to a place bring him thither? No more will affection, knowledge and

profession help men to Heaven, unless they work out their salvation, and carry on the duties of Religion that lead to it, Phil. 2. 12.

First, Consider, a Christian hath much work, and a little time; great work, and small strength; necessary work, and many diversions; excellent work, none like it: persons that set about salvation in earnest, will find much to do; and the farther they go in Religion, the more busy their employment will be: every day brings its work with it; new instructions, new mercies, new afflictions and temptations every day, which calls for much exercised grace and duty. A child of God hath no time for idleness, or impertinent business. O the many things that must be dispatched within the compass of this little inch of time for eternity! Soul, if thou diest, and thy work undone when thou diest, thy soul's undone; there's no rising from thy grave to do neglected work; or dispensation at the Bar of God for the omission of Salvation-duties.

This work is necessary also as well as great; some duties are necessary to secure thy salvation; all duties are necessary to maintain thy comforts, and greaten thy glory. Men plead necessity for this and the other thing, to do this work, and take that journey; to omit this duty, and absent from such a privilege; but who is sensible of the necessity of working the work of God, and attending soul-concerns? It may not be necessary you should have peace, credit, plenty, riches, comforts; that you should have so much estate, preferment and contentment in the world; but 'tis absolutely necessary thy soul should be saved, and that God should be obeyed; that spiritual concerns should be attended, (whatever is neglected) that thy debts should be paid, thy peace with God obtained, thy hungry soul be fed and refreshed, thy title to Heaven cleared, the presence of God enjoyed, and thy seed-time for glory improved.

'It is promised-work too, and that makes it necessary; you have engaged to be the Lord's if you are Christians; and have given up yourselves to be his, and not your own; your time is his, your capacities his, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. what you are and have, is from him and for him; this you have devoted to the use and service of God when you took him to be your God, 2 Cor. 8. 5. and many a time since you have engaged to obedience of his commands: There are sick-bedvows, affliction-promises, engagements under conscience-troubles; yea every day, and in every duty, you tell God you will mend your ways, redeem your time, do him more and better work; and how can you stand before him with such flattery and dissimulation, and under the guilt of so much falsehood and treachery, while your work lies still undone?

Yea your work Christians is excellent work also, above all the employments of the world; 'tis supernatural work, yea Angelical work, yea such work as Angels cannot do, to believe in, love, converse with, and obey Christ, as your Redeemer and Savior, Phil. 3. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 7, 8, 9, 12. to suffer for Christ, and be baptized into a conformity with his death and resurrection.

'It is suitable work also you are called to in this Heavenly Trade, work suited to your natures: If you are Saints, you have received a heavenly spirit, and are partakers of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4. 'It is as natural for you to do heavenly work, if you are Christians, as for the world to do earthly work, there being a disposition and propensity put into your renewed natures to new and heavenly work, as there is a disposition in the seed to its proper fruit, 1 Joh. 3. 9. For his seed remaineth in him: 'It is work suited to your hopes which are laid up in Heaven, Col. 1. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof you have heard before in the word of Truth. That is the blessedness, those great and glorious things you hope for, which

are laid up for you in Heaven, as a Treasure safely kept for you: Called hope by an Antonomasia (saith Davenant) This reward is not said to be only offered and proposed to us; for that would weaken our hope, if the certainty of those things hoped for did depend on us, and our disposition; so that it should be given or denied us according to the worth of our works, graces and duties; but 'tis said to be laid aside for us, as that which is deposited, and safely laid up in God our Father for us. A Christian's choicest Treasures lie in hope, not in hand; beyond their present view and enjoyment, and yet secured to their use and propriety, 1 Pet. 1. 4. Reserved in Heaven for you: (<H&G>) kept as it were in custody, and with watch and ward for you sure and certain, on which the hopes of Believers are firmly laid, and to which their present work is suited: heavenly work bears a proportion and agreement in its nature (though not in worth) to heavenly and eternal things; 'tis work suited to your inheritance and wages in its kind, though not in degree: and that's excellent work which is of the same nature with your eternal blessedness.

Suited also to your present privileges, who sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus Eph. 2. 6. Gracious souls, though in habitation they are on the Earth, yet in point of privilege they sit in Heaven: Through their union with Christ they may be said (saith Zanchi) to sit where he sits, as a husband or Brother absent from his Wife, and Brethren doth possess a Kingdom for them; they, though absent, may be truly said relatively to possess it in him as members in the head, they sit in Heaven in the person of Christ; and as the lump is sanctified in the first fruits: Neither do they sit only relatively through their union with Christ; but spiritually, through their communion with him. In that sense (saith Bucer) as the Apostle speaks, Phil. 3. 20. They have their conversation in Heaven. This is a glorious privilege the Saints only enjoy; in this life to converse in Heaven, and to have their life above, above the world, and things below, and such should their

work be also: How pleasant should heavenly work be to heavenly souls! which Believers are and should be.

Secondly, Christians set upon heavenly work; for as is your work, so will your maintenance be: They who do that work which the world cannot, have that meat and drink which the world knoweth not, Joh. 4. 32, 34. The Lord hath dainties, and peculiar refreshments for those who are single and faithful in his work, they have joys which strangers intermeddle not with, Prov. 14. 10. Whoever go without, his laborers shall not lack: He keeps a good table for his work-men: In keeping of his Commands there's great reward, Psal. 19. 11. They eat the fat, and drink the sweet, Neh. 8. 10. The marrow, the spiced wine, the hidden Manna is their meat and drink (so far as they have need of it) O the sweet bits, and pleasant sips they miss of, who are idle in God's Vineyard! They that will not work, shall not eat, 2 Thes. 3. 10. Would you live high in your spiritual comforts, then work hard in your spiritual work.

Thirdly, As is your work, so will your company be: They that do earthly work, have earthly companions to labor with them: As is men's Trade, such is their company. The children of the night have their fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, Ephes. 5. 11. and gracious souls are companions with them that fear God, Psal. 119. 63. Wicked workers have wicked men and devils casting in their lot with them, Prov. 1. 14. And so have heavenly Traders heavenly company; they have the presence of God with them, 2 Chron. 15. 2. The Lord is with you while you are with him: They have the Comforter with them, Joh. 14. 16. He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: Rom. 8. 11. By his Spirit that dwelleth in you. No company like the Comforter; friends may leave you, but if you keep with God, and do his will, the Spirit of God will abide with you forever; though he may not always be seen of you, yet he will always

reside with you: At the best, friends can but stay with you, but the Spirit of Christ will dwell in you, and give you the nearest and most intimate acquaintance with himself, (if you obey his voice, and follow him) God's laborers have the company of Angels also: they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb. 1. 14. They pitch their tents about them that fear God, Psal. 34. 7. and have it given in charge to take care of the Children of God, and to carry them in their arms, that they dash not their feet against a stone, Psal. 91. 11. Those are lovely company indeed, such as will never hurt you, but do you good; you shall be the better for them, Prov. 13. 20.

Fourthly, As is your work, so will your wages be to all eternity: though not for your work, yet according to it, Rom. 2. 6. Who shall render to every man according to his deeds: <H&G>, not <H&G>, according to, not for their works: The Preposition <H&G>, noting here (saith Pareus) not the merit, but the measure, analogy or rule, by which undeserved rewards shall be distributed, and just punishments shall be inflicted, as the word is used, Mat. 9. 29. ch. 23. 3. And so as it refers to glory (saith he) it rather describes the person to whom this glory shall be given, then shows the cause why it is given, as Mat. 25. 34, 35. Also the word rendered (<H&G>) is used for a free reward that hath no respect to desert, Mat. 20. 8. The same reward being given to him that wrought one hour, as to those that bore the heat and burden of the day: So that the word (according) notes the kind of work, not the cause of reward, reward as it refers to salvation: Suitable to that of Christ, Rev. 22. 12. Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be: <H&G>. Indeed evil works have their causality, and desert of punishment, but not good works of reward: Gryner gives three reasons of the difference: First, Because good works proceed from God, and are the fruits of his Spirit in us; but evil works proceed from man, and are the effects of his own spirit and

will. Secondly, good works are imperfectly good as to degrees, and therefore cannot merit; but evil works are perfectly evil, and therefore deserve death. Thirdly, Good works are commanded, and so are but our duty, and cannot merit, (payment of debts are not purchase) but sins are forbidden, and so are a breach of the Law of God, and deserve death. Luke 17. 10. The gift of God is eternal life, but the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6. 23. Death is wages due, but life is a gift altogether free. By grace ye are saved, Ephes. 2. 5. There can be no desert of glory in the most spiritual duties of man: Because

First, They are not man's work, but God's in him, John 15. 5. Without me ye can do nothing, Gal. 2. 20. I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Holiness is called the fruit of the Spirit, Ephes. 5. 9. Now the reward is due by way of debt to him that worketh; but to him that worketh not, 'tis of grace, Rom. 4. 4, 5. and therefore reward is not due to Saints who work not, but by strict way of justice rather to the Spirit that worketh in them.

Secondly, They are no way proportionable to the reward, and so not meritorious: Their work is imperfect, they know but in part, and do but in part, 1 Cor. 3. 9. Phil. 3. 12. The best duties as they come from the Saints here, are spotty, and as sweet waters that come from an evil vessel, they savor of the cask through which they come; but glory is perfect, omnibus modis, and hath no defect in it; Our works also are finite, being created, and creature-actions; but the reward is infinite, the love and glory of an infinite God.

Thirdly, Though our Holiness were perfect, yet it could not merit; because it is due to God from that relation we bear to him as his creatures, and redeemed ones, and from our promise and covenant with him to love, obey and serve him, Ephes. 2. 10. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Duties are but debts, not acts of favor to God: We owe God ourselves, and

our all, and are indebted to Christ for his Redemption-grace, more than we can ever pay; we cannot (though we do all we possible can) requite the blood of Christ, and love of Christ; and till we are out of debt we cannot merit.

Fourthly, We have nothing to merit withal, for we are not our own, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Man hath nothing to give to God, who is not his own, but God's (as all redeemed ones especially are) Believers are his servants: Rom. 14. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? And a servant is not his own; his time, strength, capacity, work, are his Masters; so are the Saints duties the Lord's, not by way of legal compact, and requital of wages, but by way of redemption, right and purchase, being bought out of the service of sin and Satan to his own use; and the service of such is a due already upon a former score; a debt of thankfulness, and cannot merit a reward: Beside, what can they give to God, who have nothing but what they receive from God? 1 Cor. 4. 7. Who hath first given to him? and it shall be recompensed to him again: for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever.

Fifthly, Were rewards due to any upon the account of his work, then man had something to glory of in himself, and might say of Heaven as Nebuchadnezzar did of Babylon, Dan. 4. 30. Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my Majesty? So might such say when they come to Heaven; Is not this the mansion I prepared and deserved by my duties and graces, for my glory and blessedness? For self-justiciaries, though they are forced to say that their grace is given of God; yet they boast of the improvements of this grace as theirs, and glory is due to the improvement of grace (they say) and not to the bare grace or talent; and though they are driven to confess Christ's merit, yet they shuffle and say, Christ merited for them, that

they might merit: But that is contrary to the Gospel, which tells us, That 'tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, Rom. 9. v. 16. And 'tis God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. And that no flesh should glory in his presence, 1 Cor. 1. 29. And therefore God hath chosen the foolish, weak; and base things of this world, and things that are not, of purpose to prevent this self-glorying before him, verse 17, 18. And the Apostle makes this reason why Abraham was not justified by Works, but by Faith, cause then he would have something to glory in; but this could not be. Rom. 4. 2. If Abraham were justified by works, he had something to glory in, but not before God. So that the Saints, though they have a reward of their work, yet it is not for their work; 'tis a reward, not of debt, but of grace; yea of glorious grace, according to your work. (Christians) God will not give you a jot less than the utmost of what your love and faithfulness comes to; Your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. He will not fail of any of his Promises, or disappoint you of your expected end, but will be better than your hopes: You will say in that day of compensation, Who hath begotten me all these? Isa. 49. 21. Whence is this to me? Luk. 1. v. 43. When saw we thee a hungered? Mat. 26. v. 37. Glory is a mighty thing, infinitely above all your labors: Christians, Heaven will make amends for all your duties and losses, and abundantly compensate, and exceed all your expenses for God in the world: And have: you not reason to set about the work of grace, and drive on the employments of this Heavenly Trade?

Quest. But what is this heavenly work which Wisdom's Merchants must be driving on every day?

Sol. I answer; First, in the general; Heavenly work is that work which hath a heavenly Author and Principle; a heavenly rule, and a heavenly end: work wrought of God by his Spirit, Joh. 3. 21. Work

done according to the will of God, and by Scripture-rule, Col. 4. 12. Work wrought for God, and designed purely and ultimately to his glory, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

But more particularly, heavenly works may be considered under these two heads.

First, Such as are heavenly in the matter of them, as well as manner and end.

Secondly, Such works, as though earthly in the matter of them, yet are done in a heavenly manner, and to an heavenly end.

First, That's heavenly work which is of a heavenly nature, matter, and manner, and end; as all those religious duties are which respect God, ourselves, and others.

First, Drive on that work every day which hath God himself for its first and more immediate object, as all acts of religious worship, both natural and instituted, moral and positive. Mat. 4. 10. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve: This is due to God from all his rational and intelligent creatures, both Men and Angels to worship him only, with that reverential fear, faith, love, hope and delight which is due to him, as the Supreme Majesty of Heaven and Earth, the great Creator and Conservator of all his creatures; and to serve him with that subjection and obedience as their relation to God their Sovereign calls for. This is the duty of all persons, especially those that profess their owning of God, and choice of him to be their God in Christ, and peculiar treasure. Deut. 13. 6. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and serve him, and swear by his name. Christians, to let out your hearts upon the world, relations, self, and creatures, is to rob God of his service, and to commit Idolatry with the creature. Think this, when my heart runs out to

things below God, and my affections, hope, trust and delight get over their banks, and break their due bounds, and subordinacy to God: when I fondly dote upon, and take pleasure (abstractively from God) in any creatures, then do I deal treacherously with my God, I rob him, and give his glory to another, Isa. 48. 11. O set habitually your hearts on God, and let out your faith, love, hope, fear, desires, and delighting pleasures on God every day, yea all the day long, as your chiefest good, supreme Sovereign, and last end. Prov. 27. 17. Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

Again, external acts of divine worship are part of thy every days work, which thou owest to God, and to be duly and daily performed to him, as to pray, hear, and read his sacred word: These are that honor, homage and service that is due to God every day, especially morning and evening; Prov. 8. 34. Deut. 6. 7. Exod. 30. 7. 1 Chron. 23. 30. Ezek. 46. 13, 14, 15. Amos 4. 4. 1 Chron. 16. 40. Psal. 55. 17. This is the daily burnt-offering to be prepared for the Lord; Exod. 29. 38, 39. Morning and evening; the vows that are to be daily performed. Psal. 61. 8. God's mercies are new every morning, and so must your praises be also. Lam. 3. 23. He keeps you day and night. Isa. 27. 3. And 'tis but reasonable you should give him his morning and evening sacrifice: you depend upon him for the mercies of every day, and he expects from you the duties of every day, which is reasonable service. Rom. 12. 1. You have daily necessities, difficulties, trials, dangers and duties, in which you need his help; and is it not your concern to be daily at his feet, and seeking his favor, counsel, strength and blessing?

Herein lies your professed subjection to God also; slight religious duties, and you reject God from being your God: This very reason doth Moses give why Israel should serve the Lord, and cleave to him, and swear by his name, and give him all religious worship, Deut. 19.

20, 21. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, who hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen. Dan. 6. 16. Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee: 'It is a contradiction to say that God is your God, and yet withhold his service from him: As soon as ever God had a people in the World, he had service from them. Gen. 4. 26. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord: No sooner had Seth (who was the other seed which the Lord appropriated to himself in the room of Abel) a Son and Family, but they had peculiar worship for God, and were distinguished from the Family of Cain by this, that they did serve God: This is the work of God, that every Soul is bound to dispatch every day, in Closet and Family, in Spirit and Truth, with a pure heart fervently.

This also is the best part of your work in the world, to attend on God; all other service is but drudgery, compared with your serving God, and transacting the great matters of your Souls, and your everlasting concern. This is your interest also, to maintain nearness to God, who is the life of your souls, the length of your days, and fountain of all your supplies; there's no such pleasure as in the ways of God, nor profit as in keeping his commands. O the blessedness of converse with God, and maintaining a daily intercourse with the Father of Spirits! 'tis the privilege of Angels, and of glorified Saints, to be always beholding his face, 1 Thes. 4. 17. Mat. 18. 10. And the peculiar honor of the upright to dwell in his presence, Psal. 140. 12.

There is no such advantage also as to be much with God every day. Psal. 73. 28. 'It is good for me to draw near to God: Often journeys to Heaven bring in much profit; 'twas this way David did thrive so much in wisdom, grace and experience, out-shining all the men of that age, and serving his generation by the will of God; his being much with God. Psal. 139. 18. When I awake I am still with thee: By

this nearness to the Son of righteousness did Enoch so soon ripen for Heaven; and by his constant walks with God, did he so timely get to his journeys end. Of all that generation, we find none so soon sent for home, and translated to his rest, as holy Enoch; for whereas the rest lived nine hundred, eight hundred, seven hundred years; only he lived three hundred sixty and five years, and that which so quickened his fitness for rest, was his activity in heavenly work: Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him, Gen. 5. 23. He kept his constant turns with God in his Garden and Gallery walks, and then went in with him into his Presence-Chamber, there to sit down with him forever.

This also will make you thrive in your own work, if you are faithful and diligent in God's work; mind his concerns, and he will care for yours, Deut. 30. 9. Obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments, and the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every good work of thy hand; He shall make thee to abound in the work of thy hand; (as 'tis in the Hebrew) to have more than enough, (as Montanus renders it,) He will bless thee in every work of thine hand, (according to the Septuagint,) other Copies have it; He will have a great deal of care of thee, &c. He will make thee excellent with good things, (saith Junius;) He will make thee to enjoy good in every work of, &c. (saith Symmachus;) He shall prosper the work of thy hand; It shall go well with such. Deut. 4. 40. Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, Gen. 42. 18. 'Twas piety made Joseph so prosperous in all he did, he feared God. Do this, and live; for I fear God: and God was with him, and made all he did to prosper in his hand, Gen. 39. 3. Whatsoever he doth shall prosper, Psal. 1. 3. The blessing of the Lord shall be on the head and hands of such; let their condition be what it will in the world, yet it shall be well with such as fear the Lord; if he

be afflicted, yet his afflictions shall turn to his good, and be part of his prosperity. 2 Chron. 31. 21. And in every work he began in the service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandment, to seek his God; he did it with all his heart, and prospered. The way to true prosperity leads by Heaven-gates. Christians, if ever you will thrive in your own work, be sure to carry on God's work: begin with God every day, the first fruits are his. Dispatch religious worship in your Closets and Families before you enter on your earthly business: Close up every day with him, he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end, and must have the issue as well as entrances of every day. The morning and evening sacrifice are his, 1 Chron. 16. 40. 2 Chron. 13. 11. Psal. 55. 17. Give God his due, before you render to Nature its dues. Psal. 61. 8. Pay your vows to God every evening, before you run on score for new mercies: See all things secured in everlasting Arms before you lie down to rest; put thy Soul and thy All into the hands of Christ by solemn devotion and resignation every night; get the watch set, and all things safe, before thou exposest thyself to the hazards of the night, and interest upon an incapacity to secure thyself from the least danger. O precious souls! lie not down as dogs and swine, who, when they have filled their bellies, get to their styes and kennels.

Secondly, carry on all that work daily which hath a more special respect to your own selves, and leads to the sanctifying, comforting, strengthening, edifying, saving of your precious souls. Next to the glory of God, yea in pursuance of it, thy own Salvation is thy chief concern; What will it profit a man to gain the whole World, and to lose his own Soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul? What is left, if the Soul be lost? and what is done, if, after all, the Soul be undone? To look after others Souls, and neglect thy own; and to secure all things else, and leave destruction on thyself, is folly like to hers that saved her goods from the fire, but left her child to perish in

the flames. Salvation is your chiefest work, committed to your care, and to be accounted for in the day of Christ. Phil. 2. 12. Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling. And 'tis great work also, many things must be attended too, and several things dispatched, if ever Souls be saved.

First; You must carry on heart-work every day, and that's great work: they that are acquainted with their own hearts, know there is much to do in and about them: There is nothing more out of order than man's heart, and nothing in man of greater concernment than the heart: Hence 'tis the strict charge the Lord gives his people to keep their hearts, Prov. 4. v. 23. Above all keeping (as 'tis in the Hebrew) keep thy heart, Proz. 23. 2. Ephes. 3. 17. Prov. 4. v. 4. The heart is the one thing Christ looks for; the chief room he dwells in; his warehouse, where he lays up his goods; his workhouse, where he cuts out, and prepares his work, Prov. 16. 1. A great part of salvation work is done in the secret chambers of the heart: The heart is the root and spring in man whence all acceptable duties flow, Ephes. 6. 6. doing the will of God from the heart; and to be especially looked after. A Christian finds a great deal of work to do about his heart every day: There is

Heart-searching work, Psal. 64. 6. The heart of man is deep, and not easily fathomed; 'tis a long journey to the farthest end of the heart, which no man ever yet reached in this life: The Sea is deep, and yet it hath a bottom: The World is large, and yet it hath been compassed; but who hath ever travelled through his own heart, to set up his non ultra, and say, Hitherto its wickedness goes, and no farther. 'It is deceitful also above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? Jer. 17. 9. A man hath no such cheater to deal with as his own heart; it hath such Chameleon colors, Maeander windings; such labyrinth turnings, subtle shifts, false pretenses, close designs, fair

promises, smooth excuses, rhetorical pleas, seeming integrity, deep-rooted hypocrisy, that a man cannot tell what to make of his heart, or how to find it out; and this calls for constant searching's and observing's of the heart: Besides, the Lord gives his people the balance of the Sanctuary on purpose to weigh it in, and casts out a line of providence every day to try it by. Men meet with occasional providences, temptations, employments, companies, changes, mercies, afflictions; all which help to discover the heart; the issue of which is to be observed in order to the finding out of thy heart.

Heart-judging work: When Christians have found out the evil of their hearts, their pride, hypocrisy, &c. seen the proof and evidence clear, and how contrary to Law and Gospel, to Equity and Mercy, to Light, Experience, Warnings, Patience, Profession and Promises, they are then to charge these things upon the heart, to set home the evil with all the aggravations of it, from its nature and effects, from the quality of the person, the time, place, continuance in it, attempts and means of cure, compared with others beneath them for light, profession, means and mercies; and having by these arguments convinced the heart of its exceeding evil, then to pass sentence against, and condemn it as unworthy of any mercy, and deserving of all the threatening's in the Word against it, until the heart come to bear its iniquity, and feel its exceeding sinfulness, and cry out with the Apostle, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Rom. 7. 24. This would be of wonderful use to clear up your sincerity, to preserve the tenderness of your spirits, to cut off all excuses, false hopes, and security in sin, and make it more abominable when it appears with its most taking allurements, 2 Cor. 7. 11. 1 Cor. 11. 31. and this would evidence your interest in pardon, and freedom from Divine condemnation.

Heart-humbling work. O the pride that lodges, yea lives in, and incorporates with this little piece the heart of man! how unsearchable is it, and past finding out! like leaven in the lump, and poison in the cup, which cannot be separated by a human hand; as rottenness in the bones, that cannot be fetched out. Pride is as that lofty mountain before Zerubbabel, which must become a plain, Zach. 4. 7. as deeply rooted trees, whose Mores are not easily plucked up. One compares spiritual pride, to the shirt, or inmost garment, which the Saints last of all put off; and which like the Ivy, will not be plucked out, till the wall in which it is comes down also. O the tugging's a child of God hath with his proud heart, to get and keep it low! As the Spider, whatever it feeds on it turns to poison: So is it with the proud heart of man; it turns all it does, hath, meets with, and sees to the nourishment of pride; proud of its sins; proud of his graces; proud under afflictions, and proud of mercies; proud of honor, and proud of humility; proud of God's favor, and proud under his frowns. O what a strange disease is pride, that feeds upon the means which the Lord gives to cure it, and gets strength from the remedy to nourish the disease! like Ephraim 's wound; when God would have healed one, another appeared: And this helps to make a Christian's work great work indeed, which is never done till his day be done, and his Tabernacle pulled down.

Heart-purging work: The heart of man naturally is a very sink and kennel of uncleanness; a fountain of pollution; a running Issue full of filthiness of flesh and spirit, Mat. 18. 19. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things that defile the man. 'It is not accidental and adventitious filthiness, for that may more easily be washed away, Jer. 6. 7. but 'tis innate and connatural, and never ceases bubbling forth, till the fountain be cleansed, and the root be changed. Sin in the heart is the root and spring of all the wickedness

that defiles the thoughts, words and actions. Christians complain of their thoughts; they are pestered with vain, unclean, distracting thoughts in duty, and out of duty; whereas the distemper lies in the heart: Thoughts are but the ebullitions and swarming's of the heart: He that will cure his thoughts, must first cleanse his heart, Jer. 4. 14. The heart is the nest where these Wasps fly out and trouble the soul; the root that feeds these luxuriant branches, briars and thorns that wound the conscience; and the strong fort of Zion, where these Jebusites hide themselves, and issue out to prey upon the gracious soul: Till these nests be spoiled, the Ax laid to the root of the tree, and this strong Tower attached, and these blind and lame removed, souls will never be freed from irruptions of sin in their thoughts and conversations: This (Christian) is busy and hard work, and part of thy daily employment in this Heavenly Trade; to sweep, wash, drain and cleanse thy filthy heart, by sound repentance and faith in the promises, death and blood of Christ.

Heart-quickenning work. The heart is the primum mobile, the great wheel in the watch that sets all a going; if that stop, all faculties are still: A lively heart makes a diligent hand to rid away soul-work, and a nimble foot to run in the ways of God's commands; when the heart is quickened, then every duty, inward, outward, public, private goes on; such a soul needs no spur to quicken it, nor pulley to draw it to its duties. O what a burden are some to their Christian friends, to keep them up, and draw them on in the way of God, and all because their hearts are dead, and that liveliness which once seemed to be in them is departed! The spring that at first made them so active, is weakened or broken; the waters that set their Mills a going sail, and that temporary love, and common grace, like standing pools having no fountain to maintain them, are dried up by consuming lusts, and scorching temptations; so that now they wither in all their branches, and become weak, cold, and indisposed to every work of God and

their souls. Some of these dangerous symptoms of decayed grace, are found also in sincere souls, for not looking after their hearts betimes, and keeping them close to a quickening Jesus, by a lively faith in the promises. Christian, mind this also every day, to maintain thy spiritual life, by fresh quickening's, and reviving influences, from the fountain of life, on thy weak and dying heart, making use of all instituted helps for soul-strengthening; as hearing, reading, meditation, holy conference, and the like.

Heart-teaching and enlightening work. A light head, and a dark heart may dwell together; and it seems to be the condition of too many under the Gospel this day. A spiritual eye to look into the mystery of truth, and believing affectionate discerning of excellent things, is not easily found; even while Christ is read, a veil is on men's minds, and their foolish heart is darkened: And this is one reason souls walk not as children of light; 'tis because they are not light in the Lord, Psal. 40. 8. The Law of God is not within their hearts; they have no inclination or power upon their hearts to do the will of God they know, for want of this heart-knowledge: Be earnest with God to beam over your hearts, to make that the Hemisphere where the Sun of Righteousness may daily arise with healing in his wings: Cry with David, Psal. 119. 36. Incline my heart to thy Law: Let my heart lean and stay upon thy Law, as a man doth upon a staff to bear him up: Get a greater nearness in your hearts to truth, that the Word may be wrought in, and incorporated into your hearts; that it may be a Goshen, a Land of Vision, and full of the understanding of the Lord.

Heart-keeping and Heart-watching work. The heart is bent to backsliding, if it be not kept and held fast to the Lord and his ways; 'tis still turning aside, and winding off from its proper duty. The Lord complains of Israel, Psal. 78. 8. They did not set their heart aright, and their spirit was not steadfast with God: They did not prepare,

adapt, dispose their heart to God; neither was it constant and steadfast with him, but on every occasion did start aside: So false a thing is man's heart, if not under a watchful eye, and strong hand, holding it fast to God. Prov. 4. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence: Keep it as under lock and key, bolted against sin, and bound by cords of love to every duty: And what a hard province is this! O the work that a child of God hath to keep his heart in order one moment; to keep down sin; to keep it from the power of corruption, and prevalency of temptation; to keep up grace in the heart; to maintain its desires after God, and things that are excellent; to preserve its affections to things above; to hold the thoughts on God, and things eternal, that they start not away; to continue its integrity; to perform its purposes; to secure its frames, experiences and enjoyments! And he that will thus keep his heart, must watch it constantly, never have his eye off from it, or suffer his jealousy concerning it to cease: He must be always making it over to the Lord Jesus for security, and be still imploring help from Heaven, faithfully following all the instructions he gives towards its securing: This is heart-work, and the first part of this heavenly work that concerns yourselves.

Secondly, You must carry on mortification work every day. Col. 3. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is Idolatry. The Apostle having assured the believing Colossians of their future happiness, doth thence infer their duty and necessity to press after utmost holiness here, as the way to this blessedness: The first part of which holiness lies in this great work of mortification: there is no greater motive for Believers putting off sin, than well-grounded hopes of interest in Christ and glory: if Heaven be yours hereafter, holiness must be yours now: There is no place for sin in Heaven, nor unclean thing can enter there. Then hasten away sin now; that's his Argument: [Mortify your members;]

Get yourselves rid of sin; put to death, weaken and destroy the whole body of sin, with all the parts and issues of it; the head and ruling power of sin had its mortal wound before: verse. 3. Ye are dead; habitually dead to sin, the world, and self; they have got their death-wound, the stab is at the heart, and can never be healed more: but they are not actually dead, more blood must run, and spirits be spent, and this monster be weakened every day: Practical mortification is wanting, and must be promoted daily. This spiritual death to sin (saith Davenant) is not as the natural death; for that's a pure privation, and admits of nothing in the subject that's contrary to it: But spiritual mortification is not purely privative, but while we live there's something left that is of a contrary nature to holiness, which must be daily opposed and destroyed. Sin in Believers is driven from the royal fort of the heart upon Christ's entrance into it, but possesses the suburbs and out-works of the soul, from whence it must be gradually expelled also by the mortifying influence of the spirit; like the Canaanites which were removed from the Mountains, but could not be wholly driven out of the Valleys, that Israel might by them be proved, and taught to war, Judge. 1. 19. ch. 3. 1, 2. So the Lord Jesus Christ doth not presently destroy corruptions from the people, that by them their sincerity may be proved, their graces exercised, and the mighty power of his spirit manifested: This makes a Christian's work busy, and constant, having to do with potent enemies within and without, Eph. 6. 4. which must be fought every day, and a continual war maintained with them during life: without fighting, no conquering; without striving, no crowning, 2 Tim. 2. 5. 'It is with a child of God, as with Israel when fighting with Amalek, if the hands of Faith and Prayer be not held up, no conquest; when these are down, spiritual Amalek prevails. O the losses that Christians sustain for want of mortification, by reason of which their foiled corruptions rally up, and take their graces captive! Let men neglect the constant practice of mortification, (saith Davenant) and

their vices that were trod down and subdued, will soon resume their strength; their corruption that was lopped off will bud out again, and the graces of the Spirit in them being almost strangled, man returns to his former temper. Hence come those dreadful fears of good souls, that the grace of God was never in truth in them, but that they are still in a carnal state, and shall perish at last, and all this for want of carrying on the work of mortification in them: As a lively Faith overcomes sin, so prevailing lust weakens Faith, 1 Joh. 5. 4. Eph. 4. 2. 30. withstands the sealing-work of the Spirit, and overthrows the work of the Soul's hopes, filling it with fears about the unsoundness of his estate, and the miserable issue of all his profession, experience and labor. By this ladder of unmortified sin, the Devil scales the royal fort of Faith, throws down its Towers, and man's it against the Soul's peace, comfort and holiness. O the mischief that Christians do to themselves by indulging sin, and for want of a vigorous pursuit of this great duty of mortification! which makes them like to Israel, who being once upon the borders of Canaan, were by their unbelief, and unsubdued lusts, brought back near the confines of Egypt again, and after a wearying inconstant life, were consumed in the wilderness at last. So 'tis with gracious Souls, by their unmortified lusts, after some accesses to grace, tastes of divine love, hopes of glory, and fairness for Heaven, they are brought back to the borders of Hell again, and made to spend their life in an uncomfortable and soul distressing wilderness. Christians, 'tis not security enough for your peace and spiritual welfare, that sin hath lost its dominion, unless its strength and life be impaired also: dethroned sin may bid you many a battle, and give you sore foils, and though it may not recover the Scepter, yet it may keep the Sword; and when it cannot mount the Throne, may get into some strong hold, and put the soul to much trouble e're it be beaten out again. Neither is it safe to acquiesce in some temporary truce with thy corruptions; bloody overthrows have been oftentimes the events of a cessation of war for a season: Joab blew the

Trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they anymore, (i.e., for that time.) 2 Sam. 2. 28. And yet 'tis said, ch. 3. 1. Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but the house of David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker: Sin may seem to yield, and trouble thy soul no more for a time, but carry it quietly with thee, as Joab did to Abner, and on a sudden smite thee to the ground, though not to death, 2 Sam. 3. 27. Nor is it enough that sin be in chains, and under restraint through the present strength of overcoming grace, unless it be hanged up in chains as a dead malefactor. Secured lust may break prison, and escape from under thy hand (as Benhadab did from Ahab) to thy greater hurt, 1 King. 20. 42. What mischief have chained Bears and Lions done when broken loose? Believer, thy condition is not safe till thy sin be dead: what Saul said to Jonathan, 1 Sam. 20. 31. may be applied to thy case; As long as the Son of Jesse liveth upon the ground thou shalt not be established, nor thy Kingdom; wherefore now send and fetch him to me, for he shall surely die: So can thy Soul obtain no stability in grace, but be always full of ups and downs, and have wars and changes against thee till thy corruptions be subdued.

Quest. But how shall I do to get sin mortified? I am convinced 'tis my duty, but find it not my capacity: After all my strivings, prayers and hopes, I am still foiled, and fear I shall one day perish by the hand of these Saul's. O when shall the Kingdom be restored to Israel? When shall the deliverer come to my soul? What shall I do to get these mountains a plain before Zerubbabel? and these Thieves crucified with my Lord Christ?

Sol. If ever thou meanest to get the death of thy sins, take these directions.

Direct. 1. First, Do nothing that might tend to strengthen sin. Rom. 13. 14. Make <H&G>, no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the <H&G>. lusts thereof: the word signifies a provident care of the flesh, as men do to maintain themselves and families: Don't take up your thoughts about it, how to feed and please your lusts: Never think to kill your corruptions while you secretly feed and maintain them: Many complain of their corruptions, and yet all the while feed and strengthen them. There are several things that do contribute maintenance to men's lusts.

First, Delightful Remembrance of former sins, do wonderfully please a carnal heart, and stir up desires to future sins: As the remembrance of former mercies is food to present faith. Psal. 74. 14. Thou brakest the head of the Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. Israel 's deliverance out of Egypt, and the breaking of Pharaoh 's power, seriously thought on, was food to Israel 's faith in the wilderness: And such are delightful remembrances of former sins: When a person takes pleasure to think and talk of his former evils; this doth feed present desires and hopes of sin. When Paul would help on the Romans freedom from the service of sin, he labors to get their present thoughts of former sins embittered. Rom. 6. 21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death.

Secondly, Pleasing Imaginations, and fancying of present or future sins, do wonderfully strengthen the habit of sin. The Lord charges Israel 's sinful actions, as the product of their wicked thoughts. Isa. 65. 2. Which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. Sin first begins in the head, and ends in the feet; first working thoughts of sin, and then actual works of sin: The Devil doth usually strike the first fire on the tinder of men's thoughts, which afterwards burns in their hearts and lives. Jam. 1. 15. When lust hath

conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. They that would avoid the birth of sin in their lives must take heed of the conception of sin in their pleasing thoughts. They that would help on Babylon 's ruin, must prevent its propagation, and put a timely check to their growth; dashing their little ones against the stone, Psal. 137. 9. Leave not anything that belongs to Babylon in thy soul, saith Hugo.

Thirdly, Unbelief strengthens lust. Jer. 2. 25. But thou saidst there is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go, <H&G>. Desperatum est (scil.) cor. My heart despairs of help; I fear it will never be better, therefore I will go on in my way. Unbelief strengthens lust, and makes the soul a prey to it. 'Twas by unbelief Israel fell in the wilderness, both into sin and ruin. And the Apostle cautions Christians that they fall not by the same example of unbelief, Heb. 4. 11. 'Twas unbelieving desponding fears had almost turned up David 's heels, had not grace succored him by the Word, Psal. 73. 2. But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. And whence came this weakness of grace, and strength of corruption? why it was from the apprehended prosperity of sin and sinners; and the succesless issues of his profession and obedience: Verse 15. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence: If this be the fruit of my holiness, then all my labor is in vain; 'tis to no purpose I have followed God all this while, if wickedness shall carry it at last. O take heed of unbelief if ever you would get down your lusts.

Fourthly, Presumption secretly conveys in relief to sin, and succors it against all the sieges of Word and Spirit. 2 Pet. 2. 10. Presumptuous are they, self-willed. A presumptuous soul is a self-pleasing soul, one that pertinaciously and willfully seeks his own carnal contentment's, <H&G>, (as the word imports) he will boldly adventure on the most

dangerous issues of sin, so he may but gratify his lusts, and obtain his sinful desires; he fears no dangers, sticks at no hardships, though God and his Word be against him; it makes the sinner go against all warnings, threatening's, counsels, with hopes of success. Numb. 14. 44. But they presumed to go up to the hill top, verse 42. The Lord forbid them to go, threatening his remove from them, and their ruin, if they durst go up against his will. Nay, it was said, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; and Moses went not out of the Camp; would not stir one foot with them in that wicked enterprise, yet they would go. O take heed of Presumption, that does exceedingly keep up sin, and pull down the sinner.

Fifthly, Carnal security is a great friend to sin, and contributes much to its advantage, when Christians let down their watch, and lie down to slumber, then corruptions rise up and prevails over them. When the Amalekites were spread abroad upon all the Earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the Land of the Philistines, 1 Sam. 30. 16, 17. David fell upon them, and smote them from the twilight, even to the evening of the next day, and there escaped not a man of them save four hundred young men which rode upon Camels and fled. So 'tis with gracious souls after some great mercy, either some special privilege enjoyed, some spoils upon their lusts obtained, or token of God's favor received, they become secure, proud and careless, letting down their watch, exposing themselves to temptations, and soon become a prey to sin and Satan. Jer. 48, 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into Captivity, therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed. If you would have a change on your carnal hearts, take heed of carnal security in your hearts.

Sixthly, Self-indulgence helps to nourish sin, when persons are lovers of their own selves; seek to please, indulge and gratify the desires of carnal natural-self; then lusts thrive in that soul. He that feasts his body (saith Ephrem Syrus) and starves his soul, is like him that feasts his slave, and starves his wife. 2 Tim. 3. 2. Self-love leads the Van to all the iniquities and hypocrisies of the last times. O the troops of sin that march under the banner of self-love, and are secured by its conduct; hence self-denial is the first step to Christianity, Mat. 16. 24. You can never prosper in your salvation-attempts, or decay in your soul-ruining lusts, till you learn to deny yourselves in every part of it. Take heed of a selfish spirit, if you would be sincere souls, and see the death of your lusts.

Seventhly, Opportunity favors sin exceedingly, and helps to keep its hopes alive, and gives it occasion for its enlargement. Opportunity is the Midwife of lust, and helps to deliver it of its inward conceptions and pregnant desires: 'Twas opportunity that blew the coal of David's lust into a flame, 2 Sam. 11. 2. and midwiv'd out Hezekiah's pride, Isa. 39. 2. Had it not been for opportunity, Lot might have escaped the sin of incest, as well as the sufferings of Sodom, Gen. 19. 30 to 37. and Judah's uncleanness with his Daughter-in-law Tamar: 'Twas opportunity that exposed Dinah to a rape, and Peter to the temptation of denying his Lord and Master. Take heed of adventuring into the way of temptation, and going to the borders of soul-danger; shun the occasions of evil; turn aside out of the way of snares, Prov. 1. 15. chap. 4. 14, 15. Temptation feeds corruption, ensnares and entangles the feet, and (as fuel) keeps in the fire of lust. You may as safely suffer the sparks to come near to gun-powder, as opportunity to corruption.

Eighthly, Impenitency in sin strengthens the habit of sin. Jer. 8. 6. No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, what have I done?

every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. They run on furiously in sin, as the horse doth into the battle, who runs till he sweats (saith Theodoret.) So they have no end or satiety of sin; and this impenitency in sin was the cause of all their pertinency in sin. Impenitency hardens the heart, and heaps up sin on sin unto the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 5. Take heed then of all those things that may in the least maintain and keep up sin in your souls, as ever you think to bring it down: That's the first Advice.

Direct. 2. Secondly, Not only shun whatever might strengthen sin, but take heed you go not out in your own strength against sin, if ever you think to mortify it: He that would mortify sin, must be able to master Devils, Ephes. 6. v. 12. But human strength is no match for Devils: If man in his pure estate were too weak for such an adversary, then much more impotent is impure and imperfect man: 'It is not the woman, but the woman's seed must bruise the Serpents head, Gen. 3. 15. The Saints victory is through him that hath loved them, and given himself a sacrifice to God for them, Rom. 16. 20. Rom. 8. 37. Ephes. 5. 2. It must be his armor and arm too must bring salvation from spiritual enemies: Without me you can do nothing, John 15. 5. 'It is this makes souls to fail in their attempts against sin, that they set about it in a strength inferior to sin. When Augustine after all his strivings, vows and duties to bring down his corruptions, found them still too hard for him? he heard a voice saying to him, Thou standest in thyself, and therefore thou dost not stand: Whereupon he betook himself to prayer, and faith in the blood of Christ, and so got some victory over them. When the Exorcists, Act. 19. v. 15, 16. went to cast out Devils by the bare Name of Christ without the Power of Christ; both they and their attempts soon miscarried: Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? and the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed over them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. Creature-

strength is too weak to master that enemy which hath the power of Hell to guard it. O go not out against sin

In the strength of your purposes and promises! Peter to his own cost, found that too weak to secure him in an hour of temptation.

Go not out in the strength of your frames and affections: How easily can Satan beat the Saints from these posts, and cast in a flood to drown their warmest affections! The Galatians that were high in frames and affections, and could talk of a blessedness, while spiritual, soon felt an alteration when they became carnal, Gal. 4. 15. chap. 3. 3.

Go not out in the strength of your duties and performances; these are too weak without faith and the arm of Christ to charm these Serpents, and disarm spiritual adversaries.

Go not out in the strength of your graces; these are not Christ, nor have an Almightiness in them to bring down sin and Satan: 'It is not grace in Believers, but grace in Christ, that is sufficient to guard the soul from Satan's buffetings, and to rescue it from his temptations, 2 Cor. 12. 9.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, Get the union between thy heart and sin broken: The life of sin lies in that union it hath with the heart; if that be broken, sin dies; as a man then ceaseth to live, when the union between the soul and body is dissolved: Sin hath too great a part even in a Believer's heart, which moves for some respect and indulgence towards it: When the enlightened mind says, Crucify it, the carnal affections cry, Spare it, is it not a little one? And the heart (like the City of Iconium about Paul and Barnabas) is divided. Act. 14. 4. And the multitude of the City was divided, and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles. So 'tis with the gracious soul;

sin hath too great a potency in the carnal mind, which must be broken, or sin will never die: Get the Spirit's interest in thy heart strengthened, and sins party weakened every day.

There are seven things that have a great tendency to weaken the heart's union with sin, and withdraw its affections from it.

First, An abiding sense of the great Love of Christ towards it; that he should pity him, when pitied of none, left of all; love him, when wallowing in his blood, and altogether unlovely in himself; love him, while an enemy to God, yea to his own soul; love him so as to give himself for him; to leave his Father's glory, and take up shame, yea taste of death for him, love him, and pass by others; call him, and leave others: the serious consideration of this hath a great constraint on the gracious heart to hate sin, which Christ so hates, and in love to the soul came to destroy.

Secondly; A due apprehension of the inconceivable sufferings of the Lord Jesus, and all procured by sin: He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; he was oppressed and afflicted, and (that which gave an extremity to all these sorrows) it pleased the Lord to bruise him, to put him to grief, and to make his soul an offering for sin: This made the blows the heavier, that they came from a Father's hand: Had an enemy done it, it might have been easier born, (though his torments were unimaginal) but mine equal, mine acquaintance, my familiar friend, Psal. 55. 12, 13. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, Matt. 27. 46? and all this the fruit of sin: This makes a gracious soul to hate sin, that hath been so cruel to his best and only friend.

Thirdly; A believing sight of the excellency and holiness of Christ, hath a mighty power to draw off the heart from sin: when the Prophet had got a view of the Lord in his holiness, he hath presently unlovely and troublesome thoughts of sin. Isa. 6. ver. 1. to 7. Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts: A sight of Christ's holiness will make sin seem exceeding vile and loathsome, and the soul restless till delivered from it: 'It is unacquaintedness with the holiness and beautiful perfections of Christ, that makes men fall in love with that deformed monster, sin: the transcendent glory of Christ is his grace; and the glory of the Saints is to be like him, Joh. 1. 14. which is obtained through the immediate views of him. 1 Joh. 3. 2. When he appears, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is: The hope of which sight, and glory, is soul-purifying now: ver. 3. And every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself, as he is pure: No sooner had the Apostles a sight of Christ's glorious grace, but the next thing was a receiving from his fullness grace for grace, Joh. 1. 14. 16.

Fourthly; A sensible sight of the exceeding sinfulness and evil of sin will help to loosen this conjunction between the heart and sin: when once Paul came to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and felt the killing fruits of it in his soul, his heart presently came to be loosened from the ruling power of it. Rom. 7. 11. 13. That which I do, I allow not; what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. The sense of the shameful fruits of sin was influential on the believing Romans towards their freedom from sin, Rom. 6. 21. 22. Christians, get your eye more intently fixed on the cursed nature of sin; how contrary to God; how like to Devils; how filthy loathsome and abominable: look upon the certain dreadful effects of sin here, and to all eternity, if not removed; it hath brought death on the Son of God, and destruction on the Sons of Men, bondage on the creatures, a curse on everything

men do and enjoy; enmity against God, alienation from God, robbing him of his glory, crossing his will, spoiling his works, grieving his spirit, hindering the soul in duty, depriving it of mercy, exposing it to judgment, necessitating it to evil, weakening his hopes, breaking his peace, opposing his grace, and endangering either the loss, or lessening of his glory; with other innumerable mischiefs, injuries, cruelty and miseries that follow the heels of it; with the great difficulty in its removal. I say; be more in the heart-affecting consideration of these things, and you cannot choose, but with Paul, be weary of sin, loath it, and long for a separation from it, Rom. 7. 24. How can ye love that knife that hath stabbed your dearest Friend, Father, Husband; yea, your own soul? How can you like that cloud and veil which stands between you and the Son of righteousness, and keeps these quickening warming beams from you, which would have cleared and strengthened your heart? How can you hug the fetters, kiss the walls and doors that imprison your souls in bondage, and keep you from your beloved, and from the glorious liberty of the Sons of God? what pleasure can you take in that Thief which stole your richest Jewels, and hath brought you to a morsel of bread?

5ly, Apprehension of that high dignity and honorable state to which grace hath advanced you, & those peculiar glorious privileges which you are now invested with, hath a mighty influence on a gracious heart towards the abhorring of sin, 1 Joh. 3. 1, 2, 3. Oh how unsuitable are works of darkness to the children of light! how unbecoming is vile raiment to them that dwell in Kings Houses: A Swine's snout to a Saint's eye; thick clay, and defiling dirt on the hands, face, and heart of the heirs of glory, and children of the Kingdom: what an unlovely sight is it to see Kings wallow in the mire as Swine; and such who enjoy the privileges of Angels, to do the work of Devils? Remember that thou art Son to a King, said one to Antigonus, and that will keep thee from base courses. O Christians!

work in these thoughts upon the heart, and see whether there can be any room left for the works of the flesh, or affections thereof.

Sixthly; Expectations of future glory will help you to despise that abominable thing, sin: Can you rationally look for a Throne with your Beloved hereafter, and lodge in the bosom of your Idols and adulterous Lovers now? How can you think that head shall wear a Crown of glory with Christ, who is always plotting to put Crowns of Thorns on Christ's head now? To reap life everlasting then, who sow to the flesh now? Do you hope for that time when you shall be uncloath'd of sin? and can you make it your present work to put on sin, hold fast sin? how inconsistent are desires of sin, with hopes of freedom? Christians, don't deceive your souls, you cannot have sure grounds of fellowship with God hereafter, and allow the least communion between your hearts and sin now.

Seventhly, Maintained union and communion with Christ will break heart-union and fellowship with sin: As heart-union with sin will not admit of union and communion with God. Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone: I will have no more to do with him; I will leave, and remove from him: So union and communion with God in Christ, will not bear union with sin. Hos. 2. 2. The Lord would not say Israel was his Wife, until her Whoredoms were put out of her sight, and her Adulteries from between her breasts: and no sooner did she return to a believing sight of, and affectionate union with him, but she presently cries out, What have I to do with Idols anymore, Hos. 14. 8? Contraries oppose and weaken each other. Psal. 97. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Matth. 6. 24. No man can serve two Masters, either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Union with God is of an incorporating nature. 1 Cor. 6. 17. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and cannot

subsist without heart-separation from sin. 2 Cor 6. 16, 17. I will dwell in them, and walk in them; —wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Cleaving to Christ by Faith is the best way to the relinquishment of sin. The soul that hath constant fellowship with Christ, will not care for other Lovers, Phil. 3. 8. That's the third Direction: Get the union between thy heart and sin broken.

Direct. 4. Fourthly, If you would mortify sin, strike at the root of it, and get the body of this death destroyed, The life of the tree lies in the root; lop off all the branches, yet if the root be sound, the tree lives, and the branches will sprout out again, Job 14. 7, 8, 9. But if once the root be cut off, the whole tree dies and ceases from bringing forth fruit. So 'tis with sin, if you set against this or that particular corruption, and let the body of death alone, not using means to weaken that, you will make but little of all your endeavors; when you have quieted one lust, another rises: 'It is but to little purpose to lade away waters out of a ship, unless you stop the leak that feeds them; while there is water in the Sea, it will be still running in. They that will cure a disease, must get the cause removed: Original sin is the source and fountain of all actual sins; as that is weakened, so will the irruption of actual sins be abated: The way to prevent the inroads and strangling's of a garrison, is to begirt the Fort, and not only keep them in, but scale and attach the strong hold that secures them. This is the wisdom of a Christian (saith Mr. Burroughs) that when he comes to labor against any corruption, he doth not spend his time so much against this or that particular corruption, but strike at the body of corruption: —And hence is the reason that Christians in a little time grow so much, and get so much power against their corruptions, whereas others are a long time before they get any power at all. 'It is with a Believers heart, as with a garden overgrown with weeds; though the tops be often plucked off, while the mores and strings

abide under-ground, all they do to cleanse it is labor in vain, they still spring up afresh: So is it with men's corruptions, till the root be more withered and weakened. Now to further this work:

First, Be deeply sensible of your sinful natures, as well as sinful actions: This the faithful complain mostly of, even their sinful natures. Isa. 64. 6. We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousness's as filthy rags. Psal. 51. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my Mother conceive me. Rom. 7. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!

Secondly, Apply the Death of Christ by faith to the whole body of sin in you. Faith fetches virtue from a crucified Christ to dry up the bloody issue of sin, Luke 8. 44. chap. 6. 19. This being the appointed way of God to bring down sin. The foundation of a soul's redemption from sin is laid in the Death of Christ. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Who bare our sins for us in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, might live to righteousness. This death to sin is the effect of Christ's dying for sin; this being the end of his Death, to redeem his people from all iniquity, Titus 2. v. 14. Christ's Death for sin was not only a pattern to Believers, but a medicine and appointed means to destroy their sin. Rom. 6. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him; that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 'Twas by the Cross of Christ that Paul was crucified to the world, and the world to him, Gal. 6. 14. Carry over thy old man to the Cross of Christ, and bury thy strong lusts by faith in the grave of Christ, deriving virtue thence to kill thy sin. Faith brings the soul into a fellowship with the Death of Christ, to receive the benefits and energy thereof; one of which benefits is a killing power on sin.

Thirdly, Improve Faith in the Promises. The death of sin in Believers, is part of the New Covenant, and as sure as pardon. Micah 7. 19. He will turn again, he will have compassion, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depth of the Sea, Mat. 1. 21. He shall save his people from their sins, Rom. 6. v. 14. Deut. 30. 6. which promises are sure to all the seed: The Lord Jesus came on purpose to perform the promises to, and in his people. Rom. 15. 8. To redeem them from all iniquity, Titus 2. 14. And to destroy the works of the Devil, 1 Joh. 3. 8. And saith in these Promises is soul-cleansing, and sin-subduing: Carry over thy unruly corruptions to Christ in the Promises, and sue for justice upon them.

Fourthly, Implore the constant help of the Spirit of Grace, both to discover, oppose and destroy thy corruptions: This work is too hard for flesh and blood; nothing short of the Eternal Spirit can get a full conquest over sin, and the power and wiles of Satan in thy soul: 'It is through the Spirit Believers come to mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. 8. 13. And by the spirit of judgment and burning, the Lord purges away the blood of Jerusalem, Isa. 4. 4. And by the Law of the Spirit of Life, we are made free from the Law of sin and death, Rom. 8. 2. Take heed of grieving and impeding the Spirit of Holiness, by which his gracious, sanctifying influences are suspended, and thou be left to the weaknesses of thy own spirit. Be much in prayer and fervent cries for the Spirit's daily assistance in this great work.

Fifthly, Give no place to the least motions of sin, but maintain a constant war against the whole powers and body of sin: The want of preventing care, timely opposition, and constant warfare against all the corruptions of flesh and spirit, is one thing that lays gracious souls under the entanglements and prevalency of their lusts, James. 4. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 2. Rom. 12. 9. We embrace (saith one) the desires of our temptations upon implicit faith, not examining and withstanding

the first entrance of temptation, nor crushing the first motions of sin. 'It is easy to crush the Serpent's Egg, but dangerous conflicting with it when it becomes a Cockatrice. A rebellion may be with less strength dissipated at its first appearance, than suppressed when it hath gathered head, Isa. 14. 29. The Devil's first assault (saith Chrysostom) is violent; resist that, and his second will be weaker, and that being resisted also, he proves a coward. A Christian's wisdom and interest lies much in these two things:

First, To take the start of sin, to strike the first blow, to be in the field before it; yea to baracado up its way, and to fall in upon its quarters; to lay in provision against its very rising; to fortify the heart against the least consent to sin, by applying threatening's and promises betimes, and furnishing the heart with sovereign and scriptural antidotes against it: The neglect of this preventing care, deprives the soul of needful helps against its surprisal, and so renders it weak against its first assaults. Arius at first (saith Jerome) was but a spark, but being not suppressed betimes, he proved the incendiary of the whole Church.

Secondly, To prosecute the soul's victory over sin: Sometimes the Lord gives his people power over a lust, by a sanctified affliction, or blessed ordinance, which victory, if pursued, might tend to the total subduing of it; but usually we grow secure after such successes, and do not follow the victory, but give over too soon, as Joash in his smiting on the ground, 2 Kings 13. 18, 19. The Prophet bid him shoot the arrows of the Lord's deliverance, and smite upon the ground; and 'tis said, He smote thrice, and stayed; and the man of God was wroth with him; and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it. O what advantage might a Christian get if he did but follow his victory over his corruptions, and not suffer them to recruit and gather strength

again! Give no rest to thy lusts, nor space for reviving; no not for a moment, but keep up thy warfare every day.

Sixthly, If you would further the death of sin, keep up the life of grace: As the life of sin weakens grace; so the life of grace keeps down and weakens sin. Gal. 5. 16. Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Keep up grace, and sin will down. As when the house of David waxed stronger, the house of Saul waxed weaker, 2 Sam. 3. 1. 'It is written of Ephrem Syrus, that though he was a man much given to passion in his youth; yet after he entered into a strict course of life, he was never seen to be angry with any man. As you cannot get power over sin, but by the Spirit of Grace; so you cannot keep the head over sin, but by the Life of Grace: Get your graces strengthened, and you will find your corruptions weakened.

Thirdly, You must carry on Renovation in grace, and the inward work of Sanctification every day. Ephes. 3. 23, 24. And be renewed in the spirit of your minds: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness After the work of Mortification, the Apostle presses Christians to this work of Renovation, or Internal Holiness; be renewed in the spirit of your minds (i. e.) in your minds by the Holy Spirit; the mind being put for the whole man, and internal faculties of the soul; both understanding, will, affections and conscience; all must be renewed by the Spirit, called the New Creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17. or Workmanship of Christ transformed after his own Image in righteousness and true holiness; and renewed in knowledge, Eph. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. When the soul is truly regenerated, there is the stamp or exemplar of Christ's holiness, placed in the whole soul in truth; but in weak measures at first, which must be renewed or enlarged in the soul, till it comes to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ. Christians at the first change, are compared to new born babes, 2 Pet. 2. 2. weak in

grace, but under a natural disposition and obligations to growth and increases in this grace of God, both intensively and extensively: This is a Christian's duty by divine command, and comports with the appointment of God in order to it, 2 Pet. 3. v. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 2. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13. 'It is the way by which grace becomes glory, and is greatly necessary to perfect a soul's holiness; that so he might come to his full stature and conformity to Christ, Ephes. 4. 16. Rom. 8. 29. And by the increases of grace may be enabled to dispatch all his duties, bear his burdens, and bear up under his temptations, that he might be capable to enjoy all his mercies, to glorify the God of grace, and to be made meet for the enjoyment of God in glory: On all which accounts it becomes the Christian's great concern to press after larger measures of grace every day; to grow up into him in faith and love, who is the head in all things, Ephes. 4. 15. To grow downward in humility and self-denial; to grow extensively in every part of holiness, and greater enlargements in every grace; to wax stronger and stronger in the grace that is in Christ Jesus: Perfecting holiness in the sight of God; and pressing more and more after the price of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus: The want of which increases of the Spirit, doth much obscure the glory of Christ in Believers, cloud their evidences, and render them too weak for their corruptions, their growing trials and duties. Christians, content not yourselves with the truth of grace, without daily growth in grace. Improve your interest in the Resurrection of Christ, by believing for the daily quickening of your hearts, and raising of your affections to things above, and attracting your desires and whole souls after God, grace and glory. Be much in internal soul-work, of heart searching, soul watching, divine contemplation, secret ejaculations, and soul breathings after God, and higher manifestations of his light, life and love.

Be constant in every appointment of God, public and private; of prayer, reading, hearing, holy conference, that you may get nourishment thereby administered to your souls: Get under all the dews and showers of grace for your fruitfulness.

Be spiritual as well as frequent in exercising grace under the means of Grace; without this you cannot serve God acceptably, Heb. 12. 28. or receive from him who is the head nourishment to your souls, but by these bands and joints of faith and love, Col. 2. 19. Formality eats out that sap which should make you green and flourishing: A dead, cold heart under the Word, can no more digest it to nutriment, than a dead body can concoct natural food.

Maintain hungering desires after the word of grace, and appointed means to your spiritual growth, 1 Pet. 2. 3. Hungering after food argues a good digestion, and a sound concoction furthers nourishment: Keep up warm affection to every way of God, living on Christ for all the good and blessing of them. Psal. 84. 5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them; who passing through the Valley of Baca, make it a Well; the rain also filleth the Pools; they go from strength to strength, everyone in Zion appearing before God. When Jehoshaphat 's heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, 'tis said he waxed great exceedingly, 2 Chron. 17. 6. 12. Heart-enlargement in the ways of God is a notable help to soul-thriving's: Take this one thing more; be poor in spirit, if you would be rich in grace: Such are under the promise of being satisfied, of being guided in judgment, of increasing their joy; to such he will give grace, and reviving's. Humble souls (saith one) are empty vessels, which God will fill; are low plants, which God will make to grow: To be nothing in our own eyes, is the way to receive all good things, even grace in abundance from God; Psal. 22. 26. and 25. 9. Isa. 29. 19. Prov. 3. 34. Isa. 57. 15.

Fourthly; To keep your evidences for Heaven fair and legible, is another part of your Salvation-work: this will abundantly comfort you under all your tribulations, quicken you to a lively dispatch of your duties, give you a humble boldness in your approaches to God; arm you against the fears of death, and administer to you an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Beware of quenching and grieving the Spirit of grace, by which its sealing-work is hindered: Take heed of laying blots upon your evidences, by any allowed iniquity in your hearts, or unpurged defilement in your hands, which will weaken your confidence in the Lord, fill you with dejection and despondency of spirit, and give your spiritual adversary great advantage over your souls, 2 Pet. 1. 10. 1 Joh. 5. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 12. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Heb. 10. 22. Job 19. 25, 26, 27. 2 Pet. 1. 11.

Keep up your sincerity and truth in the inner man, be often looking to the principle of your actions, that it be gracious; and to your ends in everything you do, that they be pure, singly, and ultimately aiming at God, his will and glory in every duty, action and undertaking.

If you would evidence the truth of grace, you must be every day in the exercise of grace, and conscionable endeavors to live up to known duties, exercising a conscience void of offense towards God and man, not resting in any measures of grace, but going on towards perfection, and aiming at greater enlargements in your souls and graces continually.

Thirdly; Carry on all these natural, moral, and religious duties that concern others. This is the will of God, and part of your sanctification. Matth. 5. 16. Let your light shine before men, and by your good works glorify your Father which is in Heaven. 1 Cor. 10. 32. Walk unblameable towards all men, giving no offense to any, lest

the Gospel be blamed. Phil. 1. 10. That you may be sincere, and without offense to the day of Christ. 1 Pet. 2. 12. Having your conversation honest among those you have to do with; dealing justly with all men, rendering to every man his due; doing good to all, as opportunity serveth, Gal. 6. 10. Psal. 35. 13. and be kind to the just and unjust, seeking the salvation of sinners, mourning over them, praying for them, instructing of them; seeking by a humble, holy, and affectionate carriage to win them over to the Lord Jesus, who are not won by the word, Luke 19. 41. Psal. 51. 13. 2 Pet. 3. 1. Loving, praying for, doing good unto your greatest enemies. Virtues separated (saith Chrysostom) are annihilated; equity without goodness, is severity; and justice without piety, cruelty: 'It is better to do good than to receive good. 'Twas said of Mr. Hooker, That he was born for the good of many, but few born for the good of him: That you love, delight in, and do good to all Saints, as Saints, that carry the image of God on them. That you make conscience of your relative duties both in your own houses, and in the house of God. Psal. 101. 2. Walking within your own houses with a perfect heart; to be Christians at home as well as abroad; showing the same spirit, zeal and affection to your Families as to others; doing your utmost to keep up the service of God in your houses, both together and asunder, morning and evening in prayer, and reading the word of God, Acts 10. 2. 9. Josh. 24. 18. Psal. 25. 10. Matth. 6. 6. That you faithfully discharge those mutual duties you owe to each other, as Husband, Wife, Parents, Children, Masters, Servants, Eph. 5. 22. to the end of chap. 6. To be meek, loving, peaceable in your words and carriages towards one another, giving that due respect as the place and relation calls for from each other: To be holy and profitable in your discourses, seeking the spiritual welfare, edification and salvation of each other's souls, as of your own, Deut. 11. 19. Prov. 22. 6. ch. 23. 13. Col. 3. 12, to 16. Heb. 12. 14. Gen. 18, 19. The want of which due and Christian carriages in your houses brings up an evil report on the ways of God,

rendereth the truth of your grace questionable, hinders the gracious presence of God with you, and removes his blessing from you, Eph. 4. 29. Rom. 11. 14. You whom grace hath privileged with a place and name within the walls of God's house, do stand obliged to fellowship-duties of love, care and faithfulness to each other; considering one another to provoke to love and good works, Joh. 15. 12. Heb. 10. 24. and esteem each other better than yourselves: To seek one another's good as your own, serving each other in love, Phil. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 24. 33. Gal. 5. 13. To sympathize with each other in affliction, Col. 3. 12. and to be helpful to them in bearing their burdens, supplying their wants, comforting, counseling, and supporting them in all their tribulations, Heb. 13. 3. visiting the sick and imprisoned, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, warning the unruly, admonishing the offenders, bearing one another's infirmities, covering their weaknesses, avoiding whatever might offend and injure each other's souls, or lessen their affections, or break the unity of spirit and bond of peace between them; but by a sweet, humble, self-denying, and faithful carriage, to engage the heart to each other, praying for the whole body, and every member: To be gracious and spiritual in all your communion and converses, seeking the prosperity of Zion, rejoicing in each other's graces and good, as in your own; doing all you may towards their comfort and salvation, Mat. 25. 42. Acts 20. 35. 1 Joh. 3. 17. Rom. 15. 1. and 16. 17. Lev. 19. 10. 2 Cor. 12. 20. Col. 4. 6. Phil. 2. 17, 18. Tit. 2. 12. 2 Cor. 13. 7. Psal. 15. 2. Col. 3. 9.

In your Callings, commerce and dealings with men, to be just, honest, and faithful, doing as you would be done unto, not defrauding one another, but speaking the truth in all your bargaining's, and performing your promises, though to your hurt. This is a considerable part of your heavenly Trade, and that wherein the credit of Religion doth eminently lie; the pleasing and glorifying of God, the good of others, the propagation of the Gospel, the peace

and salvation of your own souls, even in the faithful discharge of these natural, moral, and religious duties you owe unto others.

This is the first part of heavenly work; work of a heavenly nature as well as manner, both with respect to God, our own souls, and others.

Secondly, Another part of heavenly work is to do earthly things in an heavenly manner: Though the things of the World are of a different nature from things above, yet when rightly managed, they are subservient to them, and come within the compass of this Heavenly Trade: To which three things are needful.

1. To do earthly things by heavenly rules.
2. With heavenly hearts.
3. To heavenly ends.

First, Then is earthly work part of your Heavenly Trade, when you transact it by heavenly rules; every Science hath its Maxims; distinct Governments have their distinct Laws: So hath every Trade its rules, principles and instructions by which it is carried on. Earthly Traders have their rules and methods by which they manage their businesses, as may most comport with the end they propose, and the advance of their own earthly interests; and so 'tis with heavenly Traders, though they have to do with earthly things, yet they must act about them by heavenly rules.

Ten Rules

Now there are ten rules which heavenly Merchants must observe in the management of their earthly affairs.

Rule 1.

First, Be sure the matter of your employments be good, that your Callings be lawful, and the things you do be just and honest in the sight of God: Evil things can never be well done: meddle not with prohibited goods; do nothing that either in its nature, use, or by divine Law becomes evil, 2 Cor. 13. 7. Phil. 4. 8. Eph. 4. 28. Let your Callings be lawful, of good report, and useful in your generation, not only for your own interest and advantage, but for the service and good of others: For no man liveth to himself, Rom. 14. 7. Such a calling as hath God for its Author being according to Scripture; and hath God for its Teacher (saith Fenner) Isa. 28. 26. And as a man can manage with peace of conscience, and be assured his work doth please God, and he can pray for a blessing upon it; which they cannot do who set on employments that tend to nourish vice and wickedness, Rom. 13. 14.

That your Recreations also be lawful; such as are free from scandal and temptation, used by, and with persons fearing God, and such as have a tendency to refresh the mind and body, the better disposing it to its necessary duties, being sparingly and wisely used, so as to be no occasion of evil to others, and religiously entered on by seeking to God for a right management of it, and blessing on it. Such actions as come not under these characters, are not becoming Christians, who must give an account to God for every vain word, much more for idle actions, Mat. 12. 36. 'It is part of that which will trouble souls when their sins are bearing on them; that they have inherited lies, vanities, and things wherein is no profit, Jer. 16. 19. Saints should be working nothing but what hath a good in it: Working with his hands the things that are good, Ephes. 4. 28. and which can bring some glory to God: Whatsoever you do (of which Recreations is a part) do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10, 31. But what good to the body, foul or estate;

what glory to God; what peace to conscience in the day of Christ, can be found in carnal sports, scandalous plays, cards, dice, lascivious dancing's, and the like? which are the offspring of chambering and wantonness, things wherein is little praise, virtue, or good report; but rather the spots of Christianity, and bane of piety, which tend to debauch the affections, to deaden the conscience, to nourish wantonness, and seed a fleshly carnal mind, the end of which is death, Rom. 13. 13. Phil. 4. 8. Jude v. 12. 2 Pet. 2. 18. Rom. 8. 6. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. It is a double content to a generous and well-disposed nature, when he doth good for his pleasure. Games of hazard (saith a worthy Divine) do very much discompose the mind; they also provoke passion, and cause much disturbance in the soul for things of nothing. Games that consist in dexterity of body or mind, are much to be preferred before these: Chess will sharpen the wit, but busy it over much, and toil the spirits, instead of recreating them, which is the proper use of play: Of all gaming, the less the better; and when it disorders the passions, the least is too much. He that ventures much money at play, ventures with it not only the tranquility of his mind; but makes a certain loss of it whatever becomes of the money —Squandering away of money in play, is not the way to make friends of that unrighteous Mammon, that receive a man into everlasting habitations, but an enemy rather that will turn him out of his temporal habitation; it is the way to lose both Earth and Heaven: So then, whether we win or lose, we commit robbery; for if we rob not our adversaries, we rob ourselves, our families, and God: We may add this also; such unprofitable Recreations devour that precious treasure of irrecoverable, invaluable, yea salvation-time; and useth those hours in posting to Hell, which are too much neglected for hastening to Heaven. O how careful then should souls that profess heavenly hopes be of their earthly work, that it be such as may conduce to their accomplishment of them!

Rule 2.

Secondly, Set upon earthly things in their proper place and order: Seek first the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you, Mat. 6. 33. Let God have the uppermost Throne in your hearts, the fore-foot in your walk, the first stroke in your work; give heavenly things the precedency, both in estimation, affection and time, as things of greatest worth, and to which you are chiefly obliged: That's the due order and method of heavenly Traders, to begin every day and work with God; serve God first, and then yourselves: Set apart some time for religious duties, before you set upon earthly employments. Men will not go abroad into unwholesome air fasting: The things of this world have a contagious breath in them: Break your fast with God every morning, before you adventure on heart-ensnaring businesses: Labor with God first for his presence with you, his wisdom to direct you, his grace and strength to help, secure and bless you in your earthly labors. Antidote your hearts with divine cordials every morning, before you get into the Pest-house of this world, and let something of Scripture lie nearest thy soul for counsel, comfort, quickening every day: He (saith Augustine) that hath tasted the sweetness of Divine love, will not care for temporal sweetness. Meddle not with the thorns of this world, till you have fenced your hearts and hands by prayer, and the sword of the Spirit: 'It is more haste than good speed to run into the world before you have spoken with God: The lawful way to earthly employments lies by Heavens gates. Christians, God will sue you for trespasses if you take any other way to your trades and employments in the world, than his prescribed way of religious duties. Besides, you have need of God's eye and hand in everything you do: You know not the snares and deaths that lie in your employments, and the dangers you are subject to in every step you go, and in everything you do: You may go forth in the morning, and never return more; some have died

as Israel did, with meat in their mouths; others have fallen down dead in their work, broke their necks in a journey, been found dead in the way: O set on earthly work in God's way; go not about the world till you have been with God, and secured your All in his hands.

Rule 3.

Thirdly, Keep your earthly business within the bounds of due time. He that hath allotted you your work, hath allotted you your time for it: it consists not with man's state, relation and interest, to be arbitrary in anything, but to walk by rule. There is a time for everything under the Sun, Eccles. 3. 1. A time for every purpose, and for every work, verse 17. Job 7. 1. As there is an appointed time to man on earth; so there is an appointed time to man for earthly things: He that hath set bounds to the world, hath not left worldly employments without bounds, but hath fixed men's earthly affairs within their proper season. Psal. 104. 23. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labor until the evening. The Psalmist acknowledges here the power and providence of God in setting bounds to his creatures; bounds to the Sun and Moon. Verse 19. He appointed the Moon for seasons, and the Sun knoweth his going down: Bounds to the day and night. Verse 20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: he limits the labors of wild beasts and men; the beasts have their preying time confined to the night. Verse 20. 22. And it is night wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth; the Sun riseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Men have their working-time allotted in the day: Man goeth forth to his work and labor until the evening; that is, to the end of their working-day, which consisted among the Jews of twelve hours. John 11. 9. Are there not twelve hours in the day? the usual time for men to dispatch their earthly work in. The Lord would not (saith Musculus) have men's labors drawn out so far as to wear out their

strength, but hath set bounds to it. As the Lord would not have the world to take up men's hearts; so he would not have it to eat out their time, or encroach on these seasons that are due to greater concerns. God, Nature, Grace, thy own soul, and the spiritual good of others, have their claims, as well as thy earthly callings, to this little inch of this time. O consume not thy precious day on things that are temporal, and neglect thy opportunities for things eternal: do not enslave thy body beyond thy beasts, which have their times of rest; nor exhaust that strength which better things call for, upon an empty perishing world. Excessive labors beyond their due time, do argue either too much desire of these things, or too little faith in God, and are reprov'd by the Lord as the vanity and practice of them, who are not his beloved ones, Psal. 127. 2. 'It is lamentable to see such as would be thought the heirs of Heaven, so excessively taken up in enlarging their possessions on earth; engrossing all their time early and late, about their earthly affairs, leaving nothing but a few unserviceable minutes for God and their souls. O Christians! Keep the stream of your earthly affections and labors within the banks of allowed time; rob not God of his time of special service; nor nature of her time of needful rest and refreshment: nor thy own or others souls of time for their spiritual concerns, for such poor perishing things: Show charity to thy redeemed body; make it not a drudge to thy earthly lusts: Man is too noble a creature to be a vassal to this world: 'It is a sad spectacle to see the Nazarites of Heaven, like Samson, with their heads shaven, and their eyes plucked out to grind in the world's mill, till they pluck down the house about their ears, Judge. 16. 21. How do men macerate their bodies, and starve their souls, only to help them with supplies in their passage to the grave, and all the while neglect the work of God, and their souls, leaving the relics of their wasted strength, and the world's refuse, for the service of an immortal God. This is not to follow earthly things by heavenly Rule.

Rule 4.

Fourthly, Be diligent in the use of your working time: take heed you waste it not upon impertinencies, or by needless diversions, or by idleness, and unfaithfulness in your work: this is a sin against both Law and Gospel, which requires diligence and faithfulness in men's earthly callings: Labor and calling-work was man's duty before his fall. Gen. 2. 15, The Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it: And after the fall, painful labor was enjoined and inflicted as a punishment of his sin. Gen. 3. 19, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou return to the ground. This duty of bodily labor in men's Callings, is of equal sanction and regard with the duties of God's Worship, being inserted in a positive Law, and as that which is necessary to the sanctifying of God in Sabbaths. Exod. 29. 9, 10, Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work: The injunction of working in six days (saith Mayer) is given in the same commanding terms in the Original, that the injunction of not working in the seventh is: and the same reason is given for both: the one is taken from God's resting on the seventh day: and the other from his working the six days: So that not to labor faithfully in thy Calling the six days, is a breach of the fourth command, as well as the working on the Sabbath-day: Not as if the six days labor were to exclude all religious Worship of God on either of these days when the Lord calls to it by extraordinary Providences, as to mourning or rejoicing, or by ordinary tenders of Gospel-mercy, in Week-day Lectures, or the like; for this would cross his other commands, Preaching in season and out of season, and laboring for the bread that endures to eternal life: This diligent labor doth not exclude private worship every day, and public worship on week-days; so far as it consists with faithfulness in men's Callings, for which time must be redeemed, Eph. 5. 16. but it requires diligent

attendance on men's Callings, on the week-days (as opposed to sloth and sinful waste of time) without which God is not duly served on the Sabbath: This diligence in men's Callings is also required in the Gospel, 1 Thess. 3. 10. Idleness is a Gospel-scandal, and renders Christians worthy to be abstained from, as not obeying the Word of God; and such must not eat, 1 Thess. 4. 11. such are unprofitable servants, who improve not their talents for God, and the good of others, Matth. 25. 30. and are worse than Infidels, who do not by diligence in their Calling provide for their own, 1 Tim. 5. 8.

Rule 5.

Fifthly, while your hands are about the world, set a guard about your hearts: The Believers heart is Christ's royal Fort, secure that, and all is safe: If riches increase, set not your hearts upon them, Psal. 62. 10. 'tis the Nature of earthly things, like a Malignant Disease, to get to the heart, O how hard is it to meddle with these, and the heart not become earthy too! when a gracious Soul hath been with God, and got his heart warmed, quickened, and drawn out to things above; no sooner doth he return to the world, but all is gone again: such dangerous damps doth this earth send unto heavenly hearts: secure thy heart with God every day, make a new surrender of it to him, before thou get into the snares of thy earthly business: Set a vigilant watch upon thy heart every moment, lest the things of the world steal in and take it captive.

Rule 6.

Sixthly, Attend your earthly affairs with a calm and quiet spirit, whatever occurrence you meet with in the world; let your spirits be composed and fixed on God: wonder not at changes in an unsteady world, which is only constant in inconstancy. Here have we no continuing City, Heb. 13. 14. All things here are moving, ascending or

descending: Things below are compared to the Moon, Rev. 12. 1. which is never at a stay, but hath its constant changes; and like the Sea that ebbs and flows every day; and as the fountain of the Sun, which Pliny writes of, that the waters are extreme cold and sweet at noon, but boiling hot and bitter at midnight: So mutable are the comforts of this world, then going when they seem most likely to stay. Man's condition in this world at the best, is like the mountain Potosi, over which there always hangs a cloud even in the clearest day. And as 'tis written of a Meer or Salt Marsh in Scotland, called Pochlowland, where there are tempestuous waves raging without wind, yea in the greatest calm. Christians, be not troubled at the tides you see in these waters of Marah. Riches make themselves wings and fly away, Prov. 23. 5. Let none of these lower things trouble you when gone, which cannot content you when present: but one moment of time can make them cease to be yours. There is but one days difference (saith Seneca, upon the burning of a City) between a great City, and no City: So there may be but one day, nay but one hour, between a Father, and no Father; a Husband, and no Husband; a man of pleasure, and a man of sorrows; a rich man, and a poor man. Set not that at your hearts which should be at your heels: Men do not use to sigh, look pale, and cry, when servants leave them: Earthly things are no more; they are given you as handmaids to wait on you, not as a Spouse to lie in your bosoms; as servants that come and go, not as children that abide in the house forever. When thou hast lost an earthly comfort, say, A servant is gone from me today. Keep up a contentation of mind with the portion God gives you here. Heb. 13. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with those things that you have: Let them suffice you, as 'tis in the Greek; count them enough. If an Esau can be satisfied with his crumbs, how much more should a Jacob with the children's bread What this and Heaven too! (saith one.) A little of the world, and much of Heaven, will well agree. I have enough, and enough, and enough, said

precious Mr. Ball, who yet was very low in the world. When the Earl of Leicester offered Mr. Cartwright the Provostship of Eaton College, saying, 'twas an hundred pound more than enough, he answered, the hundred pound more than enough was enough for him. Psal. 37. 16. A little that the righteous hath, is better than the revenues of the wicked. There are two diminutives in the Original (a little of the righteous man's) let it be never so <H&G> little, with righteousness, it weight down all the abundance of the worldly man's interest; be it more or less, it is enough. O thrice fools are we, like new born Princes weeping in the cradle, knowing not that there is a Kingdom before them, Rutherford. I have often thought on that providence concerning Israel in the wilderness. Exod. 16. 8. He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack. Christian, why so troubled about thy proportion of these things of the footstool? as if your Father knew not what you wanted, or cared not for you, or could not maintain you: You shall have enough to carry you to your graves, and you can absolutely need no more. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not, for behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, but thy life will I give thee as a prey in all places whither thou goest, Jer. 45. 4, 5. You know not what God is doing in the world: Have you but little now? you may shortly have less: Be content with what you have: A little in Bethel, if it be but a pillow of stones, with bread and water, is better than the rich Plains of Sodom: A piece of blest bread in Immanuel 's Land, is sweeter, and will go farther than all the Garlic and Flesh-pots of Egypt. than a great deal of unsanctified comforts: A small portion of the world, with soul-advantage, is better than a great estate with spiritual losses and temptations. God can multiply a few loaves; make the barrel of meal, and cruse of oil, to hold out, and your clothes not to wax old, rather than you shall want enough to carry you through your wilderness, if you will be believing and obedient. Be contented with the talent God gives you to trade upon: Have others more than you?

envy them not; they have the more to reckon for; and it may be they need more, or they can bear more than you. That (saith one) would sink a small vessel which is but an ordinary burden to a great ship. Some can better manage a large estate with less trouble and temptation than others: Possibly that would puff up thy heart with pride, and catch thy feet in snares that never stirs another's affections, to whom God hath given a braver spirit, or greater mortifiedness to this world. Subscribe to God's wisdom and pleasure, believe his promises, wonder at his mercy, be thankful for what you have above many; see your All in God, and hope to be shortly with him; and you cannot but be content with your allowance in the world.

Rule 7.

Seventhly, Follow your duty, but cast your care on God, abide in your callings, but live above them. 1 Pet. 5. 17. Casting all your care on God, for he careth for you. Depend not on your wisdom, labor or success in your employments, but upon the promise, love and care of God for you: If the Lord blesseth your substance, don't you bless yourselves in it: See an emptiness in all your abundance, and shortness in these to answer your many wants. God can soon make a hole in your money-bags, blow on your increase, turn your prosperity into contempt, and make your expected comforts as the dream of a night vision. Live not on large barns, but on the full breasts of promises, for the good of what you do enjoy, or for the supply of what you want. The poor Christian hath the keeping of his purse in his Father's hand, the rich in his own hand. If sight fail, live by faith: Faith assures you of the good issue of all difficulties in your way, and gets advantage from the worst condition, and sweetness to mingle with every bitter providence you meet with. It may be thou hast a great family, and little to live on; liest in debt, and hast nothing to

pay it; hadst a little the other day, but the Caterpillar and the Cankerworm hath devoured it; this loss, and the other stroke hath wasted it. In this case thy duty is to live on God by faith, for a sanctified fruit of his hand upon thee, and for making up this lack by his abundance: When thou canst see no way out of thy perplexing trouble, let thine eye be unto God for help, 2 Chron. 20. 12. 2 Chron. 25. 8. Go not out of God's way for relief: He that wounds must heal; he only that casteth down can raise up, Deut. 32. 30. Neither faint thou in the day of adversity, or way of thy duty, Prov. 24. 10. Prov. 16. 3. but commit thy way to the Lord, and he will bring it to pass, Psal. 37. 5. Mat. 6. v. 25. 1 Cor. 7. 32. Phil. 4. 6. Take heed of carking cares, and fretful vexing's; these cannot lessen thy trouble, but will greaten thy sins; a provident care is thy duty, but a distrustful vexing care, both thy sin and affliction.

Rule 8.

Eighthly, In all your labors pray for a blessing: If you would live well, you must beg as well as work; add duty to thy diligence, prayer to thy provident care, calling on God, to thy calling in the world: As every creature, so every condition and work is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1 Tim. 4. 15. In every undertaking seek to God for counsel. Prov. 3. 6. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Christians should not set upon the smallest matters without enquiring the will of God; not to go to this or that place, to buy or sell to do this or that work without seeking to God for direction, Jam. 4. 13, 14, 15. Our journeys (saith one) must not be undertaken without asking God's leave, Dr. Mant. on Jam. This would evidence a life of dependence on God, and bring all thy affairs under divine care and blessing; Abraham 's servant begins his journey with prayer, Gen. 24. 12. 27. and concluded it with praise, Gen. 28. 20. And so Jacob; Israel 's folly in concluding with the Gibeonites contrary to the

command of God, was laid on their not asking counsel of God. Josh. 9. 14. The men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. O the snares and disadvantages men are exposed to in their earthly concerns, for not taking counsel from God, and engaging his hand and blessing with them: Prayer will further your work, sweeten your pains and difficulties in it, and secure the comfort and good of it: When you want mercy, seek God for it; when you receive mercy, see God in it, and return praise to God for it.

Rule 9.

Ninthly, Though you live in the World, yet be dead to the World: Heaven born souls, though in the World, yet are not of the World, but chosen out of it, Joh. 15. 19. and crucified to it. Gal. 6. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the World is crucified to me, and I unto the World. This crucifiedness to the World (saith Pareus) signifies the contempt and despising of this World; he intimates hereby, that the World with all its scorn, pride, pomp and glory are despised by him, as a nothing, empty, dead thing. A soul crucified to the World sees nothing lovely and desirable in this World but God, his Word and Works: there's nothing in earthly things that can be taking with spiritual hearts, if God be not enjoyed in them: all the glory of the World is no more to them than a dead carcass, if the love of God breath not through it on their hearts; nay the very Garden of the Lord is a Wilderness to them, if the Rose of Sharon be not in it. A mortified Saint wonders that a rational immortal Soul can see such worth in riches, pleasures, honors, and poor perishing things of this life, which to him are nothing; he can easily part with all at the Lord's bidding. And he feels no such evil neither in the bad things of this World, as to make men startle at them; wants, losses, reproaches, torments for Christ, lose their frightfulness to them whose hearts love to the Lord Jesus hath

reconciled unto the bitterest affliction that can befall them for his sake. If Christ stand, and do not perish, (saith Luther) what matter is it if Wife and Children perish? If liberty, estate, life and all go, so he stay: Such should thy heart be in pursuit of these things, as one that is dead to the World, and sits loose from all its glory, and above all its threatening's; content to have, or not to have; to use, or want; to enjoy, or be denied, or deprived of it, as God pleaseth.

Rule 10.

Lastly, Do all your work within the view of death, judgment, and eternity: transact the employments of every day, as dying persons, who are leaving this World, and liable to a remove every moment: How would frequent and serious thoughts of a near approaching end wonderfully check men's greedy pursuits of this World, and help to keep their actions in a consistency with their accounts. King Philip would have it proclaimed before him every morning, Remember that thou art mortal: And when falling upon the Sand he afterward saw the print of his body, said, O how little a parcel of earth will hold us when we are dead, who ambitiously seek after the World while we are living. When Severus was old, he called for an Urn or Pitcher in which the ashes of a dead person were put, and looking a while on it, said, Wilt thou contain that man whom the whole World cannot contain? Alas, what will the whole World be to thee when thou comest to die? let it seem no more to thee now, who art dying every day: do everything as strangers and pilgrims here, Heb. 11. 9. 13. and as if you heard a voice every day saying, Awake, and come to judgment: Jerome thought whatever he did, he still heard that voice; Surgite mortui, & venite ad judicium; Arise ye dead, and come to judgment. When you are travelling to this Market, and the other Fair; think, Sure I am journeying to the grave, and I know not what dust I shall shortly be shoveled into: when you are about your work,

think, I am hastening to eternity, and shortly these hands must rot in the grave: When you promise yourselves great things, as the fruit of your labors, and hope for this gain and the other comfort, say, Death may come between me and my enjoyments, and crop off the hopes of all my labors. What can be great to him that accounts the World nothing? or long to him that counts his life but a span? Mr. Dod, When thou findest thy heart running out too greedily after this World, ready to lie, cheat, oppress, undermine others to greaten thy interest: think on this; For all these things God will bring thee to judgment, and render to thee according to all thy works.

Secondly, Then do you your earthly work in an heavenly manner, when you do it with an heavenly heart: As is the heart, so is the action in God's account: the Lord was much pleased that it was in David 's heart to build him an House, though he never did it, 1 Kin. 8. 18. and displeased with all that Israel did in his service, because their heart was not right with him, Psal. 78. 37. Israel did many good works, they sought him, they returned and inquired early after God, they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer, ver. 34, 35. but all this was nothing in God's esteem, because their heart was not upright in it; they had an earthly, carnal, selfish, backsliding heart in all they did. If thy heart be heavenly, though thy work be earthly, yet it puts an excellency on it; but if thy work be heavenly, and thy heart earthly, God doth reject and despise it: the heart is the root of every action, and if the root be good, the fruit will be good also, Mat. 12. 33. Rom. 11. 16. If the fountain be sweet, the streams will be sweet also; and if thy heart be heavenly, thy work is heavenly: A heavenly heart, like the Be, turns all it doth to heavenly uses: when the Lord Jesus had put his hand upon the Spouses heart, and left some myrrh upon her bowels, presently her hands dropped myrrh, and her fingers sweet smelling myrrh, Cant. 5.

4, 5. A heavenly heart perfumes thy earthly work, and makes it wonderfully taking with the heart of Christ.

Quest. How might I know when my heart is heavenly in my earthly work?

Sol. First, A heavenly heart is a heart enlightened to see heavenly things; a heart beam'd over with heavenly light, to discern things invisible: An earthly heart is a dark heart, it sees nothing in God, his Word and Works, so as to draw up his heart to Heaven: an earthly heart sees nothing but earth in heavenly things; and an heavenly heart sees Heaven in earthly things. The Patriarchs saw the heavenly City in their earthly Country, Heb. 11. 13, 14, 16. They saw the promises (that is, the things promised) afar off, and confessed that they were strangers on earth, they sought a Country, desired a better Country, that is an heavenly; and all that as the product of their heavenly sight, they saw heavenly things in earthly: Abraham had an heavenly eye to see Christ's day, Joh. 8. 5, 6. and Moses a heavenly eye to see him who is invisible, Heb. 11. 27. A heavenly heart doth not only see heavenly things, but sees an infinite worth and excellency in them: it sees them to be the best things; it sees a greater glory and desirableness in things above, in one glance of his eye, in one day within his Courts, in one hours communion with him, than in all the World besides: Mary saw more advantage in sitting at Christ's feet, than in the many things Martha 's heart was taken up about, Luke 10. 41, 42. Cursed be that man (saith the noble Marquess Galeacius) that accounts not one hours communion with Christ above all the World.

Secondly, A heavenly heart is a heart that savors heavenly things, Rom. 8. 5. Nothing goes down so sweet with a heavenly heart as heavenly things, everything rejoices in its like: An earthly heart delights in earthly things; the Merchant in his Trade, the

Husbandman in his Field, Houses, Husbandry, and fruits of the earth; the voluptuous man in his pleasures; as he that sold his City for a draught of water; crying out when he had done, O that for so short a pleasure, of a King I should be made a Slave! The proud man in his greatness, Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the Kingdom? Dan. 4. 30. So doth the heavenly heart relish greatest sweetness in heavenly things: How sweet are thy words to my taste? yea sweeter than honey to my mouth, Psal. 119. 103. His fruit was sweet to my taste; his mouth is most sweet, Cant. 2. 3. and 5. 16. My meditation of him shall be sweet, Psal. 104. 34. We took sweet counsel together, Psal. 55. 14. We talked of the mysteries of godliness (saith Ainsworth) of the exercises of Religion; (saith another) which I suppose the Prophet meaneth by going into the House of God, as companions consulting (as it were) how they might prepare themselves to his service.

Thirdly, A heavenly heart is a heart that longs and desires after heavenly things: Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none that I can desire on Earth in comparison of thee, Psal. 73. 25. When shall I come and appear before God? My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see thy power and glory, as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary, Psal. 43. 2. Psal. 63. 1, 2. My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God, Psal. 84. 2. Desires are the natural motions of the heart, and the best character, and truest lineaments (saith one (y)) that can be drawn of the minds of men. Practices may be overruled by ends; but desires are always genuine and natural: Hence good men have had most confidence in approving themselves to God, by their affections, and the inward longings of their souls after him, as being the purest and most unfeigned issues of love, and such as have least proximity and danger from foreign and secular ends. It is an unquestionable

evidence of souls risen with Christ, and receiving the stamp of Heaven on the heart, to set their affections on things above: Heavenly desires are the natural breathings of a gracious heart, which can as well live without them, as a man without breathing; a cessation of spiritual desires, argues soul-swooning, or spiritual death.

Fourthly, A heavenly heart is known by its heavenly thoughts; it will be much thinking of heavenly things: As is the heart, so are the thoughts usually. For as he thinketh, so is he, Prov. 23. 7. The thoughts are the first-born of the heart, and strength of the soul, and as natural issues of the mind, as beams are of the Sun; if the heart be evil, the thoughts will be evil; if the heart be good, the thoughts will ordinarily be good, Matth. 15. 19. further than corruptions or temptations hinder, Jer. 4. v. 14. If your hearts be heavenly, so will your designed, habitual and well-pleasing thoughts be. They that are spiritual, will mind the things of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 5. Try your hearts by your ordinary, quiet and delightful thoughts: Are vain, earthly thoughts your trouble, and holy thoughts your delight?

Fifthly, A heavenly heart will be full of heavenly projects; such a heart will be driving designs for Heaven; his consultations, enquiries and studies, will be how to carry on and promote heavenly interests. Titus 3. 8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works: <H&G>, cum ration & concilio exerceri; the word is, might study, devise, and beat their brains how they might do good: That's the temper of earthly hearts also; they will be plotting and contriving ways and means how to advance earthly interests. Phil. 3. 19. Who mind earthly things, <H&G> , Zanchi, whose thoughts are in the earth (as the Syriac renders it,) that is, they are wholly taken up about earthly things: So 'tis with a

heavenly heart, it is taken up about the things of Heaven; it lays holy plots, how to keep down the world and corruption in the soul, and how to make the most of all it hath and doth for Heaven, to secure his interest, and enlarge his possession above: So far as the heart is heavenly, so far is it designing for Heaven.

Sixthly, A heavenly heart is acted and influenced by heavenly motives and arguments; there is nothing sways more with a heavenly spirit than reasons drawn from heavenly things, heavenly pleasures, heavenly honors, heavenly treasures will do more with a heavenly heart than any arguments drawn from things of this life. The nature of the heart is much known by the motives that are most potent with it: A carnal heart is biased by carnal things: Who will show us any good? Psal. 4. 6. But a spiritual heart with spiritual things: Lord lift up thou the light of thy countenance upon us: Lot will choose the plains of Sodom; but Abraham will prefer walks with God, though in a Wilderness. David values his lot, by what it hath of God in it, and counts that most pleasant and rich which helps him to most of God, Psal. 16. 5, 6. Tell a heavenly heart how he may be rich, great and comfortable in the World, and it signifies nothing: but tell him how he may pitch his Tent nearest to the Ark and enjoy most of God, how he may keep peace and holiness within, and order his conversation aright to please God, and you will sooner win such a heart, than by all the choicest proposals of this life. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Psal. 119. 9. Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Psal. 15. 1. Who will rise up for me against evil doers? Psal. 94. 16. How might I do to get a better heart? to be more rich towards God? Oh that one would give me drink of the waters of the Well of Bethlehem! 2 Sam. 23. 15. How might I do for some fore-tastes of the rivers of pleasure at the right-hand of God? and to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God, Rev. 2. 7. These are the most taking things with a heavenly soul; his choice, his delights and transcendent

interests lie on the other side of this World, even within the borders of Immanuel 's Land.

Seventhly, A heavenly heart is a heart that lives upon heavenly things, and is maintained by provisions fetched from Heaven, nourished up in the words of Faith, 1 Tim. 4. 6. desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 3. My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me, Joh. 4. 34. Earthly hearts are maintained by earthly comforts; like the Crows, they live on carrion; but heavenly hearts live upon heavenly things, they feed on the finest Wheat; and, like the Indian Bird, Ule malim, that lives upon the dew, and of the juice of Flowers and Roses; heavenly souls prosper best on heavenly pulse and water: Give me understanding and I shall live, Psal. 119. 144.

Eighthly, A heavenly heart walks by heavenly Rules; 'tis led by the Spirit of God, Rom. 8. 14. All the threatening's of men cannot upon choice bow him from his path-way of duty, Dan. 6. 10. nor the reason or allurements of men draw him with full consent into the way of sin, ch. 3. 18. Whatever comes of it he is at a point to keep the commands of God, Psal. 119. 106. It chooses to be governed by heavenly Laws. And we will walk in his paths, Isa. 2. 3. As for me and my house we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 15. Such a soul is easily persuaded by the evidence of truth; and will hear what the Spirit says: A little child shall lead him, Isa. 61. 6.

Thirdly, Then are earthly things done in an heavenly manner, when done to heavenly ends and purposes; to obey, please and honor God; when a person can approve his heart to an all-seeing eye, that the great and chief end for which he takes up this or that calling, sets on any employment, is in subordinacy to these great ends, not to please men, to gratify his own lusts, to grow great in the world, to enjoy

pleasure, ease, reputation, and interest here, but out of obedience to the Maker, Redeemer and Governor of this world, that God in all things might have his will and glory, 1 Pet. 4. 11. This is the ultimate end of all God's works, and should be of man's also. All employments run out of their proper channel, if they tend not to this Ocean of divine glory: As God is the Alpha, so he must be the Omega of every action; the first cause must be the last end. God hath made all things for himself, Prov. 16. 4. To him belongs the issues (as from death, so) of life, Psal. 68. 20. Nothing is further good, than it answers God's end; earthly ends spoil heavenly work, and heavenly ends puts an excellency on earthly work. Christians, be careful of your ends in all you do: 'It is not enough to do things that are right, if you are not upright in them: That's unsanctified work which hath not holy aims, and God for its last end. To follow your callings, that you might live honestly in the sight of men; that you might provide for your own, and have a competency in the world to carry you comfortably through it, is lawful, as subordinate secondary ends, but not as your chief and last end, to which all your actions must be directed; that must be singly and supremely the pleasing and honoring of God as your highest end.

Fifthly, Another part of this Heavenly Trade is driven on & maintained in heavenly thoughts: Thoughts are the embryo and conception of actions, which also come under the cognizance and government of Religion. 'It is a common, but carnal principle, and false assertion, that thoughts are free: They are free indeed from the inspection of men, but not from the eye and judgment of God, who searcheth the hearts, and weigheth the spirits, Jer. 17. 10. and will bring every secret thing into judgment, Eccles. 12. 14. Solomon tells us, The thoughts of foolishness is sin, Prov. 16. 2. Prov. 24. 9. And Peter tells us, that the thoughts of the heart need forgiveness, Acts 8. 22. not only sinful actions, but sinful thoughts are forbidden, Deut.

15. 9. and the very thoughts as well as words and lives of Christians, are to be brought under the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. The Idea and platform of every considerate action, is first drawn in the mind and inward thoughts: No work is rightly done that wants previous thoughts and consideration. Prov. 16. 9. A man's heart deviseth his way; he weighs, considers and deliberates about the way he is to go in, and the course of life he is to drive; he counts the time, cost, and everything that must go to his work. Prov. 31. 16. She considereth a field and buyeth it. So 'tis in this Heavenly Trade; there must be devising of the way, serious thoughts and considerations, how to manage it to best advantage; how to get in, and put off wisdom's goods; how to strengthen grace, to dispatch duty, to obtain the favor of God, and dwell in his presence; how to improve mercy, and how to ensure glory. The Heavenly Trade can never be carried on without heavenly thoughts. Inward working thoughts about God and godliness, are of wonderful use to further a holy life: They warm and cheer the heart under troubles, Psal. 94. 19. engage and fix it on God, and render his presence desirable: Heavenly thoughts fire the heart, and inflame it to holy actions, Psal. 139. 17. Psal. 39. 3. and are a choice preservative against sin, Psal. 4. 4. 'It is greatly useful to increase knowledge, and attain to deep wisdom and understanding. Dan. 14. 4. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase: That is, their thoughts shall be working on truth, busily employed to find out the meaning of the word, looking on one side, and on the other side (saith Mr. Fenner) and by this means shall come to a great thriving in knowledge. Men will never be religious to purpose, or be their crafts-masters in this Heavenly Trade, till they be more spiritual and heavenly in their thoughts. Christians, make conscience of your thoughts; they must come to judgment; wash your hearts from whence they come, Jer. 4. 14. and watch your thoughts whither they go; check your thoughts when they begin to wander; quicken your thoughts when flat; fix your thoughts when floating; spiritualize

them when carnal; exercise them when slothful; set them on their proper and profitable objects, and hold them to their work in divine and heavenly meditation every day, which is part of your Heavenly Trade, and hath a mighty tendency to soul-enriching, Psal. 4. 4. Psal. 63. 4. Psal. 104. 34. Gen. 24. 63. Psal. 1. 2. Psal. 77. 12. Psal. 139. 8.

Meditation is a calling in the thoughts from its straggling's and undue employments, fixing them on, and holding them to their peculiar work: 'It is the travel of the mind in the search of some spiritual good, from such things as duty and providence lay before it; it weighs things and actions in the balance of truth; it turns things up-side down, and looks on both sides, and through them, that it may take a right estimate of them: 'It is the running to and fro of the cogitations to increase knowledge, Dan. 12. 4. Meditation sifts things and truths, to divide the flower from the bran, and truth from errors; it helps to a clearer and more sensible view of truth and excellency; with the Chemist, it extracts the spirits and quintessence of things; it warms the heart, and fires the affections, raises desires, engages the will, enlightens and enlivens the conscience, and helps to feed the soul on divine truths, to feast it with divine love; it draws nourishment from ordinances, sweetness from promises, instructions from the creature, and good from providences. Without Meditation a person cannot receive the good that's offered to him, or do the good that is required of him. The Word preached doth not profit hearers, for want of Meditation to digest it; threatening's, promises, counsels, encouragements, don't affect the soul, or effect their errand and message, for want of a serious and settled consideration of them. O what profit might Christians get to their souls, were more time spent every day in right Meditation! Believer, charge thy heart with this duty of daily Meditation, which is as needful as Prayer, Reading, and any acts of holiness, and allow some time constantly each day for this holy exercise of thy serious

thoughts and contemplations. To meditate on God, his Word and Works; on the Soul, its being, immortality, duties, evils, and interests; on the World, its vanity and emptiness; on Sin, its nature and issues; on Holiness, its excellency and blessed advantages; on Death, Judgment and Eternity, with whatever might yield instruction and profit: Urge thy conscience with the command of God, the practice of the Saints, the great necessity, and many advantages of this duty; consider the great and usual averseness of thy heart to it, which doth manifestly bespeak its spirituality and excellency; for the more nature is indisposed to a duty, the more of God is usually in such a duty: think also of thy manifold losses and disadvantages thou hast sustained by thy neglect of it, and pray hard for the spirit to help thy soul in the due performance of it; which hints I can only leave with thee without further enlargement, lest it should swell this Volume beyond its designed bounds.

Sixthly, If you would drive on this heavenly Trade, you must be keeping up heavenly converses every day, and upon every occasion: much of earthly Trades is carried on by earthly discourses, this way they drive bargains, and barter away goods: a great many words oftentimes go to chaffering, buying and selling: and so is it in this heavenly Trade; Religion is much advanced by a spiritual improvement of men's talk and converses; this way did the searers of God keep alive Religion in evil times, when other helps were wanting, Mal. 3. 16. Prov. 10. 21. By this souls come to be fed and nourished in their holy Faith, 1 Tim. 4. 6. A great deal of good or hurt comes by men's discourses. O the mischief Christians do to each other by their vain, carnal and earthly communications when they come together! Evil communications corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. 15. 33. Whose word doth eat as doth a canker, 2 Tim. 2. 17. This way does Satan put off much of his wares, even by Wisdom's Merchants, making them to weaken, cool, deaden, and corrupt one another's spirits, stir up, feed

and strengthen each other's corruptions, become temptations and provocations to one another to sin, by their sinful corruptions: 'It is sad to think how the work of God ceases, and the work of Satan prospers this way: Persons come warm sometimes from a Sermon, and are soon cooled by impertinent and vain discourses; come from secret duty, when their hearts are quickened, and raised, and presently deadened again by spirit-quenching discourses. O how many labors of the Saints and Servants of Christ, and how many strivings of the Spirit are overturned, and come to nothing by vain and rotten discourses! no wonder the Apostle tells us, The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell, Jam. 3. 6. Through the organ of an unsanctified tongue doth Satan shoot his fire-balls of temptation into the hearts of hearers: are you afraid of that fire which burns down your houses? beware of that fire that burns down souls to hell. 'It is no small part of a Christian's wisdom to speak a word in season, and to order (as his conversation so) his converses to edification: When the Apostle presses the Ephesians to wisdom, Eph. 5. 17. the next thing he advises to is holy conference, ver. 19. by men's language are they known of what Country they are; so are persons discovered, whether Citizens of Heaven, or the World, by their ordinary and desired language. 'It is said of Augustine, he went not so willingly to a feast, as to a conference to reduce any that erred. He that is of the Earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from Heaven is above all; and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, Joh. 3. 31. He will be speaking of heavenly things, which he learnt of God: A good man out of the abundance of his heart bringeth out good things; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: The tongue is but the index and bucket of the heart, that tells men what things are within, and draws out of those deeps to others; men use to find out what metals are hid in the earth by the color of the sand which the waters wash away from the

mountains: if the streams be low, the spring is weak; an empty heart yields empty discourses; By your words you shall be justified, or condemned: The tongue of the just is as choice silver, Prov. 10. 20. in that it is enriching to those that are near it. The tongue of the wise is health, Prov. 12. 18. It sendeth out sound and wholesome words to the strengthening of hearers: 'tis said of the Spouse, that her lips did drop as the honey-comb, honey and milk are under her tongue, Cant. 4. 11. And the roof of her mouth like the best Wine that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak, Cant. 7. 9. This doubtless is one reason of the little thriving's of Christians in communion this day, 'tis from their barren and carnal communications; this starves Religion both in thy own soul, and in those thou conversest with; 'tis not maintained by gracious converses, and soul-edifying discourses. Christians, lay this to heart; how can you bear the charge of all that decay in godliness this day upon your non-improvement of this part of your heavenly Trade?

Lastly, Then do you carry on the heavenly Trade, when you improve everything to heavenly advantages, getting good from everything you meet with, do, or enjoy. 'It is so in earthly Trades, all men seek their gain from their quarters, Isa. 56. 11. endeavor to turn everything to some profit: And so should heavenly Traders be getting some spiritual good from everything that comes under their hand, and in their way, if ever they intend to thrive: this comports with the great design of God in all his administrations to his people, which is to do them good. Who fed thee in the Wilderness with Manna, which thy Fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at the latter end, Deut. 8. 16. To this end are his providences directed: The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him, Ezra 8. 22. And this leads to the accomplishment of the promises towards Believers: I will set mine eyes upon them for good, Jer. 24. 6. I will not turn away from them

to do them good, Jer. 32. 40. All their occurrences are brought under a promise of working for good. All things, the best and worst things of providence, shall work for good to them that love God, Rom. 8. 28. And why is this? but that gracious souls should be expecting good from everything, every affliction, as well as mercy, that doth befall them; and be comporting in all their capacities with this design of God, by an improvement of all, to this great end of soul advantage: What more good, O Lord? was the usual saying of a godly man, when the Lord brought any new affliction upon him, with which he was much exercised, and from which he ever got some spiritual advantage.

For this end are gracious souls made capable to use their mercies, to bear and improve their afflictions to some spiritual good; they have a principle of grace planted in their hearts, and of divine light into their minds; and have received rules and instructions of purpose, that they might be able to reach this end: They are made men of wisdom for this end, that they might hear God in affliction, Mic. 6. 9. and see God in mercies; and are skilled in divine Chemistry, that they might extract the spirit of providences, and good of every condition, duty and mercy. 'Twas said of pious Mr. Dod, that he used to turn Earth into Heaven by a wise and spiritual improvement of all earthly affairs. A blessed metamorphosis! and an argument of excellent skill and high attainment in this heavenly Trade, to turn Copper and Brass into Gold, and to convert everything, the worst things to some good. This (Christians) is your privilege, duty and interest, so to manage every affair, condition, occurrence and experience, as to help on your soul-enriching's.

There are nine things especially which Christians should be careful to manage to some soul-advantage, to be getting good from them, to the furtherance of their instruction, meditation, mortification to sin, the

world, and self; to the strengthening of their graces, raising their affections, quickening to duty, preparation for death, and every trial in the way to it; and for furthering their meetness for glory.

First, Privileges are one thing which Believers should be getting good from, to these great and noble ends of spiritual good. Every heavenly Trader hath some privileges which may afford soul-profit.

There are Natural Privileges.

There are Providential Privileges.

There are Spiritual Privileges.

All which may contribute some profit to the improvers of them; Parts, Youth, Health, Strength, are part of Nature's treasure, and to be husbanded to the use and service of the soul: These are some of those talents the great Householder gives to his Family, (though in different measures) for improvement, and singular mercies they are, if well used to the Donor's ends and directions. A humble use of Parts to the good of others, and setting of wit, memory, reason, with the choicest intellectuals, and richest endowments of the rational mind, on the service of the soul, 3 Epist. Joh. 2. making them hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the sanctuary of the Lord: A shaving and paring off of the excrements and froth of wit, that they may become Israelites, and devoted to the God of Israel, and spiritual uses, Deut. 21. 12. keeping them under the government of the spirit, is a good improvement of them in this heavenly Trade.

You that have Parts and habiliments of Mind, do not prostitute them to the pleasure of the flesh, and the service of sin, but resign them to the use of the spirit; towards your enriching's with true wisdom, and increases in the knowledge of God, which brings salvation. When

sprightly Parts and sparkling Wit are inlaid with grace, then are they as Apples of Gold in pictures of Silver, Prov. 25. 11. O how amiable are these endowments of nature, when seasoned with grace, when perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincense, and besprinkled with the Powders of the Merchant, Cant. 3. 6.

Youthful time is another privilege for soul advantage; 'tis the morning of the soul's day, the best and most useful part of time, when appropriated to God and divine uses: what advantage have such for warmth of affection, and dispatches of duty? whereas decrepit age, like an emerited Soldier, hath worn out its serviceable capacities; and as the setting-Sun, is attended with evening cold, and shadows, and the close of working useful time. O how unserviceable is old age for transacting the work of the new-birth, when Conscience is sunk down into the deeps of guilt! when the affections are clogged with the dirty things of this world, and pre-engaged to other Lovers; and when the marrow of natures strength has been eaten out by the wasting service of sin. So great and amazing a work is the salvation of a sinner, that it deserves a subject of the choicest capacities to be completed in, and transacted by: And then is youth profitably spent, when devoted to God, and taken up in the great matters of salvation. You that are yet in your youth and morning-time, let God have the spring of your time, the first-born of your strength, and first ripe fruits of your capacities; let not youthful pleasures have the flower of your time and abilities, leaving the bran for God and your souls.

You that have strength of body, and a healthful temper, put it to the best use for your heavenly interest. Are you strong to labor? work out your salvation; labor for the bread that endureth; you that have legs, use them while you have them, to carry you up and down after God. If you must eat bread in the sweat of your brows, let it be the bread of your Father's house. If you must rise up early, sit up late, break your

rest, exhaust your strength, let it not be all for the world, let Christ have some of your strength, before all be gone; yea, if you have any, let Christ have all.

As there are natural privileges, so are there providential privileges also, which are the capacities that providence dispenseth to some, of doing and receiving good beyond others, as liberty, peace, plenty, with other outward mercies, all which are to be husbanded to the best advantage of your souls.

Have you Peace with men? improve it towards the obtaining and securing your Peace with God: Your firmest leagues with men will hold but a little while, if your covenant with God be broken; what can favor with men profit you, if you have frowns from God? If men sheath up their swords, and God's be drawn, thy case is dangerous, and full of trouble. Make this use also of thy present Peace, to prepare for future trouble, and to be the better armed when trials come; spend not all thy store upon thy present Peace and Comfort, but save some fragments for times of need. God gives thee a breathing-time, that thou mayest hold out the better in thy race; and spares thee a little rest, that thou mayest be the fitter for approaching trouble.

Have you Liberty? take heed of yokes of bondage, Gal. 5. 1. and soul-straitnings. If God set you at large, do not imprison yourselves to the world and carnal lusts: Is thy body out of prison? labor to get out thy soul also, Psal. 142. 7. Are thy feet enlarged? get thy heart enlarged also, and run the ways of his commandments, Psal. 119. 132. Make the most of your Liberty in doing service to God, in attending on his appointments, and in taking all opportunities of doing salvation-work, and enjoying salvation helps: Be like your Lord, going up and down doing good, while you have opportunity, Joh. 12. v. 35. If you

have spare time, or can redeem it by double diligence from your earthly business, lay it out for God and his people in religious duties, Christian visits, holy conferences: The time may come you may wish for such a privilege, and long to see one of these days of the Son of man.

Have you yet a liberal portion of the good things of this life? is your garner full, your table spread, your cup overflowing? lay in the sense of these mercies now, as winter-provision to warm your hearts then, when you may not have them to warm and refresh your bodies, and lay them out to refresh those that want them, that they may bless God for you, glorify God in you, and procure mercy for you in the day of need: Make not thyself a slave to thy abundance, but make thy plenteous comforts serviceable unto thee.

There are Spiritual Privileges too, the lot of some, and calls for great improvements. There are Personal Privileges, the State and Spirit of Adoption, justification of persons, purchased right to pardon and peace with God, freedom from condemnation, assurance of preservation in grace unto glory, with many gifts of grace and spiritual favors which thousands enjoy not. And there are Public Privileges of access to God, communion of Saints, a place within the walls of God's House, with variety of soul-provisions, an interest in the promises of God, the prayers and graces of his people, things of infinite worth, and purchased at no lower rate than the blood of Christ: You that are interested in those, come under great obligations to behold them with wonder, to hold them with trembling, and to use them with diligence and faithfulness. You that are planted in the Courts of the Lord, Psal. 92. 13, 14. be fat and flourishing; content not yourselves with bare privileges, with dogs to feed on dry bones, but get the marrow, juice, and fattening virtue of all your advantages.

Do not with Lazarus, lie at the door of your rich Lord, the Dogs licking your sores, when you may go in and be healed.

Secondly, Ordinances are another thing which Believers should be getting spiritual good from: These are the golden pipes through which the Lord pours in the Oil of grace into his golden Candlesticks, and Gospel-Churches, Zach. 4. 12. Showers of Manna to feed his people in the wilderness, and on this side their own Country, Deut. 8. 16. These are the Churches breasts to fill and nourish her children unto life eternal, Isa. 66. 11. Gen. 2. 6. 10. Ordinances are the Mist, the River of Eden, by which God waters his Garden; Scriptures are the Mines, Ordinances are the opening of them, to such as dig for Wisdom. A considerable part of this Heavenly Trade is driven about these commodities; ply them well, that you may get large incomes of spiritual blessings through them: Take heed of sleeping at these breasts, or playing with them, lest the Lord put them up, or put you off; lie at the pool side, wait at the wells of salvation, and not only come, but draw out waters of life thence for your needy souls: For which four things are needful.

Preparation.

Attention.

Retention.

Obedience.

First, Prepare before you hear, get the room emptied, swept and garnished: For those provisions of Christ you are called to, bring your pitchers empty and clean, that God may fill them: Come not to clean food with a soul stomach, but get your hearts purged by sound repentance, and washed from an evil conscience, and renewed by the

Spirit; for the new wine of the Gospel, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2, 3. They must be new born babes, that receive the sincere milk of the Word, so as to grow thereby, Mat. 9. 17. If a dead Christ must be laid in a new tomb; Mat. 27. 60. surely a living Jesus will not come into an old heart, and rotten sepulcher. Spend some time before you go to hear, in searching your hearts, and reviewing your ways, in getting a deep sense of their vileness, and the exceeding sinfulness of your sins, that the fallow field of your hearts may be plowed up, and you sow not among thorns: Take heed you bring not a hard heart to hearing. When Thrasamund the Arian read Fulgentius's defense of the truth, he praised his wisdom, wondered at his eloquence, commended his humility; yet had his heart so hardened, that he could not submit to the truth. To help you herein, set prayer on work to beg down the Spirit's of assistance; bring your hearts to Christ by prayer, that he would make them clean: If he say, I will, be thou clean, thy Leprosy shall be cleansed. Prayer also helps you to suitable provision, and a blessing on it: Hearers prayers help Ministers to preach, and themselves to hear, 2 Thes. 3. 1. Souls never thrive better than when Ministers and Hearers be much in prayer for the Word of the Spirit, and Spirit with the Word. To pray well, is to study well Prayer (says one) is a messenger to fetch that holy seed out of the garner above: Prayer is the former and latter rain to make it grow beneath; pray continually if thou wouldest grow continually. After Christ had fed the multitude, he went up into a Mountain apart to pray. Matth. 14. v. 23. Secret prayer (saith Mr. Trap) fets the soul, as secret morsels feed the body; therefore it is said to be the banquet of grace, where the soul may solace herself with God, as Esther did with Ahasuerus at the banquet of wine, and have whatsoever heart can wish, or need require.

Secondly, Take heed how you hear, hear as for your lives, with holy attention, with fear and trembling. Ministers (saith Mr. Latimer)

should preach as if Hell were at their backs, and hearers should hear as if life or death were in every word. Hear with holy affection; many were given up to believe a lie, because they loved not the truth, nor received the word in the love thereof, 2 Thes. 2. 10. Hear believingly; the Word preached did not profit, being not mixed with faith in them that heard it, Heb. 4. 2. 'It is by faith the Gospel becomes the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1. 17. The Arm of God was not revealed on Israel, because his report was not believed by them, Isa. 53. 1. The Spirit is given out through the hearing of faith: Never expect to profit by hearing, till you join faith with hearing.

Thirdly, Keep the Word you do hear; take heed of letting slip the things you have received, Heb. 2. 1. Hold fast the truth that no man take your Crown, Rev. 3. 11. Be not forgetful hearers, but doers of the Word, Jam. 1. 25. Forgetful hearers will never be doers: Israel 's disobedience was the fruit of their forgetfulness, Psal. 78. 10, 11. The reason of the Disciples trouble at the sepulcher of Christ, was said to be their forgetfulness; they had forgotten what he had said to them when he was in Galilee, Luke 24. 6. Bad memories have many times barren lives: Be much in after-prayer for the Comforter's help to keep the Word for you, and bring it to your remembrance: Prayer opens the heart to take in the Word; and prayer shuts the heart to keep in the Word: keep up meditation of the Word, Psal. 111. 91. This chews the cud, and gets out the sweetness and nutritive virtue of it unto the heart and life: This way the godly come to be as trees planted by the waters side, that bring forth much fruit in their season, Psal. 1. 3.

Fourthly, Obedience of the Word helps to profiting. The worth of Divine Truths is never fully known until they are lived upon; nor its virtue felt till we cleave to it in our conversation. Prov. 4. 6. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve (problem) love her, and she shall keep thee. Vers. 12. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened, and

when thou runnest thou shalt not stumble. O the sweetness, the pleasure, the strength, the blessedness that they lose who only look on truth, but do not live it! Strangers to a holy life meddle not with the joy that is wrapped up in the Word and Ways of God, Prov. 3. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. The Word of God yields out but half its sweetness, until it becomes the way and walks of men, Psal. 10. 11. In keeping them there is great reward. My witness is in Heaven, saith Mr. William Cooper, upon his death-bed, That the love of Jesus, and his people's souls, made preaching my pleasure; and I had no such joy as in doing God's work. They are blessed that do his Commandment; not only in that they have right to the tree of life, but in that they eat the pleasant fruits of it, and feed upon that hidden Manna unto which bare hearers are strangers.

Thirdly, Get all the good you can from Providences; from favorable Providences, and from frowning Providences: These are the North and the South winds, which the Beloved causes to blow upon his garden, Cant. 4. 16. that the spices might flow forth. Providences, whether prosperous or afflictive, are to saved souls but the fulfilling of Divine Purposes, and the accomplishment of precious promise, which are designed for the good of Believers. Observe the Providences of God if you would get good from thence. Observable things (saith worthy Mr. Blair) do follow them that are given to observation. Doth God bring thee under smiling Providences? get some good from them: In these the Lord writes legible characters of his Covenant-love to his people. O read the tenderness, love, bounty and faithfulness of God in them, and be affected! Get thy heart to write back letters of love and thankfulness to God again; entertain giving Providences with thanksgiving hearts, and the sacrifice of praise, 2 Chron. 29. 31. Let the Lord communicate with you concerning receiving as well as giving, Phil. 4. 15. If left-hand mercies

flow in upon you, take heed lest those floods break their bounds, and carry away the banks of your affections and circumspection. Christians, 'tis a safe rule to fear your mercies as well as afflictions: There is usually less fear, and therefore more danger of professing friends, than professed enemies. 'Twas the prayer of Queen Elizabeth, To be delivered from her friends, as for her enemies she would take care of them. Further, if you have now a spring-tide of outward mercies, prepare for low-waters: The comforts of this world are not standing pools, but running streams, and rolling Seas, that ebb and flow; expect not too much from them; entertain your coming mercies as strangers, who have their time to go as well as come: The Lord gives, and the Lord takes, Job 1. 21.

Get good also from taking as well as giving Providences; be blessing God for them: There is more self-denial and pure love to God expressed in such acknowledgments, than in praises for bestowing mercy, Job 1. 2. Besides, divine grace runs as well through the empty channels, as broad streams of outward comforts: 'It is the same hand of the Father that unclothes, which dresses his children; the Fork as well as the Rake belongs to the Covenant of Grace and Peace; neither is love or hatred known by these things, Eccles. 9. 1. Some have never found more than when they have lost all: The Lord oftentimes makes men's losses their gains, and their gain of earthly things their losses: Saul lost his Asses, and found a Kingdom: Shimei found his servants, and lost his life: Place not then your happiness, no nor your comforts in these things: How many prick their fingers to get a few fading Roses, which as soon wither as they are plucked: Think well of God under scattering Providences, and believe he loves you as much when he removes your mercies, as when he gives them: Look to God in Providences; see whence those winds come that blow down your houses, and scatter your comforts; inquire wherefore God contends with you, Job 10. 2. Doth not that worm which devours your gourd,

breed in your security, pride, unthankfulness, and abuse of them, while you had them? search out the cause of God's displeasure; justify God in it, and bear his indignation humbly; come down at his feet, kiss his rod, and hear the voice of it: This is to get good from the worst of Providences.

Fourthly, Get good from the world, and things thereof; by seeing its wiles and deceitfulness, its vanity and emptiness, Mark 4. 19. The world is a fading thing, the fashion of it passeth away and it is gone. Trades-men care not for over-much of those goods that are soon out of fashion, Eccles. 1. 2. O care not for the world, the fashion whereof soon passeth away! 1 Cor. 7. 31. The world is a dirty thing, 'tis hard to touch it, and not be defiled. Christians, be not like Swine, who love to run into the dirt; and if you would keep yourselves unspotted, take heed of the world. The world is a heavy ponderous thing; by faith make it portable, and more easy to be born, 2 Cor. 4. 17. that it may not clog your feet, and stop your race towards glory: Faith will soon lessen your burden, and mend your pace; it will turn brass, yea clay into gold, and make it light in carriage. The world is a strange Country to the Citizens of Heaven, get good from it, by living as strangers in the world, by making you long the more for your own home, by converting it to the service of your souls, and interest in glory. The Scorpions in Caria, when they sting, kill home-bred people, not strangers. Apollon. Be a stranger to the world, and it will not hurt thee. The world is a subtle Strumpet, shun her embraces, lie not in her bosom, stop your ears against her charms, and shut your eyes from her allurements. The world is an enemy, beware of it; when it promises, believe it not; when it kisses you, take heed of the sword in its hand, 2 Sam. 20. 9, 10. when it cries peace, peace, then fear swift destruction; set thy feet on its fair neck to keep it down; get it nailed to the Cross of Christ, and pierced to death with the sword and spear of the Spirit. Get good from every state and condition God

puts you into, whether high or low, rich or poor: If you are above others in place, be above them in grace; if you enjoy more than others, labor to do more than others, Matth. 5. 47. The higher you are in the world, be so much the lower in your own eyes: The tallest Cedars bow most: Ships of the greatest burden draw most water, and go deepest: Exalted Angels rejoice to be ministering spirits: Yea the Son of God delighted in being the servant of men: Israel was a Prince, and prevailed with God, and yet counted himself beneath the least of all God's mercies, Gen. 32. 10. By how much the greater I am (saith Maximinus) so much the more I labor; and the more I labor, the greater I am. Paul the chiefest Apostle, and yet in his own eyes less than the least of all Saints, Ephes. 3. 8. Humble yourselves when God exalts you; and when you humble yourselves, God will exalt you.

Have you much of the world? take heed of puffing's up; the more you have, the more you owe; the more you have of Earth, the less you may have of Heaven: The poor in the world may be rich in faith; and the rich in the world may be oftentimes poor in faith: If God give you much here, be fearful lest he give you your All here. When one offered Luther much gold, he protested God should not put him off with these things. 'It is said of Gregory the Great, he could never read these words, Son, remember thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, without horror and astonishment, lest having such dignities he should be excluded his portion in Heaven. Have you little in the world? you have the less to reckon for; you have the lesser temptations, the fewer briars and thorns to go through. Are you mean in reputation? you are so much the safer, and the more beneath envy. 'It is more to you (said Mr. Rutherford to the Lord-Keeper) to win Heaven, being ships of great burden, and in the main Sea, than for little vessels that are not so much in the mercy and reverence of the storm. Are you low in the world? the more reason you have to lie low in your own spirits; a Prince's heart, and a

beggar's purse do not well agree. Are you in want? make more use of Christ's fullness: 'It is blessed misery that brings souls to Christ for mercy: Had it not been for affliction, Christ would have had but little company whiles in the world: The whole need not the Physician; the sick, the blind, the deaf, dumb, and possessed of Devils might bless God for their maladies, which were the occasions of bringing them to the Physician of their souls as well as bodies: 'Twas well for the poor Canaanite that her daughter was ill, for by that means she was put upon seeking crumbs, and while she asked for them, got the children's bread to boot, Matth. 15. 27, 28.

Fifthly, Get good from your Callings and Employments in the world, by preserving a sense of the snares and dangers that lie in the management of them. If men would take a strict survey of their Calling-carriages, and be true to their observations, they must needs confess there are many evils they are guilty of in the management of them every day; either idleness, or excess of labors, deceitfulness, earthliness, lying, cheating, selfishness, covetousness, carnal-mindedness, vain discourses, multitude of words, murmuring, unthankfulness, with many other sins of omission and commission, which they are exposed to in the pursuit of their Employments: Now when the experience and sense of this do keep them more humble and watchful against the occasions and appearances of such evils; when this helps to break and melt the heart before the Lord in prayer, fly to Christ in the sense of their weaknesses and inability to hold up under their temptations for all their help and grace to stand, Ephes. 5. 15, 16. And when they labor to keep a tender spirit in all their dealings, and a holy jealousy of their hearts in everything they do; exercising self-denial, and mortifiedness to the world, and things below, then they get profit from their Callings, Prov. 41. 3. Psal. 141. 3.

When they make their particular Callings to comport with, and subserve their general; when men's businesses in the world do not unfit them for, but are helpful in their religious duties, to keep their hearts in a meetness for spiritual service, even while they are in their earthly Employments, maintaining a walk with God in them, then they get good from their earthly Callings, Ephes. 6. 18. Titus 3. 1. Sometimes God blesseth your Callings, and makes your basket and store to increase; then to be enlarged in thankfulness, and preserve the memory of God's goodness, is not only your duty, but will sweeten the enjoyment of your mercies: With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands, Gen. 32. 10. To love him more, and serve him better, with more cheerfulness and gladness of heart; this is profiting by your Callings.

Sometimes God blasts your labors, and crosseth your hopes, makes a breach upon your Trade, follows you with losses one after another: In this case to look to the hand of God, to search out God's end in all, to get good by it, to be the more weaned from the world, and to cease from earthly stays, is a profitable use of your Callings.

Sixthly, Be getting some good from your company you reside amongst, meet or converse with: The Lord offers, and souls may get much good this way: O the mercies that God deals out through men's company! 'Twas well for Rahab that ever the spies came to her house, for by that means she obtained the salvation of herself and family. What a mercy 'twas to the woman of Samaria, when she came to the Well, that she found Christ there, who instead of filing her pitcher with perishing water, by this means got her heart filled with the waters of life, John 4. 15? What good did the Disciples get by company in the way to Emmaus, who by that means had their cold hearts warmed, their weak faith strengthened, Luke 25. 15. to the 32. Others have had company fatal to them: Had it not been for Potiphar

's house Joseph might have escaped temptation to uncleanness, Gen. 39. 7. And had it not been for Pharaoh 's house, he had not learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh, Gen. 42. 15. As long as Peter kept with the Disciples, he was faithful and courageous; but when once he fell into evil company, and got into the High Priest's Hall, he presently fell into that fearful sin of denying his Lord and Master, Luke 22. 55. When they sat down together, Peter sat down amongst them. Christians, beware what company you come into, for the peace and welfare (if not the life) of your souls, is much concerned in it: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, Ephes. 5. 11. Prov. 1. 15. chap. 4. 14, 15. Choose not wicked company for advantage sake, as Lot did with the loss of his goods, and hazard of his life, and a dreadful fall to boot, Gen. 19. 15. 36. Advantage was his end why he chose the Plains of Sodom, but loss was the issue of his choice: So Balaam for Balak's goods, run himself into those temptations that cost him his life, Gen. 31. 8. Go not into wicked company except duty call you; if you have God's warrant, you have his protection; and if by providence, or in the way of obedience, you meet with evil men, be good with them; [The Sun (saith Diogenes) visits kennels, and is not defiled.] either by taking an occasion to do them good, as the Israelitish Maid did to her Master Naaman, directing him to the Prophet Elisha for cure, 2 King. 5. 2, 3. Or by putting a stop to their sin, as David did. Psal. 75. 4, 5. I said unto the fools, deal not foolishly, and to the wicked, lift not up your horn. And as Judah sought to divert his Brethren from their wicked enterprise against Joseph, Gen. 37. 26, 27. Or by reprovng their sin, as Nehemiah did the sin of the Nobles, Neh. 5. 7. Or by instructing them if ignorant, as Paul did the Athenians, Acts 17. 22, 23. But if they be such like Sons of Belial, that the thorns cannot be taken by hand, let them be thrust away, and get yourselves fenced that they hurt you not: Take heed of the least compliance with them in their sin. 1 Tim. 5. 22. Be not partakers of other men's sins; your

own are heavy enough; silence in not reproof, with any signs of approving others sins, make them your own.

If you enjoy good company, take heed you miss not of good, or meet with evil from them: good men have their evils; great men are not always wise, Job. 32. 9. And 'tis easier to follow them down, than up the hill, and to imitate their vices, than their virtues; diseases are more communicable than health; men may impart their sickness, but cannot their soundness. O what advantage hath sin for its propagation, when it falls from the hands of men reputed gracious! The errors of good men are not only examples, but arguments unto others to sin also: If Peter play the hypocrite, other Jews dissemble likewise with him, Gal. 2. 13. and no less a man than Barnabas is carried away with their dissimulation. If they that are strong do but eat in the Idols Temple, the weak will eat the things offered to Idols, 2 Cor. 8. 10. O take care of the evils of good men, which like books published cum privilegio, vend the more. An Esau 's garment will make a Jacob 's voice to pass; and where good in any man is admired, evil is there seldom feared: take heed you follow no man further than he follows Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 11. Implicit imitation is as dangerous in practice, as implicit faith is in judgment: weigh their actions you intend to walk after; let no man's reputation be your warrant for imitation: Eminent persons are File-leaders, which way they turn, the File turns with them: The leaders of my people cause them to err, Isa. 9. 16. Men usually follow those they commend, and how much the greater they are with whom we converse, (saith Seneca) the more is the danger. Get good from good men, else their goodness is nothing to you: what truth you hear from them, receive; and as Mary did the Angel's words, so do you ponder their gracious sayings in your hearts, Luke 2. 19.

When you are in the company of those that are above you in wisdom and grace, be more swift to hear than to speak: The emptiest vessels make the greatest sound; and I have often observed in company, such as have most need to hear and learn, being self-conceitedly wise, will take up most of the discourse; and instead of drawing waters from deeper wells to fill their empty vessels, they will be pumping out that little they have: This surely doth not bespeak the modesty of such, and less becomes their profit. Origen, when a child, used to question with his Father about the sense of the Scriptures, and afterwards became a great Scholar. 'It is the observing attentive Christian is usually the most knowing, thriving Christian; who, with the Be, gathers in the Summer, and gets honey from every flower it meets with; and in the Winter spends it. When you meet with empty vessels, 'tis your charity to be putting in, but when you come to deep wells, 'tis your duty and interest to be drawing out, by asking questions, and proposing doubts, as the young man in the Gospel did, Mat. 19. 16. and Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, Joh. 3. 2. 4. ch. 4. 11, 15, 20. to Jesus Christ. The enquiring soul, if it be done in truth, and followed with obedience, will be the most flourishing soul.

Seventhly, Get good from your retirements as well as company; be never less alone, than when alone: Sometimes in pursuance of duty you must be alone; when thou prayest enter into thy Closet, Mat. 6. 6. Retire we must sometimes (saith Mr. Trap,) and into fit place to meet with God; solacing, and entertaining Soliloquies with him, as Isaac did in the field, Jacob upon the way, Ezekiel by the river Ulai, Peter upon the leads, Christ upon the mountains, Abraham in the grove in Beersheba, Gen. 21. 33. 'It is no matter (saith the same Author) how mean the place be, so it be secret: where there is a Jeremy, a Daniel, a Jonah; a Dungeon, a Lions-Den, a Whale's-belly, are goodly Oratories. If you will not hear me, (saith Peter Moice)

send me to my prison again among my toads and frogs, which wilt not interrupt me while I talk with my Lord God; Acts & Mon. 122. O how desirable is retirement with God to a soul that hath acquaintance with him! Antisthenes being asked what good he had got by Philosophy? answered, that I can converse with myself; much more is it thy interest to converse with God. 'It is said of that pious man Mr. William Sedgwick, that when he was young, while the rest of the Family were at their Games and Dancing's, he would be in a corner mourning. Mr. Greenham, when at any time he was sick, would suffer nobody to sit up with him, that so he might more freely converse with God. Psal. 119. 62. David would rise at midnight to enjoy communion with God. O the blessed seasons that gracious souls have had with Christ in their corners! how sweet have their stolen waters of life, and bread eaten in secret, been to their hungry souls! Prov. 9. 17. If the walls of this house could speak (said Mr. Hew Kennedy) they could tell how many sweet days I have had in secret fellowship with God, and how familiar he hath been with my soul; The fulfilling of Script. p. 442. The Lord doth usually unbosom himself most to his friends when he hath them alone. Hos. 2. 14. I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her, or speak to her heart, (as 'tis in the Hebrew:) Upon which words Stella hath this note, God needs no witnesses that he might speak to our souls; when God finds our heart alone, he presently comes in, and sups with it; and when he observes our soul withdrawn from the cares and carking thoughts of this World, then is his time to open his great wonders and secrets to it. Jacob was never more prevailing with God than when alone; then was the time he got the blessing, Gen. 32. 24, 29. Peter was alone in prayer with God when he fell into a trance, Acts 10. 10. His soul was as it were removed from the body for a time, (saith Beza) that he might converse with God . Elijah was alone in secret prayer, when the Angel brought him that refreshing feast, in the strength of which he

traveled in the wilderness forty days, 1 King. 19. 4. to v. 9. O what am I, (said Mr. Patrick Simpson, after he had been many hours in his Garden alone, wrestling with God for his deserted Wife) being dust and ashes, that the holy ministering Spirits should be sent by the Lord to deliver a message to me! telling one that overheard him, that he had had a vision of Angels, who did with audible voice give him an answer from the Lord of his Wive's condition; this Woman also to whom, upon importunity, he delivered these words, as she was approaching to the place where he lay on the ground, heard an affrighting noise of a great rushing of multitudes together, and with it a melodious sound: Such a welcome doth the Lord Jesus give his children sometimes, when he gets them alone into his Chambers and Wine-cellar. O the sweetness persons may find in their solitudes with Christ! Samson turned aside when he saw a swarm of Bees and Honey in the carcass of the Lion, Judge. 14. 8. 'It is said of Jerome, that living in the wilderness, he seemed to converse with Angels. Contemplation (saith Gregory) is the clearest day of internal light; then are their discoveries most, when in a holy silence with God alone: Retirement (Christian) is an opportunity put into thy hand of in-door work; 'tis God's call into the Mount: Exod. 34. 2, 3. Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the Mount, and no man shall come up with thee. 'It is his command to a holy silence and cessation from other work, that thou mayest attend the most secret concerns of thy soul: Improve this time wholly in converse with God and attending the affairs of thy soul: This is a season to take an estimate of thy soul-state, to try the grounds of thy hope for eternity, to be searching into the secrets of thy heart, and taking a full review of thy past life, and former carriages, Psal. 4. 4. Then is the time to weigh thy mercies and duties, to call to mind God's dealings with thee, and thy carriages towards him; to be studying the wiles of Satan, and the ways of thy duty; the worth of godliness, the danger of miscarrying,

and the blessedness of overcoming, and such like meditations. When you are riding, or walking, or sitting alone, invite the Lord Jesus to keep you company, to walk and converse with you; fill up your vacant hours with secret prayer and meditation; take heed of being at leisure from duty-employment, either in your general or particular Calling, or lawful Employments, lest being too much alone, the Devil strike in for company; no greater temptation can Satan find, than times of solitude not improved.

Eighthly, Get good from occasional objects and occurrences, which are not chance and fortune, as the blind world calls it; but the products of divine wisdom and pleasure towards Believers for their good. Albane receiving a persecuted Christian into his house, and seeing his holy devotion, and sweet carriage; he was so much affected with his good example, that he became both a Professor and Martyr; Bede. It was not by accident, but divine intention, that Melchizedek should meet Abraham to bless him, and Shimei meet David to curse him; that Moses should meet Jethro 's Daughter at the well in Midian, and that David should meet the Egyptian in pursuing the Amalekites: It was God put it into the thoughts of Saul 's servant to advise his Master to speak with the Prophet, by which means he obtained a Kingdom: 'Twas by divine disposal, that when Joseph was cast into the pit, the Midianites should pass by, and lift him up, and sell him to the Ishmaelites, and they to Potiphar. The Lord is carrying on some part of his work, some piece of mercy or justice, comfort or affliction by all these occurrences, in which his people should be coworkers with him, and be learning something from every passage of providence they meet with, and object they occasionally behold in their journeyings and pursuits of their occasions in the World: What fruitful meditations had Samson from beholding the carcass of the Lion, and swarm of Bees in it in his journey to Timnah? Judge. 14. 8. 14. And our Savior from seeing the withered

Fig-tree in his passage from Bethany to Jerusalem? Mat. 21. 19, to 23. What a lecture did Christ read to his Disciples upon viewing the goodly Buildings of the Temple? Luke 21. 5, to the end: He beheld the City, and wept over it, and improved it to some instruction to his Disciples, Luke 19. 41. He beheld people casting in gifts into the treasury, and makes improvement of it, Mark 12. 4. Some told him of the blood of the Galileans which Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice, and he makes a profitable use of it for his Disciples instruction, Luke 13. 1, 2. What Sermons hath Christ preached, when he took his Text from the waters of Samaria? Joh. 4. 9, 10. from the Manna given to Israel in the wilderness? Joh. 6. 26, 27, 31, 32. from the multitudes flocking after him for loaves? Christians, if you would grow rich in Spirituals, make some spiritual improvement of all you see, hear, meet with in your journeys, dealings, converses in the World: Thou walkest into thy Garden, get some instruction from the objects that thou castest thy eyes upon: Every herb in thy Garden preaches God to thee : Thou walkest into the Field, go with Isaac 's heart, to meditate upon the creatures and providences of God thou beholdest there: Thou lookest to the Heavens, let it not be only as the Pharisees, to discern the face of the Sky, Matth. 16. 3. but to see the glory of God, and his handy-work, Psal. 19. 1. with the Chemist, extract some good from everything thou meetest with. 'Twas said of Jerome, he knew how to gather gold out of the dunghill, and honey out of weeds, leaving the poison for spiders. How will men dig into the bowels of the earth, rack the creatures, spend themselves to get a few shadows, and all the while do nothing to get the substance that endures! and this doubtless is one reason of soul-poverty this day; we trade not with creatures and occurrences that fall in our way to spiritual advantages: Beg spiritual skill and faithfulness to be improving all you see, hear, do or enjoy to soul-profit.

Ninthly, Get good from your falls and miscarriages: Physicians do sometimes make poisons medicinal, and so doth the Physician of value make the diseases of his people turn to their health. Sin is the greatest evil, and yet redemption-grace works good out of it. David got good by his fall, it made him the more humble and broken in heart; drew out his heart in stronger cries after grace; made him more watchful for the future against the occasions of sin, Psal. 51. 7, 8. to the 12. Psal. 39. 1. Psal. 141. 3. Peter got good from his fall, by keeping an after-sense of the evil of it on his heart. Israel by their departure from God came to loath themselves the more in their own eyes, Ezek. 36. 31. And Ephesus, by a sense of their evil got this advantage, they could not bear evils in others, Rev. 2. 2. As sin abounds, so grace abounds much more, Rom. 5. 20.

Object. If souls may get good from sin, and where sin abounds, grace abounds much more: Then why should we be troubled for sin, and watching against it? Why may we not rather sin, that grace may abound, and do evil that good may come thereof?

Sol. The Apostle answers this objection, Rom. 6. What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid; and proves by several Arguments.

First, That it cannot be that souls interested in Christ can live or allow themselves in sin; Because,

First, They are dead to sin, and therefore cannot live any longer in sin, v. 2. dead men while so cannot live, but Believers are dead to sin no longer to live therein, <H&G>, amplius, never more to live in it; they may fall into it, be overcome by it; but to allow it, to design it, to make provision for it, and to take up encouragements upon choice in judgment, to continue in it; this cannot consist with men dead to sin, as all souls in Christ are; for they are baptized into the likeness of

Christ's death, yea into his death, v. 3. That as Christ died for sin once to die no more, but was raised by the glory of the Father, v. 4. so they being really dead with Christ, should live no more in sin, but be perpetually dead to it; for this is the very end of Christ's death, to destroy the old man, the body of sin, the whole power and Being of sin in Believers, to be accomplished in its time and ways, v. 6. And Christ died in vain, and hath lost the great end of his death, if they that are in him can live any longer in sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin v. 7. <H&G>, being put for <H&G>, by a Synecdoche, Piscat. that is, absolved from the obligation, servitude, dominion and guilt of sin; as an Apprentice is by Law declared free, or set free from his Master's rule and power.

Secondly, They that are in Christ are not only partakers of his death, and therein brought into a state of death to sin; but they are partakers of his resurrection, and by it instated in a life of holiness, v. 4, 5. that now they should live to God, which cannot consist with a life of sin, v. 11, 12.

Thirdly, They that are Christ's are brought under grace, under a Covenant of Grace, opposed to the Law as a Covenant of Works, and therefore cannot be any longer under the dominion and service of sin, v. 14. These two Covenants being in that respect contrary, they that are under the Law as a Covenant of Works, are in the flesh, and bring forth fruit unto death, Rom. 7. 5. and for that end are Believers set free from the Law, and brought under Grace, that they might serve God in newness of spirit, v. 6. and no longer serve sin.

Fourthly, They are become the servants of righteousness, set free from the service of sin, Rom. 6. 18. Your time under sin is out, and you have now no more to do with sin; you are another's servant, and therefore cannot return to the service of sin anymore; for you are

now servants to God, not for a time, but forever; you have delivered over yourselves, sworn over yourselves to be the servants of God forever, and therefore cannot now serve sin: That's his first answer: You cannot, if in Christ, serve sin any longer, nor continue in sin that grace may abound: for if you can consent to live in sin, you are not under grace.

Secondly, You ought not to do it, if you are rational; 'tis not your concernment to sin, because sin is an evil thing.

First, Sin is the greatest slavery in the world, v. 16. You are servants to sin, and to Devils; sins are the works of the Devil, 1 John 3. 8. which Christ came to destroy; sin is evil in its state; 'tis drudgery, and in its nature 'tis filthy, abominable and shameful.

Secondly, It is attended with sad issues here; it brings forth bitter fruit, v. 21. It makes the soul ashamed when awakened, to see what he hath done, and it fills the soul with grief, horror and torment; it breaks your loins, makes you go halting to your grave; it makes you weary of your life, and fearful to die; it sets your teeth on edge, and fills your bowels with wormwood and gravel. O the dreadful effects of sin here! which makes it no way a souls interest to sin, 2 Cor. 7. 11. Psal. 51. 8. Psal. 38. 4. Psal. 119. 120. Psal. 55. 4. Lam. 3. 19.

Thirdly, As the work is bad, and fruits are evil here, so the wages of sin is death, v. 23. As soon as the work is done, they shall have their wages, which is always paying, and never paid; they shall be always dying, and never dead; whose worm never dieth, and whose fire is never quenched, Mark 9. 44. This will be the certain end of them that can choose sin, and live in sin, if God be holy, and his Word true. And can you then continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.

O Christians! get good from your sins; to be ashamed of them, to grieve and mourn over them, to hate and loathe them, to pray and cry against them, to watch and strive against them, to fly to Christ for pardon over them, and freedom from them, to shun and avoid the occasions of them, to have no more to do with them, to seek and further the death and total ruin of them, to prize graces, and love Christ the more, to be more attentive to his instructions, and obedient to his commands, to bless God, and rejoice in Christ; when God doth in any measure keep you, or set you free from sin, to long for Heaven and Glory, that you may never sin more, to keep close to Christ, and abide in his ways, that you might be the more secured from sin, and fitted for glory, Ezra 9. 6. Zach. 12. 10. Ezek. 36. 31. Rom. 7. 24. Prov. 4. 14, 15. 1 Thes. 5. 22. Ephes. 5. 11. Ephes. 2. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 7. 2 Cor. 5. 8. Acts 11. 23. This is to get good from sin, and to drive on the Heavenly Trade: That's the second branch of Exhortation to Professors.

Counsel to Earthly Traders.

The third branch of Exhortation is to Earthly Traders, who meet with breaches and discouragements in the pursuits of their Earthly Trades. This is manifestly the case of England this day: The Lord blows on men's interests, makes breaches on their Trades, sends in wants as an armed man; Trade fails, a blast is on men's labors, and the Nation becomes poorer every day: This should be for a lamentation, but few lay it to heart; men murmur and complain; some are dejected and sink in their spirits, others seeing God plucking their Idols away, hold them the faster, become more close and covetous; others sink the deeper into the world, turn more earthly and excessive in their carakings and labors; others more griping and oppressive; but few in appearance look to God, and make a right use of this sore stroke. Now towards a better improvement of this providence, give me leave to propose to all such these few Counsels.

Counsel 1.

First, By your disappointments and losses in your Earthly Employments, be convinced of the transcendent excellency of this Heavenly Trade (which you have, it may be, in pursuit of those too much slighted:) There are no such issues of Wisdom's Merchandise, if duly followed: Religion breeds no such worms to devour its treasures; Riches and honor are with me, yea durable Riches and Righteousness: My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold, Prov. 8. 18, 19. There are no such hazards in the ways of God, as here in my earthly business I am exposed to: I labor hard, and can hardly live out; I sow much, and bring in little; I eat, but have not enough; and drink, but am not filled; I clothe me, but am not warmed; I earn

wages, but put it into a bag with holes; I look for much, and it comes to little, and when I have brought it home, the Lord blows upon it, Hag. 1. 6, 9. But 'tis not so in that Heavenly Trade I have neglected; there are no such disappointments; they that sow to the Spirit, in due time do surely reap; they that labor for that bread, shall have it given to them. O how do Wisdom's Merchants prosper when I decay! their faces shine, their basket is blest; whatever they have in the world, 'tis enough for them; they eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart, and are freed from those anxious cares and fears I am almost consumed with: That's the best Trade, I now see it; when all fails, that holds; when others famish, that feeds; when others undo men, that enriches them: O blessed Calling! thou excellest them all. This is one good use of your earthly wastes, to see the excellency of Heavenly Treasures.

Counsel 2.

Secondly, See God in these afflictions that lie upon your Earthly Trades and Interests: Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, Job 5. 6. nor promotion from the East, or from the West, but God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another, Psal. 75. 6, 7, 'Twas not the wind, the fire, the Chaldeans, or Sabaeans that undid Job, but it was God that took away, it was by his permission all those losses came, Job 1. 21. This helped Job to a due deportment under his troubles, that he saw God in it: He doth not fall out with man, or complain of the Devil; he is not angry with chance or fortune, with stars or constellations, but looks to God in all. Is there any evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it? Amos 3. 6. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil, Isa. 41. 7. Israel decayed in their estates, and God says, 'twas he that blowed upon them: Men usually lay it on the times; cry out of one, and other, but few look to God, and that's one reason men make no better use of

this Rod, because they do not see it in the hand of a holy God: You will never lay your hand on your mouths, till you cast your eyes on God in these troubles, nor take a right way for cure before you see the hand that smites you, Psal. 39. 9.

Counsel 3.

Thirdly, Search out the cause of them: You will not find the remedy, till you see the reason. Show me wherefore thou contendest with me, Job 10. 2. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord, Lam. 3. 39, 40. The Lord may well say to the Complainer, Friend, I do thee no wrong, Mat. 20. 13. And as David did to Eliab, What have I now done? is there not cause? 1 Sam. 17. 29. Hath God consumed your estate, broken your Trade, brought you to a morsel of bread? and is there not cause? There are several sins which do usually prove wasting to men's earthly interests.

First, A letting down of Religion, and decaying in this heavenly Trade, is usually followed with wastes on men's outward comforts and interests, as hath been already shewn: Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. When that flourisheth, all things go well: when Religion goes down, nothing prospers. 2 Chron. 24. 20. Why transgress ye the Commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you. For this letting down of Obedience did God threaten to make Israel waste, and a reproach; to send evil arrows of Famine, and to break the staff of Bread. Ezek. 5. 14, 16, 17. Because ye multiplied more than the Nations round about you, and have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments, neither have done according to the judgments of the Nations round about you; you have increased in

abomination more than the Heathens and Nations round about you, and have not kept those Laws, and done that Righteousness which they have done: [Greenhill,] Therefore behold I, even I, am against thee:—Moreover, I will make thee waste, &c. Falling back in holiness will make men fall back in the world too, bring a curse on their abundance. Now this decay of Religion is the sin of this day, as hath been fully demonstrated.

Secondly, Declension in the worship of God hath been followed with declensions in men's interests: Mal. 1. 9. Israel brought to God a corrupt thing, the blind, and lame, and sick, the worst of the flock, and departed from God's Ordinances, and the Lord brought on them a curse; I will even send a curse upon your blessings, yea I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. To give glory to God, (saith Cocceius that honor and worship that is due to him: They had corrupted God's worship, and God corrupted their seed, Mal. 2. 3. I will destroy your fruits before they are ripe; which Cocceius thinks was fulfilled in that great famine in Claudius his days mentioned Acts 11. 28. They had made the service of God contemptible, Mal. 1. 7, and God made them contemptible: Chap. 2. 9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, <H&G> according as you have not kept my ways, but have been partial in my law: you have cast dung on my Ordinances, (for such are corruptions, <H&G> in God's worship;) and I will spread dung on your faces; Mal. 2. 2. Even the dung of your solemn Feasts, excrements. I will instead of seed throw so much dung upon you, even the excrements of your corrupt service; as the defilement thereof shall even overcome and ruin you: For these corruptions in the worship of God, did God stretch out his hand over Israel, and diminish their ordinary food, delivering them to the will of them that hated them: Ezek. 16. 26, 27. I have cut thee short of thy allowance, I have diminished thy portion, [Greenhill] thy lawful things, Sept.

God's worship is his name, by which he is known and distinguished from all Idols, Exod. 20. 4. his glory, Rom. 1. 23. To corrupt his worship, is to defile the place of his Throne, Ezek. 43. 7. and to defalcate, and cut off his tribute and revenues from the earth: And no wonder if God blast their Trade, who adulterate his Treasure.

Thirdly, A covetous with-holding from God turns away the blessing of God on men's labors, and tends to poverty. Prov. 11. 24. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that with-holdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Many think that lost which is laid out for God, and be-think nothing but what goes to pious uses. O how sparingly do most sow, as if they thought their seed cast away! and thence 'tis they reap so sparingly, 2 Cor. 9. 6. Men's former charity, rather like showers than streams, are dried up; and therefore are God's showers withheld also: expenses for God having been many, seems now burdensome, through men's self-love and unbelief. While Alexander had hope for more, he never wanted a heart or hand to part with the Frankincense and Gold he had: certainly men's Faith fails when their Charity fades: Few in their scarcity dare, with the Widow of Zarephtah, give the first cake to the use and service of God, 1 King. 17. 13, 14. No wonder the barrel of Meal and cruise of Oil fails; 'tis Christians weariness in well-doing, and defectiveness in scattering for God, hinders their reaping and gathering, Gal. 6. 9. This was one of those sins that brought a curse and devourer on Israel's increase, Mal. 3. 9, 10, 11. and is still as pregnant of blasting's and mildews as ever it was.

Fourthly, Greedy desires after the World are oftentimes followed with disappointments: Ye looked for much, Hag. 1. 9. and it came to little, <H&G>. Sept. To look with desire and affection. 'It is mercy in God, when men's hearts run too fast after the World, to lay some blocks in their way, to hedge it up with thorns, that they might not

overtake their Lovers. Hos. 2. 6. Thorns in men's way is safer than spears in their bowels, and that would have been the issue of such Lovers when they meet. Covetousness is the Hydropick distemper of old aged profession: to cure which, the great Physician hath providentially prescribed abstinence, and in his holy jealousy hath made men to read their sin in their punishment. The Lord sees it dangerous for his people to have much of this World, because it becomes a snare to their souls; They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, 1 Tim. 6. 9. Earthly things are the very bane of Religion, they entangle men's feet, and keep them from attendance on God in his appointments. The invited guests had no leisure to enjoy refreshments for their souls, because of their interrupting interests of this World, Matth. 22. 5. The things of Heaven seem light to such, compared with their other things: They made light of Christ's invitation, and put men on pleading excuses for neglect of God, and on justifying their omissions of holy duties: They began with one consent to make excuse: Christ and his people would have more of men's company, if the World had less of their hearts.

These earthly things do not only hinder men's duties, but their thriving's also under privileges: 'It is the cares of this World, and deceitfulness of Riches, that choke the Word, and make men unfruitful, Matth. 13. 22. They make careless, sleighty, forgetful hearers; they hinder convictions, quench the motions of the spirit, take away the tastes of divine sweetness, and make all the attempts of Grace fruitless: They take away the heart from God and spiritual things, and so nourish formality and hypocrisy in profession and duties, causing men to draw near with their mouths to God, when their hearts are far from him, Ezek. 33. 31. Isa. 29. 13. This made Judas, Ananias, Demas, Simon Magus such hypocrites in Religion, because they loved this present World, 2 Tim. 3. 2, 5. 2 Tim. 4. 10.

This weakens faith, blinds the mind, starves the affections, rules the will, and so man's all the royal forts of the soul against Christ; by which the salvation of that soul becomes exceeding difficult.

And they make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof, feeding the carnal mind, and yielding such nourishment to sin, as that it always resists the Holy Ghost, wins the day, renders damnation sure to all that are not by a mighty hand redeemed from these spiritual enemies; so that it becomes in such a case needful to starve earthly desires, by a remove of those things that feed and maintain them; and men may look upon those afflictive providences on their interests, as the procurements of their earthly affections: Hastening to be rich, hath poverty at the heels, Prov. 28. 22.

Fifthly, Unfaithfulness in men's Callings puts them out of the way of blessing, and ushers in wastes on their interests, Mic. 6. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. The Lord had a controversy with his people, v. 2. and till this was taken up, all their religious services were to no purpose; sacrifices and duties could not prevail, or stop his displeasure, till their sins were removed, v. 6, 7. 'Twas not to wait on God in public duties was all that he called for, but to do justice, show mercy, and to walk humbly with him, wherein they had been defective; and therefore had he brought a rod upon them, v. 9. he had made them sick in smiting them, and would make them desolate, v. 13. They should eat, but not be satisfied; and there should be a casting down in the midst of them; they should be blasted in their labors and interests; they should sow, but not reap; tread the Olive, but not anoint themselves with it; have sweet Wine, but not drink it; and then comes to reckon with them, wherefore this was brought upon them; ver. 10, 11, 12. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked? and the scant measures that is abominable? Should I count them pure with the wicked balance? and with the bags of deceitful weights? for

the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the Inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouths. They were full of wickedness, and among the rest, were false and deceitful; they did not walk humbly with God, nor justly with men, but were deceitful in their Callings, had false weights, scant measures, were injurious to others, and not just and faithful in their dealings; some oppressed, others defrauded; such as were over others were cruel task-masters, exacting their labors, Isa. 5. 8. 3. grinding the faces of the poor, eating them up as bread, Psal. 14. 4. by defrauding them of their due, keeping back the hire of the Laborers by fraud and injustice, Jam. 5. 4. which they do (saith one) who give them not a proportionable hire, working upon their necessities, sucking out the strength and sweetness of the Laborers, Dr. Manton. A sin that cries in the ears of the Lord of Sabbaths, cries out aloud, <H&G>, and their groans are entered into his ears, as a God of vengeance to requite it, and to give his poor a Sabbath, and rest from their oppressions: A sin that God will surely and severely punish; He will be a swift witness against them that oppress the Hireling in his wages, and turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 3. 5. Sins joined with Adultery, Sorcery, and Swearing; provocations in God's ears, and actions that plainly show no true fear of God in such persons that dare oppress their poor Laborers, changing their wages as Laban did Jacob 's, Gen. 31. 41. These God will surely take in hand; he will be both Judge and Witness against them; he will not delay neither, but proceed speedily to sentence and execution against such as oppress their poor laborers: Of all oppression, the oppression of the poor is greatest, and carries most cruelty in it, to tread on them that are down already, and abuse them that have no helper; to take the bread out of their mouths which are ready to starve, and to defraud them of their wages, which is their life, and God calls it down-right robbery, Levite. 19. 13. To build up their houses, and raise up estates upon the ruins

of the poor laborers, is to lay the foundation in blood, and hath a woe pronounced against it from the Lord of Hosts, Hab. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12. This is one of those sins which bring a people down to the ground, and make them desolate: Ye have eaten up the Vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses; what mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord of Hosts. Her gates shall lament & mourn, and she being desolate, shall sit upon the ground, Isa. 3. 14, 15, 26. This is a God-provoking, and an estate-wasting sin, and one of the great, visible, crying sins of this day.

Sixthly, Another reason why God consumes the interests of men, and makes a breach on their Trade, seems to be this; That by this means he might bring them down to his foot, and bring them back to himself: Prosperity in men's interests feeds their pride, and makes them too high for God's use and pleasure; riches do puff men up: Thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches, behold therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the Nations, and they shall draw their sword against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness; they shall bring thee down to the pit, they shall destroy thy riches wherein thou gloriest, and countest thy beauty, Ezek. 28. 5, 7, 8. Men are apt to glory in their riches, and to give that respect to them which is due to God, and this he will not bear, but comes out in indignation against men's Idols, Jer. 9. 23. Abundance of earthly interests doth also unfit men for God's use and delight, rich in goods, and poor in grace; prosperity in the world cools men's hearts towards God, and lames their feet in his way: 'It is the poor of the flock that waits on God, Zech. 11. 11. that press his Vineyard, and bear the heat and burden of the day, Jer. 52. 15. When men grow full, they are lazy; & when great, they become fearful to adventure for God: Give me thy shield (said Epaminondas to his servant, when he had got a great sum of money) for now thou art grown rich, I am sure thou wilt not adventure thyself into dangers. Smyrna was the poorest

of the seven Churches in Asia, but yet was richest in grace and serviceableness for God. I know thy poverty, but thou art rich, Rev. 2. 9. This may be one reason why the Lord makes this Nation poor, that he might by this make them pure, he melts away our dross, that we may be the more refined, and takes away our Lovers, that he might come in the room of them: I will hedge up thy way with thorns; she shall follow after her Lovers, but shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them; then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now, Hos. 2. 6, 7. Men seldom return to God fully, till stripped of other comforts; nor see God to be best, till their condition in the world be bad; and therefore doth God remove these mountains of earthly interests, that his people may the better see and go after himself.

Counsel 4.

Fourthly, If God hath made breaches on your Trade, get the breach between God and your souls composed: Hos. 4. 1, 2. Hear the Word of the Lord ye children of Israel, for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the Land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the Land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood: There's a controversy between God and a sinning people (and such are we:) Sinners contend with God, & God by afflictions contends with them, and till this controversy be taken up, there's no peace. And if ye will not for all this be reformed by me, by these things, but will walk contrary to me, then will I also walk contrary to you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins, Levite. 26. 23, 24. Hear the Word of the Lord: Lay this to heart, they that strive with him shall perish; there is no contending with God; bow we must, or break, return, or be ruined: Wash ye, make ye clean,

put away the evil of your doings, Isa. 1. 16. Get washed away your blood by sound Repentance; get into Christ's blood by saving Faith; set upon a thorough reformation, personal, family, public, each one in his place, help to carry out the uncleanness of thy heart, hand, house and land to the Brook Kidron, 2 Chron. 29. 16. Get trading sins removed, if you would have trading mercies enjoyed: Take every man his Censer, and stand in the gap; pour out strong cries for returning-mercy, that the Lord would cease from his fierce wrath, and turn again, and heal our Land, and bless our substance, accept the work of our hand, and dwell in our Land.

Counsel 5.

Fifthly, Get advantage from decays in your Earthly Trade, to further your Heavenly Trade; gather materials from your earthly ruins, for your heavenly building. Christians, there's a great deal of good you may get from these evil things in the world, to quicken your pursuit after the things of Heaven.

First, By your earthly losses you may be convinced of the vanity and uncertainty of all things below God: Men are apt to take up too much pleasure in their booths, till God sends a devouring worm and consumes them; and to sit down under their shadows with great delight; and therefore doth God make them like shadows to fly away; what expectations do men raise from their swelling-comforts, thinking their mountains are made so strong, they shall not be moved, till the Lord by some levelling providence soon corrects their fond opinion! and what dependencies do we usually take up on those uncertainties, leaning so hard on our reeds, till they break under us, and send splinters into the arm which stays upon them? O the contentment, pleasure, profit, men fancy to be in creatures, friends, relations, honors, estates, before by some killing stroke they see

themselves to be deceived! What mercy is it then to meet with disappointments in these groundless hopes, that we may come to see before it be too late, what poor, empty, perishing things all the wares of this lower world are! This way David came to have his error seasonably corrected. And Solomon, by a serious review of past enjoyments, comes to see that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, Eccles. 2. 1. Surely every man walketh in a vain show; they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them, Psal. 39. 6.

Secondly, Divine rebukes on men's earthly interests, help them to a discovery of those sins that procure them, Deut. 31. 17. Afflictions are Christ's clay and spittle to open his people's eyes, and to bring them to see those evils that have brought those deaths upon their comforts, and breed those worms that have destroyed their substance. Times of correction, are times of instruction, Job 36. 8, 9. When Jacob 's Sons were cut short of their provisions, reduced to great distress, and plunged in sore dangers, then they thought upon their sin, and wrong done to their brother Joseph, Gen. 42. 21. Then they said one to another, verily we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us: Whence one hath this note, Affliction is a dark condition, yet it brings much light into the soul. Men come to read their miscarriages best by the fire-light of affliction; then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God, 2 Chron. 33. 13. Now the soul comes to see his abuse of these mercies he hath lost, his inordinate love to them, and wanderings from God, and this helps to after-wisdom, and greater freedom from these entanglements for the time to come, which is no small advantage to future godliness.

Thirdly, By this loss of earthly things, the soul comes to see a necessity of looking after, and ensuring better treasures: Heb. 13. 14. Here have we no continuing City, but we seek one that is to come. Uncertainties on Earth should put souls the more to look after Heaven. The Prodigal never thought of returning till all was gone, Luke 15. 14. to verse 18. The Steward never considered how to secure his future state, till goods were wasted, and Stewardship in danger of removal, Luke 16. 1, 2, 3, 4. Think of swimming ashore (said Mr. Rutherford) after a shipwreck. 'It is a mercy in this stormy Sea to get a second wind, for none of the Saints get a first. This is advantage indeed, when having nothing, you seek to enjoy all things; and when the world flies from you, to pursue Heaven the faster. Could a Heathen say, I never gained more than when I lost all; because his shipwreck became the occasion of obtaining knowledge; and will not you Christians by your earthly losses be provoked to make after heavenly interests?

Fourthly, Losses in the world have an advantage through grace to loosen the heart from the world. Afflictions on men's estates are like wormwood on the breast, that tends to wean the hearts of God's children from them: Love of the world hath been the sin of this Age; and the shipwreck of worldly things is the likeliest way to cure it; this disease is best conquered by fasting. Absence of Lovers is sometimes the way to starve affections; and poverty with distress is God's usual method to chastise men's wanton affections to this world. Afflictions when sanctified, are Sanctuary-fire to purge away the dross of our affections, Mal. 3. 3.

5ly. Soul-enlargement is another fruit of sanctified straits, and so a help to the heavenly trade. Christians are never fit to make any speed in the way to Heaven, until their hearts be enlarged, Psal. 119. 32. Enlargements in the world are oftentimes bonds to the soul: He that

hath most of the Earth, hath usually least liberty for Heaven. When the Lord cuts short the interest of his people, he doth but knock off golden fetters from their feet, that he may bring their soul out of prison. Afflicting Providences are God's dieting his racers, that they may be more long-breathed, and swift in their run towards glory. O how imprisoned are redeemed souls in the many things of this world! they cannot have time to pray, read, hear, confer for the entangling-affairs of this life, till God by some deaths upon their employments sets them at liberty. Removes of worldly treasures are but the taking off of a heavy cloak-bag from the shoulders of Zion 's Travelers, that they may the more comfortably travel to their journeys end. Good souls, whiles crowded with earthly businesses, are like persons in the midst of a thicket, and thorny grove, when they would be going forward, one briar hangs in their skirts, and another thorn stops their way; so that when God takes off their interests, he doth but cut out a way for his children to pass the more comfortably and swiftly through the brakes of this world, and lighten the vessel that it might sail faster and safer to its designed port; and is not this advantage?

Sixthly, Sweeter relishes of heavenly things are to Believers the blessed issues of the world's bitterness: Harsh Providences on earthly comforts make heavenly things the more pleasant. Men sometimes engraff sweet fruit on crab-tree stocks, and God gives honey to his children at the top of the rod, Psal. 94. 19. [The thorn is one of the most cursed, and angry, and crabbed weeds, and yet out of it springs the Rose, Rutherford.] The sweet-meats of this world do too often put Christians palates out of taste; to cure which, doth the Lord dish out his daintiest meat with sour sauce: Heavenly things never relish better, than when there is less sweetness in the creature. What a value did David put upon spiritual things when stripped of all! Psal. 63. 1. Gospel-comforts will not down with such as are choked with the world's delicacies; but when once the Saints are

emptied of the world by cross providences, then is Christ precious: & is not this a help to Heavenly Traders? O then! the more crosses you meet with in the world, the more haste do you make to your Crown. Doth the world fly from you? pursue Heaven the faster. Doth gain fall? then advance godliness: And if your getting's from Earth be small, let your laying's out for Heaven be great. And thus much for the third Branch of Exhortation.

Advice to such as are fallen back in Religion.

Fourthly, A word to such as have begun this Heavenly Trade, and are fallen back: This is the case of some, and may be of more in this hour of Temptation and Apostasy: There are some have begun in the Spirit, and are now ending in the flesh; who have made a fair show, seemed to be somewhat, and like blazing comets, drew the eyes of admirers on them for a time, and then fell down to the Earth. Some that have left the very form; others that have lost the power and life of godliness: Many have laid down their Lamp; but more have spent their Oil, and are almost come to a snuff: Some have shut up shop, are quite gone, and have taken their leave of Religion, resolving to return no more, unless safety, credit and interest return with them: Others yet stay, keep open shop, but have little goods; decay daily, and are upon the breaking hand; a waste is on their interests, they have lost their first love, decayed in spirituals; faith, hope, love, zeal, delight in God, and liveliness for him are quite lost; as hath been demonstrated in the use of Lamentation. The design of this head is only to offer some advice towards the recovery of decayed broken

Traders: In which, as hitherto, for better illustration I shall keep to the metaphor in the Text.

Advice 1.

My first Advice to such in order to their recovery, is to be deeply affected with their evil case.

First, Consider, 'tis no small change for a person that hath lived well, been in reputation with God and men, fared deliciously, been used to the dainties of God's house, and delicacies of his love; have tasted the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come; now to be brought to penury, and scarce meet with a sweet morsel from day today; to be put off with husks and dry bones, and the crumbs that fall from their Lord's Table; to stand at his door, or to wait without for some scraps, when the friends of Christ, and Wisdom's thriving Merchants, have their marrow and fat things; this is a great change.

For such as were wont to have a place amongst them that stand by, to converse with the Father of Spirits, to be let into the Presence chamber, and have the visits of the Comforter, and spiritual fellowship of Saints: Now to be laid aside, and scarcely looked upon with a divine glance from day today, no intercourse with God, or fellowship with the Spirit, from one Lord's day to another, but to be only company for formalists and hypocrites, and such as are without; this is a great change. O get thy heart deeply affected with it!

Secondly, Think also how unlovely, offensive and displeasing an object in the eyes of God, a withered, decayed Professor is; his soul takes no pleasure in him, Heb. 10. 38. He doth not care for the company of such, they are a burden to him, he loves no more to see them, than men do dead corps in their houses, and rotten trees in their garden; he bethinks the place they stand in as cumbering the

ground, Luke 13. 7. he counts them unworthy of the Kingdom of God, having put their hand to the Plough, and then look back, Luke 6. 62. Nothing more troubles his soul, than a lukewarm temper, that was once burning in love, but now is neither hot nor cold; such ride on the stomach of Christ, and make him down-right sick, till he hath vomited them out into the dunghill from whence they came; and is not this matter of trouble to a sensible heart? Rev. 3. 16.

Thirdly, Such have little desirableness in the eyes of men also. Who cares to deal with broken Merchants; or keep company with spendthrifts, that have wasted their estates, and are come to nothing? no more do gracious souls care for converse with backsliders. Decayed Professors are like broken vessels in whom there is no pleasure; and as a withered hand, or broken bone in the body, which hath lost both its usefulness and beauty. A broken Trader in Religion is valued by none; the men of the world cannot endure him, because he hath been seemingly godly; and Saints cannot love him, because he is not really gracious: Such, like Absalom (when hung by the hair) lie between Heaven and Earth, as unworthy of either; and as a person held in a strait passage, cannot go forward nor backward; he cannot go far enough to keep pace with the profane, nor go back to fill up his place with the pious; the Saints reject him, the wicked will not receive him: In such a pitiful case is a withered decayed soul, he hath no comeliness in him for which he should be desired.

Fourthly, They are the greatest losers of any who break in Religion; for they not only lose their own goods, but others also; their talents; graces, privileges and experiences, are their Lord's goods, which they have wasted in riotous living; they lose what they once had, what they seemed to have, or were fair for; and they lose what they hope to have, Luke 16. 1. Mat. 25. 29. 2 Epist. Joh. v. 8. Gal. 3. 4. All their

enjoyments, tastes, comforts, frames, experiences, are lost: All their profession, faith, love, conscience, are shipwrecked: All their duties, labors, sufferings, come to nothing, if they are not recovered again to repentance. Here men estimate their losses to be great, from the quality, variety or abundance of the things they lose; all which are yet but temporal; but the Treasures that Professors are in chase of, and which they shall surely have, if they be sincere and faithful to the death, are eternal; of all which, by their backslidings (if uncured) they are deprived: O who can count the sum, and value the worth of those glorious things they fall short of, who fall back, and go down in Christianity, till they come to nothing!

Fifthly, Their case is dangerous also, and their wound hardly healed; not one of many that fall back in Religion, if they go far, recover again. Joh. 6. 66. From that time many of his Disciples went back, and walked no more with him. When Judas, Simon Magus, Hymenaeus, Alexander, Demas, went off from Christ, they returned no more: John tells us of some that went out from them, and thereby declared that they were not of them. 1 Joh. 2. 19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. The Apostle speaks not of such as fall out of infirmity, falling in the way, which gracious souls may do, both falling into some sin for a time, as Peter, and fall back by some abatements of grace, as the Church of Ephesus, yet be recovered; such he intends not here; but those that fall out of the way, both totally and finally, these recover no more.

Quest. If persons that fall back in Religion after a high profession, may never be recovered again; how may one know if he find decays, and falling back in Religion, whether he be one of those that shall never be healed or recovered more? This is my case, I find great

declensions in my soul and conversation, and I fear I shall never be restored, but wax worse and worse, and perish at last.

Sol. 1. First, Are not thy declensions thy choice, upon judgment and consent, but against the standing bent of thy heart? the renewed purposes of thy soul through Christ: Thy error is not thy aim, thou dost not deliberately contrive thy departure from God, but hast a secret would-not against every backsliding; then thy backslidings shall be healed again, Psal. 119. v. 10. Rom. 7. 19, 25.

Secondly, Are thy backslidings and spiritual decays thy soul-trouble, and restless burden, because of thy distance from God as the God of grace, and Father of thy mercies; and because of the injury thereby done to thy graces and inner man, and from an enmity in thy nature against sin? Then there is hope in Israel concerning this, that thy backslidings shall be healed, Rom. 7. 24. Psal. 5. 1, 7. Luke 15. 21. Gal. 5. 17.

Thirdly, Are thy backslidings after thy Effectual Calling, and thy sincere choice of God to be thy peculiar and alone portion? Thou canst appeal to the searcher of hearts, that thou hast taken the Lord to be thy God and only Treasure here, and to all eternity to be thy last end and chiefest good; and hast taken Christ to be the only way, truth and life, thy Lord and righteousness; and hast made a full and actual surrender of thyself and thy All to God in exchange, to be presently, unreservedly, and eternally his, and not thy own, to be led and governed by him only: If so, thy after-errors cannot make void this Covenant, but are under a promise of healing; such cannot sin unto death, because the seed of God remaineth in them, 1 Joh. 3. 9. They are undertaken to be kept, that they should not totally and finally depart from him, Jer. 31. 18. Isa. 57. 18. Jer. 3. 14, 22. Hos. 14. 4. Jer. 32. 40.

Fourthly, Art thou restless in thy backslidings, until the Lord doth heal thee? thou canst give him no rest till he establish thy soul, and be as the dew to thy dry and barren heart: When God sets a soul a crying, it's a sign he will hear: Jer. 30. 15, 17. Isa. 19. 22. A man (saith Mr. Dod) can never be in a bad condition, except he hath a hard heart, and cannot pray? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God? Job 27. 10. Backsliders in heart are heartless in prayer; as they decay, so do they restrain prayer, Job 15. 4. Ye have said, it is in vain to serve God, Mal. 3. 14. As sin becomes more delightful, so duty becomes more burdensome, cold and formal; but a gracious soul that shall be healed is importunate with God, and will not let him alone, Exod. 32. 10, 11. or let him go until he bless him, Gen. 32. 6. The worse his condition is, the more fervent his cries are; the more his piety goes down, the more his prayers go up, Psal. 6. 2. Such a soul shall be healed, who would be healed; where he works to will, he will work to do.

Fifthly, Are thy vitals sound under all thy decays? then thy consumption is not mortal: Is thy heart sincere? thou canst not hide or reserve iniquity, but walkest before God in truth; thy desires after grace are not feigned, Psal. 17. v. 1. Thy love to God is not pretended, lip-love, but real; thy faith and love are not wholly gone, but maintained in the truth thereof, though abated; thou canst not let God go, but hast a secret rest on him, and resolved recumbence on his grace and faithfulness. There is hope of that tree, though it seems to be cut down, that it will sprout again, and the tender branches thereof will not cease, Job 14. 7.

Sixthly, If under all thy decays thou findest a humble heart and contrite spirit; thy backslidings make thee lie low before God, and to become more vile in thy own eyes every day; thy soul-poverty makes thee poor in spirit also, rating thyself beneath the least mercy, and

judging thyself unworthy of all that patience, privilege and mercy shewn to thee; thou dost not fret at afflicting providences, nor charge God foolishly, but bearest his indignation, justifiest his displeasure, and wonderest at his forbearance; then will reviving's come again, and recovery after thy falling back, Dan. 9. 7, 23, 25. Mat. 5. 3. Isa. 57. 15.

But on the other side, There are five dangerous symptoms of falling back that shall hardly be restored.

First, If thy falling back be before thy falling in with Christ in truth; thy decays before thy quickening's, then 'tis dangerous: If thy building were on the sand, and the towering heights of thy frames and profession from which thou art fallen, were only structures of thy own raising, in which the Sanctifying Spirit had no hand, then thy decays are not likely to be repaired. Art thou a stranger to the new birth, and to any inward change upon thy soul? the principle of thy new profession and actions is is still an old heart: Thou never didst take the Lord for thy God and only Treasure, nor hadst to this day any heart-union with the Lord Jesus; then thy fall is dangerous, Mat. 7. 26, 27. 1 John 5. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Secondly, A falling off from the foundation is dangerous: When men depart from the Faith, turn to another Gospel, and deny the Lord that bought them, fall from the Doctrine of Grace after enlightening's, to a Covenant of Works, laying the foundation of Salvation-hopes upon creature-performances and improvements, when they go from the Rule of Faith and Word of Truth, to natural light, and seducing spirits, which have not their evidence and approbation from the Scriptures. When persons at once disclaim dependency on the true foundation and disposal by the Rule of

Righteousness 'tis much to be feared whether such shall be restored, Gal. 1. 6. ch. 5. 4. Heb. 10. 26, 39. 2 Pet. 2. 15. Heb. 6. 4. 6.

Thirdly, When men make Merchandise of the Truth, and sell their profession for worldly interest, having loved the reward of iniquity, and made a swap of their Religion for advantage sake: This is a mighty provocation to the Spirit, when men can sell themselves to work wickedness, and value the great things of God's Law, of his Truth and Salvation at so low a rate; to part with them for a mess of pottage, and the dirty Cabals of this world: 'It is seldom that such find repentance, though they seek it with tears: See Judas, Simon Magus, Balaam, Demas, Spira: What remarks of furious indignation God makes such Apostates to be, who can part with their Religion for worldly interests! 2 Tim. 4. 10. 1 King. 21. 20. 2 Pet. 2. 3, 15. Acts 1. 18.

Fourthly, Backsliders in heart shall surely perish, and be filled with their own ways, Prov. 14. 14. when falling back is upon choice, and with delight, like a deceitful Bow that is then at rest when its string is broken, Psal. 78. 57. When a man casts off Religion as one doth his burden, and a beast his yoke, Jer. 5. 5. and is glad he is rid of his troublesome work, as one that is got out of prison, Rom. 1. 32. This argues a spirit of Belial, and a dangerous state: Many have taken up a Lamp upon constraint, for fashion, or interest, or for companies-sake, as the foolish Virgins did, Prov. 14. 14. Psal. 78. 57. Jer. 5. 5. Mat. 25. 1. But when opportunity hath offered itself for a fair riddance, they have soon appeared what they were by their cheerful returns to Egypt, and the broad way of error and looseness, falling in with other interests, and finding pleasure in it: Now the world, reputation and pleasure take away the heart, and they are well-pleased with other Lovers: this is a bad sign of a desperate state, of marish-ground that shall never be healed, Ezek. 47. 11.

Lastly, When persons are prejudiced against the means of recovery, hate them that rebuke them in the gate, Amos 5. 10. shun the light, and cannot endure those that would reclaim them from the error of their way, Joh. 3. 19. their hearts rise against any attempts to reduce them, Amos 7. 10. cannot bear them that are good, slight and hate the people of God they formerly loved, avoiding their company; jeer and reproach those Ministers, people and ways they once took pleasure in: this shows a dangerous state, such a persons condition seems desperate, and not far from the Chambers of death. O you that are fallen back in Religion! get your hearts affected with it: do you begin to decay? you know not where it will end: are you gone back? 'tis questionable whether ever you may return, and then what will your latter end be? your last state will be worse than your first; and if twice dead, you will be plucked up by the roots; if after showers and dressings you decay, your end will be to be burned.

Advice 2.

Secondly, If you would recover out of your wasting decays in this heavenly Trade, search out the causes, and get them removed. There must needs be something more than ordinary, when men who have a good Trade, which may be driven in the worst of times, and will ensure advantage, if followed, do notwithstanding fall back and decay: Such is Religion, it will maintain and enrich its followers, if they be not wanting to themselves; there must needs be some great causes and miscarriages then that doth cast back the professors of Christianity, and bring a consumption on their soul-prosperity: some of which may be these:

First, When they enter upon this heavenly Trade, and have not a stock to set it up: Religion is a great thing, and cannot be carried on without a stock of saving-grace to maintain it: Common grace is not a

suitable stock for this spiritual Trade; it may help men to transact the external part, and common works of Religion; but cannot do the inward, secret, and choicest services of godliness: A stranger intermeddles not with its joy, Prov. 14. 10. no, nor its work; They that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, Rom. 14. 17. it lies not in outward duties, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; which no hypocrite can reach to. This spoils many, they take up a form of godliness without the power of it; and being strangers to the work within, they cannot carry on the works of grace without, which this state calls for; and so fall back, and come to nothing. When persons get some knowledge, parts, frames, and temporary graces; they presently take up a Lamp of profession, and get into the company of the wise, climb up to the enjoyment of privileges, and then sit down contented, and fall asleep; and when they come to temptations, and spiritual duties, to the work of faith, love, patience, self-denial, mortification, and the like; having not grace to support them, and a principle that suits such work, they fall short of duty, and into sin, and so Trade, and fall away: Common grace is as a standing-pool, which having not a spring to feed it, dries up when supplies cease, and scorching's come; whereas true grace is as a well of water, that springs up to life eternal.

Secondly, Another thing that casts back Traders, is this; when they set upon an employment, and have not skill to manage it: Every Art hath its principles, rules and mysteries by which it is carried on: to deviate from these, is to mar the excellency, and miss the advantage of it: Irregular actions seldom thrive; so 'tis with the heavenly Trade, when persons set upon it, and have not skill to order it to best advantage, no wonder if they prosper not, but fall back in godliness. Solomon directing to this heavenly Trade, advises to get wisdom as the principal thing in order to it, Prov. 4. 7. And when the Apostle

would further the Saints in holy walking, as the necessary way to it, he begs wisdom for them, Col. 1. 9, 10. That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: that ye may walk worthy of the Lord to all, well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. Two things made David thrive so much in his proper public work; Integrity of heart, and Understanding, Psal. 78. 72. He fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands: Some books read it in the plural number in the Greek; In skillfulness's, <H&G>, noting the great measure of wisdom which men need who would prosper in their proper work, and order their administrations prudently, as might most further their spiritual welfare: The want of which wisdom and prudence in Christians to order everything they do in their general and particular Callings, converses, conditions and occurrences in the World to the best advantage of their souls, is one reason they thrive so little in their heavenly Trade: Wisdom would teach men to prevent many snares and occasions of evil, and instruct them how to get good from everything they do, which would much advance their soul-profiting, for want of which they go back in spirituals, and decay apace.

Thirdly, This also casts back Traders; when they are not diligent in the management of their Trade: A slothful soul suffers hunger, Prov. 19. 15. and by much sloth the building decays; and through idleness of hand the house droppeth thorough, Eccles. 8. 10. They that will thrive in the World must be diligent, take all opportunities to carry on their work: The diligent hand maketh rich, but by slothfulness men are brought to a morsel of bread. So 'tis in Religion, when men let down their work, and do not follow it to purpose, they soon decay, and become spiritually poor; this is the bane of many this day: Religion is not their business; men do but little on the Lord's day, and scarce a stroke of work is done all the week after; hear they will,

and when that is done, their work is done too: never think of what they hear, or put it to practice from one Lord's day to another: All the week their heads, hearts, hands, feet, time, strength, discourses, contrivances are wholly taken up about the World; and how can they choose but go down the hill, and waste away in their soul-interests?

Religion is one continued work, which allows of no intermission, but hath its work every day, and in everything; break but one link of this golden chain of godliness, and it weakens the whole. O the slothfulness of Christians at this day in their soul-businesses! every day is filled up with neglects; neglect of prayer, neglect of reading, meditation, conference, heart-watching, grace-cherishing work, forget this duty; pass by another, cold, sleighty, formal in all; this spoils the prosperity of souls. The Galatians began well, but did not hold out, they were soon weary, Gal. 5. 7. Most men's journey to Heaven is full of stops, and that which makes it most miserable, their lets are of themselves: Who hath hindered you? Men's stays are within in their own hearts, they have no heart to do good, Hos. 7. 11. Love to Religion is almost gone, and this makes men weary in these pleasant ways: while affections hold, souls are never weary; but when the heart is gone, then everything is a burden; such will do no more than needs they must to quiet conscience, and preserve peace and credit; and this starves godliness.

Fourthly, Great and frequent losses in men's Trades tend to breaking; and so it is in Religion: Christians through their sloth, formality and unwatchfulness sustain many and great losses of spiritual mercies, and this brings them low. A Christian the other day, it may be, had his graces flourishing, his heart warm, his affections quick and lively, his conscience pure and tender, his will flexible, and fixed on God and things spiritual, 2 Ep. Joh. 8. and a good frame throughout his whole soul: but now through his

carelessness all is lost again, Gal. 3. 4. One time he loses the favor and comfortable presence of God, Psal. 51. 12. another time he loses a sweet serenity of spirit, and peace with God; then light and convictions are gone; another time enjoyments and experiences are gone; now his desires after God are lost, then his strength is devoured; now temptations prey upon the soul, and then corruptions make a waste upon it: come to Ordinances, Sermons, Sacraments, and after a great deal of prayer, care, and striving, a little grace and comfort is obtained; but through want of watchfulness all lost again: it may be before it stirs out of the place, or recovers home to his habitation; the next company, discourse, occasion, takes away all.

Another time God brings the soul into the fire of some great affliction, sickness, suffering, losses; and there melts it into some holy frames, humility, faith, love, obedience takes off some dross, puts on some beauty, imparts some soul advantage; but immediately upon a change of the person's condition, when new mercy, health and comfort returns, all the good is lost again. Now through these many and great losses in spirituals, which gracious souls sustain, they are brought very low, and come to be soon poor and beggarly.

Fifthly, Great wastes, and large expenses, help to make Traders poor apace; when they turn spendthrifts, and prodigals, living above their estates; when their laying's out are more than their comings in, this must needs bring them low: It undid the Steward; He wasted his Masters goods, Luke 16. 1. So 'tis with Wisdom's Merchants also, when they turn prodigals of their graces, mercies, parts, strength, time, and other goods committed to them, spending them on their lusts and carnal contentment's, then they soon find an alteration.

O, at what a rate do men live in point of time! and at what vast expenses of their short day upon things of no value, talking, eating,

drinking, sleeping, trifling, sinning away their precious time, as if they had no employment for it, or no better work to do: Little do souls think what a small pittance of day-light they have allowed for their vast concerns, and multitude of great employments; and what madness 'tis to be so prodigal of this little inch of precious time. O the hours, and days, and years that professing Christians spend to no purpose! in vain thoughts, foolish talking, impertinent converses, unprofitable duties and labors, which when they shall be all reckoned up by the great Creditor, and a bill of wastes put into the hands of conscience, and the total sum of these expenses read; what amazing sense! what dreadful impress! and fretful sting will this beget when persons come to die! As the Queen said, If her heart were ripped open, Cales would be found written in it: So if their hearts could then be as legible as their expressions, men might read this there in black, and capital letters, Lost time, Lost time.

How great also are men's wastes of graces and peace, wisdom and capacities, and all for the obtaining of some poor, empty, insignificant comforts, which perish with the using: There are no locusts (Christians) like your cursed lusts, which have devoured your precious things; your affections, time, strength and graces; what convictions, resolutions, hopeful frames, conscience-tenderness, talents, capacities, privileges, ordinances, providences, have the service of thy base lusts, and contentment of thy carnal mind consumed! and this hath brought thy soul to such straits and distressing exigencies.

When souls live above their capacities and proportion; that's casting back, when persons have little, and yet live high; have but a little light, and yet spend that too in works of darkness; have but a short day, and yet so many hours of that one day consumed in vanity; this is to live above thy estate, and will be soon impoverishing: When

men have but a little grace and strength, and yet adventure upon great temptations, and run into soul-ruining dangers, rush into vain company, set upon entangling affairs, and take much business on their hands, and yet have but a little portion of Wisdom and Grace to manage them; this is to live above thy estate in Christianity. To be low of stature, and yet high in conceit, of little spiritual worth, and yet think highly, and speak highly of thyself, and to expect estimation from others also, is to live above thy estate.

To have nothing to maintain thee but what comes in by thy soul labors; no longer work, no longer eat; thy daily bread depends upon thy daily work; so poor, and yet in this condition to expect an easy life, to lie down to slumber, to dwell carelessly, and set thy hand but by fits and starts to thy work: This is to live above thy spiritual estate, and will soon bring thee to breaking in this Heavenly Trade.

Sixthly, Great debts are breaking, and will cast men back in Wisdom's Merchandise; when men owe more than they are worth, and know not how to pay it; run further on book every day, till their credit will pass no longer; they have often promised payment, but still failed, and now their word will not pass, they can get no more goods, Creditors will not trust them, but begin to suspect them, and threaten to take them up, then men shut up shop and break: This also is pernicious to Heavenly Traders, when they become unfaithful to God and men, run on score for mercy, but never pay or render to God again; are deep in debt to God for divine goodness; receive one mercy after another, one talent after another, and make no returns of any; God sees not principal or interest, but they remain fruitless and unthankful under all; make promises of better improvements, but still break them: Come to Sacraments, and renew their Covenant with God, and go away and break it again; make promises to God under affliction, that if he will deliver them this once, they will never

grieve and provoke him more as they have done; make large engagements, if God will hear this prayer, and give that mercy; but when their turn is served, forget God, and break all their vows again; be ready to pass their word on every occasion, and then look after it no more; this begets a jealousy in the Lord of Hosts, that he will trust them no more, Deut. 32. 21. but hold his hand. and part with no more goods, but threatens to take them up, and to cast their souls into prison; begins to sue them in the Court of Conscience, and to out-law them at the bar of Justice, to seize on what they have; then away goes peace, joy, hope, and then comes breaking. These are some of those reasons why Christians go back in Religion, and decay in their Heavenly Trade. O Christians! bring the plummet to the line, and thy heart and life to the balance, and try from which of these comes thy soul-decays, and then get it to bear upon thy heart, till thou art fully convinced of thy evil, and willing on any terms to obtain remedy.

Advice 3.

Thirdly, Compound with your Creditor; get your peace made with God through Christ; make haste to prevent a seizure on your person and goods by a timely composition. Agree with your adversary while you are in the way with him, lest at any time he deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast into prison, Mat. 5. 25. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an ever-living God, who is a consuming fire, Heb. 10. 31. ch. 12. 29. O tremble in the sense of his righteous Judgment, and force not the Lord by thy delays to commence a suit against thee, and to make an entry upon all that thou hast; but go humble thyself, and make sure thy friend, Prov. 6. 3. Fall down before thy Creditor, and sue for terms of reconciliation; cast thyself at the feet of mercy, confessing thy sin: Pay the debt thou canst not; go beg remission, and offer a

Surety to discharge the score, even such a one as the Father himself is well pleased with: Thy Creditor must be satisfied or thou art undone; but this you can never do: Away to a Mediator to obtain terms, and to procure your peace; make Christ your friend, who is able to satisfy all the Father's demand, to cross the book and send your discharge by the Spirit of Grace, who can witness the pardon of all your sins to your consciences: Come to him in the sense of your folly, bearing your shame. Forsake your wasting ways, and with the prodigal return from your harlots to your Father's house, rating yourselves beneath the least of his mercies, and consenting to the meanest condition, so he would but take you in again, Luke 15. 17, 18, 20, 21. Subscribe all his terms, and make a new surrender of yourself and your All to Christ, to be no more your own, but more entirely his than ever, Jer. 50. 5. Enter into a new Covenant with God in Christ, taking him for your Surety, and fetching all your abilities to fulfil it from him, and get thy soul more firmly bound to the Lord in it by the bond of the Spirit.

Advice 4.

Fourthly, Set up no more for yourselves, but enter yourselves Factors for Christ. It may be you traded formerly for yourselves, and that broke you; if you would prevent that danger for the future, you must be no more for yourselves, but for him; trading as his Factours, not your own.

Now three things are required in a Factor, which must be observed also by wisdom's Merchants, if ever they will drive a thriving Trade in Godliness.

1. To trade upon another's Stock.
2. To be regulated by another's Advice.

3. To drive on another's Interest.

First, If you will be Christ's Factors, you must trade upon his stock; you must not only take all your goods from him, but as his; not only fetch in your graces, abilities, skill, success from him, but use and improve them as his, not as your own. Joh. 1. 16. Of his fullness have all we received grace for grace. 'Twas not only part of his fullness before it was received, but 'tis his grace after reception. Col. 1. 19. It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell: not only the fullness of the Divine Nature, but the fullness of habitual grace, both which are in Christ; the latter is chiefly intended here, which dwells in Christ as in a head, not for himself only, but for his body, as beams in the Sun, and water in the Fountain for the use of man. The Father hath laid up all that grace that Believers need here and forever in the Lord Jesus, as in a Treasury, or Trustee's hand, for their use; or made it over to him not only as a deed of gift, but as a purchase which he hath bought by his blood for the good and use of his children: 'It is his fullness, right and interest, but for their use and advantage, but so as the property and disposal be still his. Fallen man hath forever forfeited his credit with God since his first defection, to become anymore the disposer of his interests and inheritance, or be entrusted again with his own portion. God deals with saved souls as parents do with prodigal children, secures their estates in the hand of a Feoffee. Believers Treasures are laid up in Christ, that so grace as well as glory, sanctification and salvation may be sure to them, and not liable to forfeiture or loss; to be disposed of, and parted with by them as they please, but be certainly and eternally theirs, that so they may come to Christ for all they need, as heirs under age, who have no more in hand than what they want, but must come to their Overseers for all they have use of; and not only as such, but as Stewards also that must be accountable for what they have, and how they bestow it.

Poor decayed souls, Would you recover your losses, and renew your Trade? then you must come to Christ's fullness, and be beholding to his free grace for all you need. Do you want grace for your duties, places, trials, sufferings? come to Christ's fullness for your supplies; send to him by the hand of prayer an intimation of all your wants: Make known your requests to him. Phil. 4. 6. Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. Cease not from following God in the Name of Christ with requests, till the Spirit meet you with returns. The Lord Jesus hath ordained his people to receive their supplies, salaries, and stipends from Heaven in the Court of Requests. Matth. 7. 7. Ask, and you shall receive. All things whatever you shall ask in prayer believing you shall receive, Matt. 21. 22. Seek it by prayer, receive it by faith: Go to Christ in the promises for all you want, judging him faithful who hath promised, Heb. 11. 11. God's Word is as good as present pay, and shall be fulfilled by him (who cannot lie) to all that by faith receive it, and wait for its performance. All his promises are in Christ Yea and Amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20. Who came down from Heaven to confirm them with his blood, and is returned to Heaven to fulfil them by his intercession, Heb. 7. 25. You may boldly adventure on divine assurance, and shall not be ashamed, if you sincerely roll on Christ in his Word. Be well acquainted with the promises, clear up your interest in them by believing, and expect their fulfilling through Christ. It may be thy graces are low, thy corruptions high, guilt heavy, fears many, refuge fails, thy prayers not answered, no good news from Heaven or Earth; thou prayest, hopest, waitest, but no answer; in this case nothing but firm reliance on divine faithfulness, can keep thy head above water.

Are you in wants? go to that promise, My God shall supply all your wants, Phil. 4. 19. God will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. 84. v. 11. Do

you find changes in your spirits, and frames, and condition? See that word, Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe his Prophets, and you shall prosper, 2 Chron. 20. 20. Are corruptions high? apply that word, He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, Mic. 7. 19. Sin shall have no dominion over you; for you are not under the Law, but under grace, Rom. 6. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, Titus 2. 14. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, Joh. 3. 8. I will save her that halteth, Zeph. 3. 19. When thou seest nothing but withering's and dying's in thy soul, apply these promises; So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live, Isa. 38. 16. The righteous shall flourish like the Palm-tree, he shall grow like the Cedars of Lebanon: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God, thy shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing, Psal. 92. 11, 12, 13, 14. I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the Lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon: they that dwell under his shadow shall return, and shall revive as the corn, Hos. 14. 5, 6, 7. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, Isa. 40. 31. In these and such like promises, as in wagons sent of purpose to fetch you, go over to your Joseph, and get them laden with the riches of his Kingdom, that you may be relieved and carried on in your Trading for Heaven, improving these not as yours, but as your Lord's goods: That's the first, Trade upon Christ's Stock.

Secondly, Follow his instructions, be guided by his order in the management of your Heavenly Trade: Take Letters of Advice from your Creditor, how to lay out his moneys, and how to dispose of his goods. Prov. 3. 5. Lean not to your own understanding, which is the most close and subtle kind of Idolatry (saith Cartwright) Seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a

whoring, Numb. 15. 39. Man is mightily propense since his first defection from God, to take the Scepter into his own hand, and to become the governor of his own ways: But this God cannot bear, as being inconsistent with his Supremacy, and that State also into which man is by grace redeemed; which is an absolute devotedness unto God, 2 Cor. 8. 5. Ye have likewise chosen the Lord to be your Law-giver and King, if you are his, and are now upon your own consent determinable by his pleasure in everything you do: The rectitude of every action lies in a conformity to his will, who is your Lord and Sovereign. And as the eyes of a Handmaid wait on her Mistress; so should Believers on Christ for direction in all they do, Psal. 122. 3. Christians, your former irregularities in the prosecution of your Heavenly Trade, have almost lost you, and cast you back: O be more observant of Divine Instructions for the future! follow your advice, walk by Rule: As you have received how you ought to walk, and to please God; so abound more and more, 1 Thes. 4. 1. Beg Wisdom of God to know his Will in everything, to do that which is well-pleasing in his sight, having a warrant for every action you perform both civil and religious; this will be your comfort now, and your peace in the day of your accounts.

Thirdly, Drive on his interest, not your own. Rom. 14. 7. For none of us liveth to himself. God can more justly say what Laban did to Jacob concerning his children and goods; These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle; and all that thou seest is mine, Gen. 31. 43. The cattle on a thousand hills are his, Psal. 50. 10. with the corn, wine, wool and flax, Hos. 2. 9. Both the improvement as well as principal are his, Mat. 25. 27. He hath right to the exercise and fruit of your graces and duties, with all that you enjoy and do: Put Christ's mark on all your goods; whatever you gain by his talents, put on his account, and let your disbursements be expended to his use. Seek not your own

things, your credit, peace, comfort, interest, but in subordination to him: If the Lord by his Word calls for any of your enjoyments, you must let them go: If by his Providence he takes off any comfort, murmur not, say, 'tis the Lord, Let him do what he will with his own, Mat. 20. verse 15.

Advice 5.

Fifthly, Follow your Trade better than you have done; remember how former carelessness, formality, sloth, hypocrisy, have undone you, and amend. The slothful soul is as the door on his hinges, Prov. 26. 14. that never makes any progress in Religion, or comes to any excellency in grace. No Christian (saith Mr. Sedgwick) is so able in the habits of grace, as he who is conscientiously frequent in the practice or exercise of grace. [Christ's Counsel to his languishing Church] Would you recover your state, and come to any eminency in godliness, then make Religion your business: That slightness of spirit in the way of God, which lost you at first, will never restore you. The recovery of a faint soul (saith the same Author) will never be effected by faint workings: You did fall into your decayed state by remissive acting's, and think you, that which was not able to keep up your graces from sinking, can now quicken and raise them being sunk. [Christ's Counsel to his languishing Church, p. 148.] If negligence did cast you back, diligence must help to recover you: Take more pains with your hearts; follow your work of godliness every day, and in every place; Be early and late in your shops of duty, and in the warehouse of your hearts: Beware of spiritual sloth, and soul-losses; take heed of unfaithfulness with God, conscience, or others; keep touch with your Creditor; be tender of your vows to God and men; keep from prodigality; live not above your condition; waste not precious time, parts and grace in vain; walk strictly in the whole course of your life, keeping yourselves from iniquity, and in the Love

of God. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ, Jude v. 21. Tit. 2. 13.

5th. Branch of Exhortation to good Traders in Religion.

Lastly, You, whoever you are that drive on this Heavenly Merchandise, and have any good Trading in Religion, be you exhorted

Advice 1.

First, To bless God for good trading: Is it well with your souls? Doth the South-wind blow upon your Garden, and the Spices flow out? Cant. 4. 16. Doth the Fig-tree put forth her green Figs? and the Vine, with the tender Grape, give a good smell? Cant. 2. 13. What reason have you then to be always giving thanks? you whose trading turns to any spiritual advantage: thou canst say, 'It is good to draw nigh to God; in keeping his commands is great reward: The Lord is not a barren wilderness to thy soul; but peace is within thy Walls, and prosperity within thy Palaces, Psal. 122. 7. Thy glory is fresh in thee, and thy bow renewed in thy hand: thy root spreadeth out by the waters, and the dew lying all night between thy branches, Job 29. 19, His ways are pleasantness, and his steps drop fatness to thy soul; and he commands his blessing upon thee; and thy faith and love do grow. Is it thus in any measure with thee? O then bless the Lord with thy soul; let all that is within thee bless his holy Name. Make the Lord thy glory, and triumphing praise: Thou hast abundant reason to be admiring grace, and exalting divine glory. Because,

First, Soul-thriving is a great mercy at all times; a little spiritual goods is beyond all the World's treasure; one piece of Christ's tried Gold weighs down all the Pearls and Diamonds on earth; and whatever can be found below grace, cannot be compared with it, Job.

28. 11, 12, 16. or named the same day with it: The light of God's countenance, pardon of sin, participation of the spirit, fulfilling of Promises, fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit; heart breathings after, love to, and delight in God, are things of inestimable worth; if you weigh them in themselves, or with other things; or if you consider the grace from whence they come, or price which they cost: Spiritual thriving's are an evidence of sincere love to God. Judge. 5. 31. Let them that love thy Name be as the Sun that goeth forth in his might, and of special love in God to that soul, Tit. 3. 4, 6. Eph. 1. 3, 5, 7. God may prosper in the World those he hates; Esau had his fat things here, but grace and peace are new-covenant-blessings, which spring from eternal love in the heart of God to that soul, Heb. 8. 10. Zech. 8. 11, 12, 15.

Secondly, 'It is a singular mercy at this time, a mercy that few enjoy in the day we live in: What a rare thing is it, in this long winter, to see a green Olive, a tender Grape appear, or Pomegranate bud? Cant. 7. 6. or one Berry in the uppermost branch, Isa. 24. 13. It was a peculiar glory put upon the head of Thyatira, that she was thriving when other Churches were decaying: She had works, and works, and the last were more than the first, Rev. 2. 19. Ephesus had lost her first love; Sardis had decayed and wasted her first strength, and was ready to die: Laodicea was luke-warm, ready to be spewed out by the Lord Jesus, Rev. 3. 1, 8, 16. only Thyatira flourished exceedingly, and grew in the winter; and this honor she had, to have it recorded by the Spirit for a monument in after-ages. 'It is not the lot of everyone to thrive in evil times; few Thessalonians whose faith and love did grow, 2 Thes. 1. 3. A single Timothy, who had flourishing affections to the things of Christ; I have no man like minded, Phil. 2. 20. One Gaius, whose soul out-prospered his body, 3 Ep. Joh. v. 2. A flourishing Christian this day is like a flower in winter, an Apple-tree amongst the trees of the wood: Surely, if there be a Soul who this day

flourishes to any height of Christianity, who lives in intimacy with God, fares deliciously in his soul, feeding on marrow, and hidden manna; that he or she is greatly beloved of God. Thy lot, O soul, is fallen in a peculiar plot of mercies ground; and should not the Lord Jesus be admired of such a one, seeing he is come to him in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel? O bless God for this unspeakable gift!

Thirdly, 'It is an earnest of eternal mercy: They that sow to the spirit shall reap life everlasting, Gal. 6. 8. And such as abound in holiness, shall have an abundant entrance administered to them into the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior, 2 Tet. 1. 11. God will never throw away savory salt to the dunghill, nor burn up fruitful branches: Trees full of sap are the Lord's trees, which he will transplant into his Paradise above, Psal. 104. 16. The Lord's ripe fruit shall be gathered, not shaken on the ground; and safely housed in Heaven. Grace is too precious seed to be lost; Such as sow it now, though in tears, shall surely come again, and bring their sheaves with them, Psal. 126. 5.

Poor troubled Soul, God will not despise the day of thy small things, much less thy soul enlargements after him; he will be tender of thy smallest blossoms, and secure them into fruit; much more shall thy increases arrive to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ, Eph. 4. 15. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have shewn towards his name, Heb. 6. 10. It may be thou hast forgotten many a duty and hearty testimony of thy love to Christ, his name, people and ways; and canst see nothing in all thou hast done, but art ready to say on every turn; When saw I thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw I thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or sick, and in prison, and came to thee? Matth. 25. 35. But God cannot be so unrighteous to forget it, or let it pass so; but keeps a record of all thy

meanest duties, and will make the most of them in the day of righteous judgment. I know thy works, and thy labors, and thy patience, &c. Rev. 2. 2. When thou wast under the Fig-tree I saw thee, Joh. 1. 48. He takes notice of a Daniel by the river Hiddekel; of a Peter on the house-top; of Elijah under the Juniper-tree, 1 King. 19. 4, 5. yea, of what was but in David 's heart to do, and requites it, 8 King. 8. 18. Will not an Ahasuerus let the good deeds of Mordecai go unrewarded? and shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right, and crown the works of his own hands? Your labors shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. O then be blessing God for the least good he hath wrought in you, and for you, for any prosperity in your souls. There are no offerings come up with that acceptance on God's Altar, as thanksgiving-offerings, Psal. 69. 30, 31. What a delightful remark did the Lord Jesus put upon the Lepers return to praise him for cleansing, Luke, 17. 18. the more spiritual, the more rejoicing, Isa. 52. 8. No such thriving souls, as God-praising souls: Jer. 31. 12. Therefore they shall come, and sing in the height of Zion; and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord for Wheat, and for Wine, and for Oil; and their soul shall be as a watered Garden, and they shall not sorrow anymore at all.

Quest. How might I know whether I have good trading in Spirituals or no, that I might have ground for rejoicing in God? Could I find this soul-welfare you speak of, I should bless God with my whole soul; but I fear 'tis otherwise; that I am one of those who fall back, and decay in my heavenly Trade.

Sol. There are seven signs of good Trading, especially in evil times; which men usually reckon to be discoveries of a thriving Trade.

First, When men go not back in the World, but hold their own, they lose nothing: 'It is much in bad times to keep ones ground; to be

savers in such a season is a piece of gain: Try in this how 'tis with you; do not you go back in your spiritual estate? is it not worse with you than heretofore? Is not your faith, love, humility, patience less than heretofore? If you go not back in grace, you go forward; there's no standing at a stay in Religion, men go forward or backward in the way of Virtue; they that do not decay, do thrive in Spirituals: Job proves his good estate by his standing fast in shaking times: Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lip; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food: My foot hath held his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined, Job 23. 10, 11, 12. and thence concludes a gainful issue: When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold. And the Apostle reckons it good profit, in soul-conflicts, to stand one's ground; if he cannot gain, yet not to lose: But having done all, to stand, is victory, Eph. 6. 13. Christians have their winter seasons, when growing is not visible; then to keep alive, is commendable. Do you hold fast your integrity? and keep your garments on? Do you preserve your conscience pure from the defilements and temptations of the day and place you live in? and your hearts unspotted from the World? your desires as warm, your purposes of cleaving to God as firm, and your feet as quick to run the way of God's commandments as heretofore? then have you good trading, considering the times you live in, which is an hour of temptation, and an evening of darkness.

Secondly, If wares go off well, 'tis good trading; when goods vend at a good rate, men count it thriving. Is it so with your souls? do your prayers come up to God with acceptance? do duties turn to any profit to you? what returns have you of your religious services? do hearing, prayer, conference, bring you any soul-advantage? do not goods lie by you undisposed of? but your graces are exercised, your talents, gifts, opportunities, improved; then 'tis good Trading. If the Lord give you light, you lay it out for the good of others; if he restore to

you the joy of his salvation, and uphold you with his free Spirit, you teach transgressors his ways, and endeavor to convert sinners to him, Psal. 51. 12, 13. When God drops in comfort to you, you pour it forth to others, that they may be comforted also with the same comforts wherewith you are comforted of God, 2 Cor. 1. 4. When you are come to duties public or private, do graces go out in them? you show parts it may be, but do you lay out grace as well as gifts, spiritual as well as natural affections? Do you pray with the Spirit, and hear with Faith? do hope, fear, humility, holy fervency, heavenly breathings, sincerity, go off in your religious duties? when you meet with company, what goods do you put off to them? Do you labor in every society to vend something of heavenly wares, to put off some holy counsel and instruction, some gracious experience and observation, to leave something behind you in every place and company you come, that may fasten a savor of God on them? then is it good Trading, and you are in a soul-thriving way.

Thirdly, Men count it good Trading, when they are richer in stock, when they have more goods, more variety, greater quantity of wares, than first they had, and that clear too, and paid for; their shops and warehouses are fuller than they were, and the goods their own also; this men reckon good Trading: And can you say 'tis thus with your souls also? Are you increased with spiritual goods? your graces are more as well as gifts, your faith, love, hope, fear, are more grown, and stronger than they were, 2 Thes. 1. 3. Can you trust God more than you could, and hang upon a naked promise more strongly than you could, when sight fails? 2 Cor. 5. 7. Can you think well of God when he frowns upon you? Can you love him when he corrects you? Isa. 39. 8, Can you stay on him when he strips you of your visible comforts, and cleave to him when he seems to reject you? Job 13. v. 15. Then are you richer in stock.

Is your Faith more cleansing and quickening, your Love more warming, your Zeal more fervent, your Hope more adventurous, your Patience more bearing, your Joy more delighting, your Humility more self-abasing? then are you increased with goods. Have you more of every grace; it may be at first you had much affection, but little sincerity; great desires, but little faith; much comfort, but little patience and self-denial; you could pray, talk, rejoice, do some duties, but could not bear trials, want comforts, live by faith when sight failed; you were much it may be in some duties, but negligent in others; but now you have more variety of graces, enlargement in duties, and more universal respect to all God's commands, Psal. 119. 6. And if you are less in the bulk of duty, you are more in the spirit of it; when 'tis thus, there's a thriving Trade in Christianity.

Fourthly, Are you less in debt than you were? that's another sign of good Trading: Do you make conscience of rendering to God again for all his benefits? Psal. 116. 12, 13. Is it your trouble when you are behind-hand with grace, and fall in arrear to the mercy of God by your unthankfulness? Dan. 9. 10. Indeed, in compensation of the grace of God you are defective; to make requitals of mercies you cannot; you see possibly an infinite shortness in your performances of the meanest favor that the Lord bestows upon you; but such as you have, you give to the Lord; you render all possible praises, though not all praises due, Exod. 15. 2. This you are careful of, and charge upon your hearts every day, to walk as becometh the grace that brings salvation, and the mercies bestowed on you: 'tis the desire of your heart and labor, to walk worthy of God to all well pleasing, and to answer the end of mercy in which you are willing beyond your ability, and grieve at your falling short herein: Now this doth the Lord count for the deed, and accept at his people's hands, as full pay, through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 8. 12. And where 'tis thus that persons live in the daily sense of Divine Grace, and grateful

acknowledgment of every mercy, there is a thriving Trade in spirituals.

Fifthly, Have you much owed you, and is it secure? This also bespeaks a thriving Trade: Men count sure debts as good as ready money; though they have little in bags, yet if they have the more in book, and good debt too, they rate themselves accordingly, and reckon themselves worth so much as is due, as well as to what is in hand: And is it so with you Christians? are you rich in promises? is much coming to you upon a new-covenant score? It may be you have little in hand, little comfort, peace and sweetness you meet with from day today: You sow much, but reap little; you ask, but have not, and yet seek with your whole heart: Goods are received, but no money returned; if so, you have good grounds of hope for a plentiful harvest, because you sow store of good seed; are much in holy duties, and sincere in them; many a prayer upon the file, many a tear dropped into God's bottle, much grace laid out in duty, and time spent in it, a daily care to please God, and upon Scripture grounds can lay claim to many a promise on the account of Christ: What you sow, you shall reap, Gal. 6. 8. Your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, 2 Cor. 15. v. 58. Say unto the righteous, it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings, Isa. 3. 10. And the less is received, the more is behind. Improvements of grace do book down many a mercy for Believers, which possibly they may not receive all their life, and yet be sure, and turns to account in the Inheritance prepared for them; and this is good Trading which brings in bonds and bills that are sure, and shall be paid to Heavenly Traders in their own Country.

Sixthly, That's good Trading where the present incomes maintain the Trader, and so much is got by it as they may live by; when a person can live comfortably upon his getting's, without impairing the stock: If it be so with the Believer in thy Heavenly Trade, then hast thou

good Trading. Try Christians, your thriving by your livelihood! can you live comfortably upon the fruits of Religion, Cant. 2. 3. Isa. 40. 31. doth your Religion maintain your Souls and Graces well? Joh. 4. 30. at what rate do you live? Men that thrive in the world usually live well, have good fare, and good clothing: Diet, Apparel, Expenses, do soon show men's getting's; Indeed Prodigals may spend high, live well for a time, but then they cannot hold it; they soon break, but when men can bear liberal expenses, and their Estates not impaired, it argues such do thrive apace, and get well in their Trades; so 'tis with thriving Christians, they ordinarily live at a higher rate of peace and comfort than others, Ps. 119. 165. Ps. 80. 19. their fare is better, unless the health of their Souls do sometimes call to fasting and affliction; strong Christians, overcoming Souls, have better Provisions promised them than others: such feed on hidden Manna, Rev. 2. 17. and marrowy bits; milk is for babes, but strong meat for strong men, Prov. 21. 15. 'It is joy to the just to do judgment: Joy and Pleasure (saith Mercer) is the fruit of well-doing to such: Such can expend more than others, who have larger proportion of Blessings on their Souls. A person may be truly gracious, and yet live uncomfortably in his Soul, and in the ways of God; but he that thrives in Godliness, hath larger incomes of sweetness and peace, and makes many a merry meal on the review of his integrity, and the grace of God in and towards him, Psal. 112. 2.

Seventhly, Laying's up, as well as laying's out bespeaks good Trading, when men fill their bags and enlarge their possessions, turn Purchasers, and begin to join house to house, and field to field, then they manifestly show their thriving's: So when Souls thrive in their Heavenly Trade, they begin to lay up for Heaven, and to be preparing for another world; they lay up Treasure in Heaven, Mat. 6. 21. get bags that wax not old: weak Christians are all for their comforts here, how they may maintain their peace and pleasure in the way; but

strong Christians, thriving Souls, they have their thoughts upon their journeys end, and to make provisions for their future state: Bread and Water contents them here, Gen. 28. 20. a little spending Money in the way to help them home is all they indent for: But their chiefest care is to lay up for Heaven; When shall I provide for mine own house, saith Jacob, Gen. 30. 30? So the thriving Christian is thoughtful about his house in Heaven, to make all the provisions he can for that; he will lay up in store a good foundation to lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. 6. 19. he is for securing all he can for Heaven, and for such works as will follow him; he will turn all he may into moveable's, that he may transmit them into his Country. The interests of this world are staked down to the earth, and cannot be removed; but thriving Christians are for such goods as they can knock up, and carry with them to their own home: They strive to pray, hear, think, speak, do, suffer, and all for eternity: their affections are gone before to Heaven, while their bodies are imprisoned in the World. As 'tis said of the Athenians, when besieged by Sylla, their hearts were with him without the walls, while their bodies were forced to serve within. So 'tis with enriched Christians; the World is a Prison to them, a strange Country where they have been sent to trade; and when they have filled their sacks, and got all they can, they long to depart into their own Country. By these things (Christians) may you know what kind of Trade you drive for Heaven; and what share you have in this great engagement to thanksgiving.

Object. All this makes against me, and confirms my just fears that I am a stranger to spiritual thriving's; I now see 'tis a pitiful Trade I drive in godliness: I profess, hear, pray, perform duties, enjoy privileges, but am never the better. O how may I write lost labor on all my performances! I need no greater proof than these evidences; nor other judge than my own conscience, to convince my languishing soul of daily wastes and poverty in my heavenly Trade: What shall I

do to get my case mended, and once attain to true thriving's in this holy Calling.

Sol. There are four things which usually make men thriving in their earthly Trades; which do also contribute to prosperity in this heavenly Merchandise.

1. A provident care.
2. A diligent hand.
3. A secret trade.
4. A divine blessing.

First, Men that are thriving in the World are provident and careful to prevent their dangers, to secure their interests, and proportion means to their advantage. And so must Christians that think ever to flourish in godliness: what losses and miscarriages in Religion might a provident care prevent? were temptations way-laid, and corruptions timely guarded against, souls might escape many surprises of sin, and abatements in grace: Never think to prosper in holiness, till you are provident to prevent its weakening's, and contribute all you may towards its strength and enlargement. One enjoys a good frame of soul, much peace and joy in believing; and for want of watchfulness loseth all again. Another hath got a little power over his corruptions for a time, and for want of a provident care to avoid ensnaring occasions, is overcome again. Another hath a choice advantage put into his hand for spiritual good, but not exercising a timely care and preparation to improve it, miscarries in all his hopes and labors; and by these changes and interruptions their spiritual welfare is impeded: Go learn of the Ant, she provideth her meat in Summer, Prov. 6. 6, 8. Be wise as Serpents, they decline danger as

soon as seen, and guard their noblest part, though with the hazard of their All, Matth. 19. 16. Walk circumspectly as wise, Eph. 5. 15. O how happy might Christians be, were they as provident for their souls as they are for their bodies! and did exercise their reason, care and fore-sight to further their spiritual interests; and without this provident care, never think to prosper in this heavenly Merchandise. Take heed of grace-wasting sins, of any secret lust allowed, or sweet morsel rolled under your tongue, that will prove a moth in your spiritual estate, and keep you low in your heavenly interests. Souls under some perplexing lust, are like Israel under the prevailing hand of Midian against them, Judge. 6. 3, 4, 6. When Israel had sown, the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the East, and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither Sheep, nor Ox, nor Ass;—and Israel was greatly impoverished: So 'tis with such; no sooner have they got any mercy, frame, experience, hope, or soul-advantage, but presently a prevailing lust riseth up, and destroys all: Cry unto the Lord as Israel did, until he deliver you from every iniquity: make no peace with any corruption, never let it rest till wholly destroyed if you think to prosper in your souls and conversations. Be provident also to take all advantages for godliness, watching your opportunities for every duty, keeping every soul-market and fair, and taking the best season to lay out grace, and get in profit, Prov. 8. 34. Be careful to get some good from everything, and to keep and save what you have; and this will tend to soul-thriving, Acts 2. 46.

Secondly, A diligent hand tends to thriving; men that prosper in the World take pains, and follow their employments; rising early, sitting up late, neglecting no business that may help on to profiting. So must you that intend to thrive in Religion; you must make it your business, you must be laborers in God's Vineyard, Joh. 6. 27. and workmen

indeed that need not be ashamed, 2 Tim. 2. 15. Christians for the most part are too slothful in their spiritual business, to have their profiting appear: it will cost you more striving to enter into the strait-gate, and get ground in the narrow way that leads to life; more blows must pass before your enemies will down, and more strokes at your work before your interests will come in: Running, striving, wrestling; in labors more abundant, in weariness, and painfulness, in watching's: What pains will men take for the World? She riseth also while it is night, —Her candle goeth not out by night: That neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes. Ye compass Sea and Land; and should they not much more for Heaven? The most diligent soul is the most thriving soul; Always abounding in the work of the Lord; instant in season, and out of season; taking every opportunity for Heaven: And what their hand finds to do, to do it with all their might; this is the way to soul-thriving, 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25. Heb. 12. 4. Eph. 6. 12. 1 Cor. 11. 23, 27. Prov. 31. 15. 18. Eccles. 8. 16. Matth. 23. 15. Eccles. 9. 10.

Thirdly, Driving a secret Trade of holiness, is soul-thriving: Men that have some peculiar art, and unknown mystery in their Trade which is not ordinary and common, usually get greatest custom and advantage: So is it in this heavenly Trade; the more men are taken up in the mysteries of Godliness, 1 Tim. 3. 16. the more they thrive in Religion. There's a secret in holiness, which no stranger intermeddles with, Prov. 14. 10. There's a way within the veil; the hidden part in which souls are made to know wisdom; Psal. 51. 6. Hidden riches of secret places, which thriving Christians meet with, Isa. 45. 3. If you would prosper in Godliness, be sure to maintain the secret duties of piety: The religion of most men lies in the Market place, and in the view of others; their hearts, their closets are not privy to any secret transactions between God and their souls; and in the praise of men they have their reward: but the thriving trade of

Christianity, is the secret trade. Christians be most in those duties which men least observe, and chiefly excellent in the invisible part of your visible work: Public duties are most honorable, but secret duties the most gainful. Matth. 6. 4. And thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Fourthly, The blessing of God maketh rich: Prov. 10. 22. Promotion cometh not from the East, nor from the West; nor prosperity from men's fingers ends, but from God's hand. Deut. 28. 8, 10, 11, 12. The Lord shall command his blessing upon thee; in thy store-houses, and in all which thou settest thy hand unto:—The Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods:—The Lord shall open to thee his good treasures; the Heavens to give thee rain to thy Land in his season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: (and then comes riches) And thou shalt lend unto many Nations, and thou shalt not borrow: Prosperity, both spiritual and temporal, comes at God's sending: Psal. 118. 25. O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity: Psal. 18. 32, 33. He restoreth my Soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness: Psal. 23. 3, 5. Thou anointest my head with Oil: Thou blessest the springing thereof; thy paths drop fatness: Psal. 65. 10, 11. The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered Garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not, Isa, 58. 11. I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the Lily, and cast forth his root as Lebanon, Hos. 14. 5. Secure an interest in the promises, and get your souls brought under the showers of blessing, if ever you think to thrive in godliness. Improve thriving graces, and take prosperous courses; these are under a promise of blessing: though every grace and duty do in their measure help on soul prosperity, yet there are some graces and duties have a more special influence on spiritual thriving's.

First, Faith is a soul-prospering grace: 2 Chr. 20. 20. Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper. Eph. 6. 16. Above all take the shield of Faith, wherewith ye shall quench all the fiery darts of Satan, <H&G>, insuper, Bez. Every grace is useful in the spiritual warfare, but Faith especially: other graces may (with Saul) slay their thousands; but Faith (with David) slays its ten thousands: Some darts may be quenched by other graces, but Faith quenches fiery darts, yea all the fiery darts of Satan, which does wonderfully further thriving: The just shall live by Faith, Heb. 10. 38. Faith will maintain the soul's life in the greatest straits and exigencies: Faith is a receiving grace, it takes in whatever is laid up in the promise; and that's thriving. Gal. 3. 22. That the promise by Faith might be given to them that believe. A soul-enriching grace, rich in Faith, Jam. 2. 5. A working grace, And the work of Faith with power, 2 Thes. 2. 4. A powerful grace; it gives the soul experience of the mighty power of God. Eph. 1. 19. 20. What is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, 1 Thes. 2. 13. 'It is a strengthening grace: Out of weakness were made strong, Heb. 11. 34. through it doth the Lord let out his abundant grace: And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 1. 14. It doth exceedingly nourish the soul in grace, and edify it to salvation: 1 Tim. 4. 6. Nourished up in the words of Faith, 1. Tim. 1, 4. Which minister questions rather than edifying which is in Faith: One reason why souls prosper no more in piety is their unbelief; they are full of doubting's, fears, and questionings upon every turn, still wavering as a wave of the Sea; such cannot receive much at the hand of God, but are still weak, and going back in Religion. Be much in believing the promises against hope, and above fears, if ever you think to prosper in Religion.

Secondly, Love to God, his Name, ways and interest is a Soul-prospering Grace. Let them that love him, be as the Sun that goeth forth in his might: Judge. 5. 31. They shall prosper that love thee, Psal. 122. 6. Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee, for thou Lord wilt bless the righteous, with favor wilt thou compass him as with a Shield, Psal. 5. 11, 12. Love to God must needs be a prospering Grace, because it brings the Soul under the blessing of God, and within the compass of his securing Shield, Love is a Soul-strengthening and establishing Grace. Eph. 3. 17, Being rooted and grounded in Love, <H&G>, set in a firm ground, not easily shaken from God or their integrity. Love makes a growing Soul. Eph. 4. 15, Speaking the truth in love may grow up in him, who is the head in all things. It helps on edification in Grace, ver. 16. maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love: Love constrains the Soul after God, makes his commands pleasant, and quickens the heart to make hast in the way to Glory; the more you love God, the more will you prosper in Godliness.

Thirdly, Humility is a Soul-prospering Grace, and under a promised Blessing. Prov. 29. 23, Honor shall uphold the humble in spirit; shall bear him up from falling, and bring him unto honor (saith Montanus) Prov. 15. 33, By humility are riches and honor: The humble Soul must needs be a thriving Soul, for God giveth Grace to it, Jam. 4. 6. yea, dwelleth with the humble to revive the Spirit of the humble, Isa. 57. 15. There's a great deal of Pride in most Christians, and that hinders Soul-thriving, proud of Parts and Grace, proud under seeming humility, proud of humility; Low Valleys are fruitful, when lofty Mountains are barren: The rich sit in a low place: Eccl. 10. 6, Such as are rich in wisdom (saith Mercer) they sit in a low place; they come down, and lie low in themselves, folly is set in great dignity: Poor, foolish, empty Creatures, they are high in conceit as well as place, many times; but the most rich and thriving Souls, these

are poorest in Spirit, and lowest in their own eyes; the richer the Metal, the heavier; Gold weighs down Silver and Tin; the fuller of fruits branches are, the more they bow: He sendeth the springs into the valleys, Psal. 104. 10. Psal. 65. 13. They are covered over with Corn: Vineyards thrive best in low places: One branch of Grapes from the Valley of Eshcol, was said to be a burden for two men, Numb. 13. 23. would you flourish in Grace? take heed of Pride: Pride in the Soul, (saith one) is like the spleen in the body, when that swelleth, all the other parts languish: 'tis poison at the root of the tree, which corrupts the sap—'It is so dangerous a poison, that of another poison there was confected a counterpoison to preserve Paul from it: would you prosper in Godliness? be persons of low, humble spirits, (Mr. Adams on 2 Pet.) 2 Cor. 12. 7. Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high, Ezek. 21. 26.

Fourthly, Another choice fruit of the Spirit which will further Soul-thriving, is sincerity: Prov. 14. 11, The tabernacle of the upright shall flourish: They shall have good things in possession, Prov. 28. 10. they shall not only be preserved from evil, and escape the pit into which the wicked fall; but shall be sure to meet with good; Blessings, good things shall be given to them as their inheritance, as Aquila and Theodosius interpret it, <H&G>, Thou showest mercy to thy Servants, that walk before thee with all their heart, 2 Chron. 6. 14. He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his Soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his Salvation, Psal. 24. 4, 5. Upright Souls must needs prosper, they dwell in the presence of God, Psal. 140. 13. He will withhold no good thing from them, Psal. 84. 11. His countenance beholds them, Psal. 11. 7. God engages his all sufficiency for their good, Gen. 17. 1. They shall hold on their way, and wax stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9. and shall surely prosper. 2 Chron. 31. 21, In every work that he began in the service of the house

of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered: 'tis not thy many Duties before God, but the Oneness of thy heart with God: nor the bulk of thy Services, but the sincerity of thy Soul, which will make thee prosperous in thy heavenly interests.

Four Ways to Prosperious Trade

Again, Take thriving courses, prosperous ways, as well as prospering Graces, these are under a promised Blessing also. Not to multiply particulars: There are four thriving ways in which Christians may attain to a prosperous Trade in Christianity.

The way of

1. Self-Examination.
2. Prayer.
3. Enjoyment of God.
4. Obedience.

First, Be often examining; and calling yourselves to an account how matters stand with your Souls: Traders that would be thriving will be often viewing their Books, and trying their Accompts, and have some set days, when they survey their Goods, cast up their Books, and try whether they gain, or lose; and so must Christians that would profit in Religion, they must be often judging themselves, that they be not judged, 1 Cor. 11. 31. they must cast up their accounts, and try their state whether they go forward or backward: Hag. 1. 5. Consider your

ways: try how the case stands with you, whether you get or lose, and what's the cause of all those blasting's that are upon you, Psal. 4. 4, Commune with your hearts upon your beds, and be still: 2 Cor. 13. 5, Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates. The neglect of this examination is one cause of that great mistake of persons about their Soul-state, some thinking themselves better, Rev. 3. 17. others judging themselves worse than they are: which begets security in some, discouragement in others, error and sloth in all. A right estimate of thy spiritual capacity, either poverty or riches, gain or loss is absolutely needful to regulate thy duty unto a right affecting of thy heart, and advance of thy spiritual interests: Look over the Day-book of thy heart and life every night, posting all thy accounts on the large book of thy Conscience, and take some special time for a more full survey of thy Soul and state for Eternity; this will be of good use to further Soul-thriving.

Secondly, If you would prosper in your Souls, be much and mighty with God in Prayer: 'It is said of Uzziah, that he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper, 2 Chron. 26. 5. Right Prayer is a wonderful way to Soul enrichings: He (saith one) can never be poor that can pray well: One reason why this King prospered as long as he sought the Lord, was, by this means he came to the visions of God, and that helped him to take a right way to prosperity. By Prayer you advise with God, what course to take towards mercy: 'tis your Ephod by which you ask counsel of God where to go to shun danger, and what to do to carry on Duty, and obtain Mercy, 2 Sam. 23. 6. 9. Chap. 30. 7. and by Prayer you procure and get out the Graces and Supplies you need, 1 Chron, 4. 10, And Jabesh called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldst bless

me indeed, and enlarge my coasts, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me: and God granted him that he requested. Prayer brings down the Spirit sometimes insensible and almost intolerable measures thereof. When that precious Servant of the Lord Mr. Bruce in Scotland (of whom King James said he was worthy of the half of his Kingdom) had sadly represented the Churches case, then under eminent danger, there was such a sensible down-pouring of the Spirit, that they could hardly contain themselves; yea, an unusual motion on those who were in other parts of the house, not knowing the cause of it at that time. O what great things did Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Jehoshaphat, Samuel, Elijah, and other Servants of God, get out of the hand of God! Luther was a mighty man in Prayer, 'tis said of him, he could get of God what he would, nothing is too hard for Faith and Prayer, because it seeks nothing but what God is willing to spare, and hath promised to give: Labor to get a mighty Spirit of Prayer; the gift of Prayer will not do, it must be the Spirit of Prayer, which is a pure, and heart cleansing Spirit, and cannot dwell with the least regarded Sin: Gifts of Prayer with natural affections may be mighty on the Spirits of men, but are no way prevailing with God for the Blessing: 'It is said of Naaman, He was a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper, 2 Kings 5. 1. So there are some that seem mighty men in Prayer, and can wonderfully raise the affections of others; pray like Angels, but all the while are Lepers, under the ruling power of some secret lust; pride, passion, covetousness, uncleanness, and the like, which they hide under their tongue; but such are far from this mighty power of prayer, which brings down the Spirit on their own hearts or others. Ah Christians! if you would prosper in grace, get and improve the Spirit of Grace and Supplication.

Thirdly, Another thriving way is to engage God with you in all your undertakings. 'Twas this made Joseph so prosperous in all he did;

God was with him. Gen. 39. 23. Because the Lord was with him; and that which he did, he made it to prosper: 2 Sam. 5. 10. And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him: 'Twas not his wisdom, valor, nor any means he used, but the gracious presence of God with him that made him to grow so great: This made Solomon to prosper; 2 Chron. 22. 11. Now my Son, the Lord be with thee, and prosper thee. When persons lose the gracious presence of God, they soon find an alteration, and begin to wither and decay in their soul-comforts and prosperity: Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled, Psal. 30. 6. Troubled like a withered flower, that loseth sap and vigor, [Mr. Leigh.] Jonah soon found a change in his soul; it ceased to be with him as before, when once he fled from the presence of God: He never had a good day after he lost the presence of God, but storms, tempests, shipwreck of peace, safety and prosperity, and a casting into the deeps of distress, and ruining dangers, Jonah. 1. 3, 10. Ah Christians! as you love your souls, and your spiritual welfare, take heed of losing God's gracious presence; whose company soever you lose, keep the Lord's presence with you; abide with him, and he will abide with you: 2 Chron. 15. 2. The Lord is with you while you be with him; and if you seek him, he will be found of you: Put away the unclean thing, and he will dwell in you, and walk in you, 2 Cor. 6. 16. Love him, and keep his commandments, and he will take up his abode with you, Joh. 14. 23. Content not yourselves with any privilege except you have God with you: If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence, Exod. 33. 15. I protest (saith Mr. Bruce, when wrestling for the presence of God with him in his going to preach) I will not go except thou go with me.

Fourthly, Follow the counsel of God, if you would thrive in the work and way of God: Josh. 1. 8. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for

then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success: Jer. 38. 20. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord which I speak unto thee; so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. One cause why men prosper no more in Religion, is, that little conscience they make of doing the will of God: men hear, but forget the word; others know their Lord's will, but prepare not themselves to do it. We live in an age of notions, not of motion after God; like men that see Countries in a Map, but care not to travel into them; bare knowledge pleaseth most: Men's zeal after truth, is like Absalom 's love to his Father David, only to see him, not to serve him: 2 Sam. 14. 32. Let me see the King's face; which he no sooner did, but conspired against him: So most care for no more than to behold truth, not to dwell with it; and hence 'tis that prosperity is such a stranger to them: 'Twas not directions could heal Naaman of his leprosy, but obedience; he was never the better till he followed the Prophet's counsel, and washed in Jordan: that which made the ground rained upon, to be nigh to cursing, was not bringing forth fruit meet for them, by whom 'twas dressed, Heb. 6. 8. Do not only seek after, but walk after the truth, if you think to prosper in Religion, Jam. 1. 25. The doers of the word shall be blessed in their deed.

Object. 'It is the desire of my soul to live in the exercise of every grace, and discharge of every duty; and some weak endeavors I have had, though too too short; with many cries for this soul-prosperity, but cannot yet attain unto it: Methinks I am like a withered arm, a dry tree, and barren womb, nothing doth me good; no food, seed or showers make me thriving and fruitful: I fear I shall be at last cut down, and bundled for the fire.

Sol. First, Thou mayest thrive in Religion, and not know it for a season; thy profiting may be, though not appear: The Tradesman

may bring home gain in his purse, though untold: men know not their getting's till they cast up their accounts: thy prosperity may be as a casked Jewel, and friend under disguise. If you would estimate your advantage, survey yourselves, compare your present with your former state; what were you? what are you? speak out soul: was there not a time when thou wert blind, thou couldest see no evil in sin, nor excellency in grace? but now thy eye is opened, and things appear otherwise to thy soul than they did: Now there is nothing so vile as thy wicked heart, and ways; and nothing so desirable as Christ and holiness.

Thou wert once dead in sin, thou didst not feel or fear any hurt in it, or danger by it; but now 'tis otherwise: thou canst not sin, but thy conscience smites thee: nor God threaten, but it affrights thee: thy quick-eyed conscience soon espies the least failing in thy duty, falseness in thy heart, or error in thy life; and, as a Serjeant, arrests thee, and hales thee to the Judge. Thou couldest formerly live without God, and be as still as the dead body in the grave, and the burning brand in the fire: but now as a bone out of joint, thou art restless till in communion with him: I remembered God, and was troubled, Psal. 77. 3.

Thou wert gone out of the way; yea an enemy to the way of life, turned aside to the flock of his companions, and didst turn again, and rend those that were of them. But now thou art folded with the flocks of Christ, and feedest besides the Shepherds Tents, Cant. 1. 8. Thy foot hath held his steps, and thou esteemest the word of his mouth more than thy necessary food, Job 23. 11, 12.

Object. But may not a hypocrite go so far, and all this be no more than a change from darkness to conscience-light, and from sin to common grace.

Sol. Common light cannot see a desirableness in Christ for himself, nor bring the soul to count all things dross and dung to win him, and obtain the excellency of the knowledge of Christ as thy Lord; but saving light sees one Christ worth ten thousand Worlds, and quits all to take him. Phil. 3. 8.

Common light sees no evil in sin; but guilt, and torment, loss of comfort, and sense of punishment, Gen. 4. 13. but true grace, when in exercise, loathes sin when it pretends love; and flies from sin when it makes largest proffers; and fears sin when it sees no danger, when there is no breach on present comfort feeled, or danger of future misery feared, Tit. 2. 11, 12. The gracious soul, like Joseph, when tempted with flattery, secured with secrecy, pursued with restless importunity to wickedness, yet cannot close with it, and sin against God, Gen. 39. 9.

Common light can dwell with works of darkness, and consist with an unsanctified heart and life, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Common light and lust never fall out but when it awakens conscience, or weakens interests: but saving grace cannot bear that which is evil, Rev. 2. 2. or ever be brought to a treaty with sin, in order to an agreement, Gal. 5. 17. but, with Sarah, can never be at rest till the bondwoman and her son be turned out of door, Gen. 21. 10. Common grace may be offended at sin, but never hates sin; there is no contrariety founded in their nature or difference, but what may upon terms be made up, Luke 23. 12. And if it seems to have an indignation against sin, yet 'tis not against every sin, and at all times, nor irreconcilable at any time: but saving grace hates the very being of sin, 2 Cor. 7. 11. And as the Tiger flies at the very picture of a man, so doth Grace abhor the appearance of evil: 'It is universal against the whole species, and every kind of sin; an enmity founded in the nature of grace, and therefore irreconcilable, Psal. 139. 22. and derived from the riches of grace, Ps.

97. 10. and greatness of redemption-love: It cannot be reconciled to sin, because sin cannot be reconciled to grace, or admit of any love to, or enjoyment of God; but still interrupts the soul's tranquility, holiness and pleasure in God, his chiefest and only good.

Again, Common light can live without special acquaintance with God, Eph. 2. 13. [afar of,] if it can have peace, because its Country is nourished by the King's Country, Act. 12. 20. and its welfare depends upon divine pleasure, 'tis all it looks for: but saving grace gets within the veil, Heb. 6. 19. approaches the mercy seat, where it converses with God. To be called by his name will not content grace; no, nor to eat his bread, and wear his raiment, except it enjoys his bed also: it longs for intimate communion with God, Psal. 101. 2. O, when wilt thou come unto me? It loves the Bridechamber, closet, and secret corners with him; never thinking itself near enough to, or long enough with him.

Obj. But change from nature to grace, is not growth in grace: though I may have received the former rain, and reaped the first fruits of the Spirit; yet I fear I have not the latter rain, and after-fruits of grace: waterings and dressings do not make me fruitful, or feedings make me grow: and that's the case you insist on.

Sol. 1. There may be fruit, though not appearing; and growth, though unseen: Christ hath under-ground-fruit, which may not spring up to thy own view, or others, Ps. 88. 5. [Free among the dead,] as berries hid among the leaves, which cannot be seen till winter-storms or shaking times come: thou mayest thrive more inwardly than outwardly, and be like the windows of the Temple, wide within, and narrow without; you may grow more in the truth and parts of grace, though less in the fruits of grace for a season; thy sincerity may be more, though thy shows be less; you may grow more downward in

humility, self-abasement, sorrow for sin, though not upward in joys and blossoms of comfort; thou mayest grow more out of thyself, and into Christ, as the root of all thy grace, and foundation of thy foulrest, though not into sensible frames and workings of grace. Art thou more sensible of thy own nothingness? thy heart-deceitfulness? self-insufficiency? inward disorders? soul-wants? sinfulness? hypocrisy? barrenness? then thou profitest, Rom. 7. 18. Art thou more jealous of thy heart every day, 2 Cor. 9. 27? more weary of thyself? and longing after Christ? having a higher valuation of his excellency, and greater breathings after his quickening spirit, and delighting presence, Phil. 3. 8? this is profiting.

Secondly, It may be thy conclusion springs from thy impatience; thou mayest be for hasty fruit, not allowing time for its growth and maturity. The Husbandman waits for the precious fruits of the earth, Jam. 5. 7. before he can enjoy them, or estimate their worth: Thy hopes, labors and profit may be buried under the clods for a while: We cannot sow and reap (saith one) in a day: The more excellent and durable the fruit is, the longer is it before it comes to maturity: rare ripe fruits are soon rotten: hypocrites blossom apace, and cast their leaves as fast, Mat. 13. 21. Though 'tis matter of shame, that those trees which have less earth, and least nourishment, should grow fastest; yet the reason is, they take up no time in getting root, and growing downward; and hence all their growth is outward. Thirdly, It may be 'tis a winter-time with thy soul; the Sun of Righteousness is withdrawn from thee, and thy lightsome days are gone, Cant. 2. 11, 12. The Comforter that should have relieved thy soul, is far from thee, Lam. 1. 16. It may be thou hast sinned away his warming presence, and lost thy first spring; hence 'tis the flowers do not appear: Yet here's thy comfort, though thy winter be not a time of fruit, yet God will make it to thee a time toward fruitfulness.

Advice 2.

2. You that have any good Trading for Heaven, be exhorted to enlarge your Trade; drive a greater Trade of godliness every day, as men that prosper in the world do; they build larger barns, fairer houses, greater shops, get more goods, buy more land, and widen the bounds of their interests: So should you Christians, if God bless your heavenly substance, and prosper your souls; if the gain of godliness come in, lay it out to greaten godliness, as biting Usurers do, take use upon use; convert your getting's into your Trade; put your incomes into bank, and your blessings into stock, trading on them. Think

First, On the smallness of thy first stock, and thy low estate at thy setting up, A Syrian ready to perish, Deut. 26. 5. thy grace was small, a grain of mustard seed, Mat. 13. 31. thy capacity is weak, a new-born babe, 1 Pet. 2. 3. You began with one talent, and have you not reason to improve it? you were the fewest of all people, Deut. 7. 7. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking him by the arm, Hos. 11. 3. as a little weak child; a dry tree, Psal. 56. 3. a tender plant, Isa. 53. 2. which need addition.

Secondly, Consider what a poor Trade most men drive for Heaven this day; few that seek the things that are Christ's, and make Religion their business. All men seek their own things; the multitude of Professors, as well as others, wonder after this beast the world: We may say of Religion, as the Prophet did of Zion: This is godliness which no man seeketh after, Jer. 30. 17. Few Israelites, in whom there is no guile; few Noah's, perfect in their generation, walking with God; few Caleb's, who fulfill after God. Most men's Religion lies in notion, profession, talking's, frames, privileges, going to Meetings, getting into Churches; but few make conscience of their words and ways, their promises and duties; few second-table men and women,

that cause their light to shine before men; and as Zacharias and Elizabeth, walking in all the commands and ordinances of God blameless, Luke 1. 6. doing justly, showing mercy, and walking humbly with their God, Mich. 6. 8. visiting the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and keeping themselves unspotted from the world, Jam. 1. 27. And should not this provoke thy zeal for the Lord of Hosts, to see the Altars of Religion down, and so few friends of godliness left, and stir up thy holy ambition to excel and do more for God than others? It would argue a brave spirit, and be a worthy attempt to offer a lift at fallen godliness, with thy life as well as lip, and by the raised splendor of thy holy conversation, as a City on a hill, to provoke others to an imitation, saying, Come up hither.

Think also what an excellent Trade the Saints and Angels in Heaven drive, who have their portion in hand, and dwell in the City of the great King, who are always receiving and rendering, driving a whole Trade for God, above all hazards and interruptions: They always behold their Father's face, and serve him day and night in his Temple, with palms in their hands, with songs in their mouths, and their Crowns at his feet, and how far you are beneath these glorious Merchants. Think what a breadth you have yet to fill up in godliness, and what advances you must make in holiness, before you can get up to their pitch, and have a place amongst them that stand by, Zach. 3. 7. and is it not time yet to build the house of God? Hag. 1. 2. and that you hasten to your work, and raise higher stories for God every day, pressing after greater measures of grace, till you come to the fullness of the stature of Christ, and those perfections of glorified Saints and Angels?

Fourthly, When will you be fit for a return into your own Country, and a comfortable account of your Stewardship, if you be so slothful and contracted in your Heavenly Trade? When will your ships be

loaden, and your sacks full for a departure hence, if you trade at such a rare, and attend your soul-thriving's no better? your Treasure is deep, and calls for more digging; your Crown is afar off, and requires faster running; your Reward is large, greater enlargements of labors are needful to meeten you for it. O think how far glory is above all your proportions of grace and duty; and what need you have to press after more enlargedness in your souls, and suitableness for your estate above.

Fifthly, The greater Trade you drive for Heaven, the less trouble; 'tis not so in earthly Trades; there the more work, the more weariness; but Religion carries refreshment in its work. John 4. 34. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Prov. 3. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. O the sweetness and delicate pleasure which vigorous pursuits of holiness afford! Cant. 2. 3. I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. If persons intermeddle not with the joy of godliness, 'tis because they neglect the work of it; they eat not the kernel, because they break not the shell; Christ's myrrh is to be gathered, and his honey eaten with the honey-comb, which must be squeezed out ere eaten, Cant. 5. 1. Rabbi Solomon takes the comb <H&G>, for a Cane, out of which the honey is sucked, or the sugar boiled out. They that will eat Christ's pleasant bread, must work hard for it; his idlers have none of his dainties; the greater the labor, the sweeter is the rest. The Lord's way is not tiresom, unless to flesh and blood: the more you run in it, the less weary. Isa. 40. 31. They shall run, but not be weary, walk, but not faint: And though they should be weary in well doing, through their carnal sloth, yet they are not weary of it.

Sixthly, The greater Trade, the richer; 'tis not always so in worldly employments; men may labor in vain, and sit down in sorrow, but

godliness is profitable for all things, Isa. 55. 2. 1 Tim. 4. 8. And the Heavenly Trade brings in the true Treasure, as I have already shewn; and the more employment, the more profit.

Seventhly, The larger Trade you drive for Heaven, the more you have of that honor that comes down from Heaven, Rom. 2. 10. Glory, and honor, and peace to everyone that worketh good. The greater Trade, the greater riches, and the greater riches, the greater reputation: The rich hath many friends, Prov. 14. 20. The greater Trade you drive for Heaven, the greater regard you have from God; the more of his presence is with you, his delight in you, and blessing upon you; the Spouses growth and fruitfulness, was much taking upon the heart of Christ. How fair and how pleasant art thou O Love for delights! Cant. 7. 6, 7. This thy stature is like to a Palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes. The Palm-tree is an emblem of growth and fruitfulness; the more it is oppressed, the more it grows, and no tree more fruitful; 'tis called <H&G>, always having leaves: Naturalists say, 'tis never without leaves and fruit; when some fruit is ripe (as Pliny tells us) other fruit is growing It hath leaves in the highest branches, wherever the sweet sap comes (saith Alsted) 'It is a tree that's exceeding profitable; some reckon three hundred and sixty advantages that this Palm-tree yields, and hence the Egyptians make it a symbol of the solar year, which consists of three hundred sixty five days: and its fruit is wonderfully restorative and nourishing, repairing the decayed strength, and radical moisture of man's body, Alsted. Theol. Nat. and therefore a fit metaphor to express the Church's fruitfulness, in which the Lord Jesus takes such great delight; he gets up early to the Vineyard, to see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the Pomegranate bud forth, Cant. 7. 12. So delightful is the view of a flourishing people unto Christ: The more you thrive in grace, the more will you have of Christ's company; and that's honorable.

Eighthly, The greater Trade you drive for Heaven, the more useful you are while on Earth; the larger capacities you have to do good to others, and to serve your generation, which is a blessed thing. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive, Acts 20. 35. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate. The richer you are in grace, the more able you are to do good, and not only able, but the more willing also. The reason Christians have no more heart to do good, and to communicate, is their soul poverty; they are not rich in grace, they have but little spiritual Treasure, little grace to communicate; their hands are shut, because their hearts are empty; but the more divine treasure you have, the more ready will you be to do good, and to lay out both your outward and inward riches. O how useful may rich men be in the places where they live, if God give them hearts to do it! and how helpful may such be in this day of soul-wants, who are increased with spiritual goods? there are many impoverished souls this day who are ready to perish for want of light, peace and comfort; perplexed with doubts, darkness, and distressing fears, and have none to help them. O how refreshing, in such a day of soul-exigencies, would it be to have some rich neighbors among them, some prosperous Jobs! Who withhold not the poor from their desire, nor cause the eyes of the Widow to fail, Job 31. 16, 17, 19. Who would draw forth their soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, Isa. 58. 10. Who could not eat their morsel alone, or see the poor to perish for want of clothing: To be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, Job 29. 15. To speak a word in season to him that is weary, and to comfort others with the same comforts they have received of God. Christians, make haste to be rich in grace, that ye may be rich in good works; that ye may cast in much into the Lord's treasury, Mark 12. 41. and out of your abundance cast into the offerings of God, Luke 21. 4. Then should the blessing of the poor, that was ready to perish, come upon you, Job.

29. 13. and the fruit of well-doing be your savory meat, on which the Lord would daily feed you.

Ninthly, The greater Trade you drive for Heaven now, the greater will your estate in Heaven be hereafter: 2 Tim. 4. 8. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness; which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all that love his appearing. To me, who have run my race, finished my course, and kept the faith: To me, who have wrought hard in the Vineyard, and traded diligently for Heaven in the World: For me, yea for all such as enlarge their heavenly Trade, is laid up, <H&G>, (as Parents do Portions for their children, saith Zanchi) a Crown of righteousness: glory suitable to their improvements of grace; called a Crown, to note its excellency; and of righteousness, to note its equity: It shall bear a proportion to all that grace, labors and faithfulness that is in Saints; and infinitely beyond it. A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. God will not leave out the least item of the Saints right in the great day of righteousness; A cup of cold water; a little meal to the Prophet Elisha; a mite in the treasury; a desire to build God's house: all shall be remembered in that day: Mercy gives the Crown, but Justice fits it for the overcomer's head. God crowns (saith Beda) his own gifts, not thy merits: He first gives grace in the time of mercy, and then crowns it in the day of Judgment: And is not this argument enough? yea constraint on an ingenious heart, to labor after the greatest latitude of holiness? Is not Heaven enough to requite all thy duties and hardships on earth? What's enough, (saith one) if Rome be counted little? So what can be counted great, if Heaven be small, and not price enough for all thy holy strivings, and utmost progress in the way of life?

O attend your proficiency in this heavenly Trade! your hearts and hands can never be too deep in the concerns of this upper World; in

this you can never be too covetous: 1 Cor. 12. 31. Covet earnestly the best gifts, Take heed of putting stands and limits to your holiness; (the course of all unsanctified souls:) In this only is it lawful to remove the ancient bounds, and enlarge your spiritual inheritance, as far as possible; Reaching forth to the things that are before, and pressing forward to the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 13, 14. Nothing undoes Professors like to stinting their measures of holiness, and contenting themselves with present attainments; if they can get to such a pitch of light, grace, and comfort, as will secure their salvation and present welfare, they sit down, and go no further: this makes formalists and starvelings in Religion. Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward, Exod. 14. 15. is God's charge on his people in their passage to the heavenly Canaan: Be adding to your faith virtue, &c, 1 Pet. 1. 5. The greatest skill in this holy Arithmetic lies in Addition and Multiplication. Be still enlarging your store, get in more choice of heavenly wares, greater quantities, and more costly goods; and be putting off more and more goods, as you have opportunity; seeing great is not only your present advantage, but your reward in Heaven also, Mat. 5. 12.

Advice 3.

Thirdly, You that have good times for trading now, make provision for bad times; Lay in for changes: be not like the Grasshopper, that spends her All in Summer; and when the Winter comes, starves. Every Summer hath its Winter; North-winds have their season to blow on Christ's Garden, as well as the South, Cant. 4. 16. Good and evil have their turns with Christians in this life; 'It is only the Diveses that have their good things in this life; here have the Saints no continuing City, Heb. 13. 4. Created comforts, whether spiritual or carnal, have their shakings and removes: Heb. 12. 27. And this word

yet once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made; that those things which cannot be shaken, may remain. The life of Believers is made up of vicissitudes; with Naomi, now full, then empty, Ruth 1. 21. like Ships in their passage to their Port; now they have calms, then storms; none but wicked, and they not always neither are exempted from their changes in this life, Psal. 55. 19. 'Twas an error in David 's apprehensions, which he soon saw to his cost, that his mountain was made so strong, it should not be moved. Psal. 30. 6. I said, in my prosperity, I shall never be moved: Lord, by thy favor, thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled. Prosperity and affliction have their different says and thoughts: think of thy most promising state here; though this be a beautiful structure, yet 'tis but a tabernacle: Sin puts wheels on every condition below, and makes them moveable: What that Ambassador said to the Romans, who boasted of the height and strength of their Walls; they were not so high, but sin could bring them down, may be said of the most flourishing condition of Saints in this World: Is thy store full now? a spending time may come: Dionysius the second had four hundred Ships, an Army of one hundred thousand foot, nine thousand horse, and the richest Magazine of any Prince, and yet lived to lose all. Christians have their spending as well as getting times, and should lay in for times of need.

Four Special Seasons

There are four special seasons when gracious souls will have need of all their store to relieve them.

Times of Temptation.

Times of Desertion.

Times of Affliction.

And The time of Death.

First, Times of Temptation are spending times, and call for great succors to be laid in against such seasons. First, Because such times are certain to Believers, they will come. Psal. 11. 5. The Lord trieth the righteous: There's never a gracious soul, but some time or other the Lord trieth it, either immediately by his Spirit, or mediately by afflictions or temptations from men or devils. The Apostle tells us, every man is tempted. James 1. 14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed. The best of men (saith one) are tempted, and that when they are at the best. [Capell of Temptation.] Adam in Paradise, Gen. 3. 6. Solomon after God had twice appeared to him, 1 King. 11. 9. Job after the evidences of his uprightness before God, and religious duties, Job 1. 1, 5. Peter after he had made a confession of Christ, and entered into covenant never to be offended at him, Mat. 26. 33. Yea Christ himself after his Baptism, and the Spirit's resting on him as a Dove, and the Father's owning of him by an audible voice from Heaven, Matth. 3. 17. chap. 4. 1. He (saith the former Author) that thinks he is so good that he ought not to be tempted, and so strong, that he need not fear to be tempted, hath need of a temptation, that by experience in himself, he might prove what he ought to have found in the Word; that of ourselves we have no strength. Capell.

Four things make temptations unavoidable to gracious souls:

1. God's good Pleasure.
2. Satan's Rage.

3. The Saints Corruptions.

4. And their Profit.

First, 'It is God's good Pleasure to have them tried: The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is, 1 Cor. 3. 13. whether it will bear the fire or no; hereby the excellency of his work, the greatness of his power appears, in the enduring graces of the Saints, and their standing after all. By this the Lord will confute the slanders of men and devils, who are still charging his people with hypocrisy, and falling away when trial comes; Doth Job fear God for naught? Job 1. 9. Put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face, Job 2. 5. This is the usual calumny of the Saints enemies; to confute which, and prove them liars, doth the Lord suffer his people to be tempted. 'It is his will and purpose that all his people should be tried; and therefore 'tis unavoidable.

Secondly, Such is Satan's Rage, he cannot always keep his fingers from them; if he lets them alone, 'tis but for a season. Luke 4. 13. When the Devil had ended all the temptations, he departed from him for a season. Is Satan busy? then his work is not done; hast thou any rest? 'tis because his tempting-time is not come; he is a roaring Lion, and cannot rest from seeking to devour, though he forbears attempting to devour for a season, when it makes to his greater advantage: Never expect freedom from temptation, till Satan's chain be shortened, or thy remove without his reach obtained, Rev. 20. 2, 3.

Thirdly, The Saints corruptions expose them to temptations; Where the carcass is, there the Eagles resort, Mat. 24. 28. While the Saints have galled backs they can expect no freedom from flies. If Samson be bound, the Philistines will be upon him. The cause of those sins is in us whereof the occasion is from Satan, Capell. Till the fire of Hell

be out in the Saints, the Devil will not lay down his bellows; where there is no sin, there is no matter for temptation to work on; as where there is no morbid matter, there contagion cannot so easily fasten, corruption keeps open the door for Satan; never look for silence from Satan, till you find cessation from sin.

Fourthly, The profit and good of gracious souls do necessitate it: By this means they come to see their own vileness; were it not for temptation, they could not see the greatness of their corruption: David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Peter, did not think their hearts were so abominable, till left to temptation, which stirs the mud, and brings up the bottom to the top; and this helps to abase them, and make them more vile in their own eyes. By this also they see their own weakness, and their need of Christ; and are more effectually brought out of themselves to the Lord Jesus for succor and victory. And by temptations from Satan they come to be acquainted with his devices, 2 Cor. 2. 11. and more skilled in his wiles and stratagems (no small advantage to one that is in a state of warfare with him.) This way also doth the Lord winnow his Saints, and by these high winds fan and cleanse them. Luke 22. 31. Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; and brings them to more conformity to their head, and to greater establishment in grace, which are glorious advantages to Believers, promised in the New Covenant, and this way accomplished, which makes temptations necessary to Wisdom's Merchants, and renders it their great concern to lay in provision against them.

Secondly, As temptations are certain, and will come; so they are shaking when they come; they are part of that rain, flood and wind which did beat vehemently on the sandy building, that it fell, Mat. 7. 27. Luke 6. 49. Temptations are part of the Devil's Artillery, his fiery darts and cruel buffetings which none can bear without the whole

Armor of God upon him, and then too; all they can do is but to stand, Ephes. 6. v. 13, 16. They are so potent and prevailing, as that none but such as are in Christ can stand their ground under them. And in time of temptation fall away, Luke 8. 13. Receive the Word with joy, seem to love God, and delight in his ways for a season, till temptations come to the purpose, and then fall away. There are some temptations are more easy to be born, but when Satan sets on a soul with all his might, there's no standing without divine succor, and the Lord's opening a way to escape. Temptation is reckoned amongst the sorest afflictions that the Saints do undergo, 1 Cor. 10. 13. Heb. 2. 18. Heb, 11. 37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword. No suffering like temptations, for they draw the soul to sin, which is more cruel than death to a soul that loves Christ. O Christians, what need have you then to be laying in for an hour of temptation, seeing it will surely come, and seeing it will be so terrible when it comes!

Get yourselves well furnished with wisdom, that you may know Satan's devices, that you may be able to distinguish between temptation and corruption, and able to answer the Objections, and subtle reasonings of Satan; you must have experience also to encourage your hope, and strengthen your patience, that instances of former relief in the like cases may lift up your head, and strengthen your expectations in new Trials also. You must lay in store of faith to guard your hearts, and shield your heads from the fiery darts of Satan; you must get your integrity cleared, and the uprightness of your heart and way evidenced; that's of great use also to bear up your Spirit under all his charges against you. Make much of every breathing of his Spirit in you, and take care you quench not any of his motions: God (saith one) doth often leave us to own Satan's suggestions for our own, because we do not own God in his holy motions and breathings. And have good evidences of your interest in

Christ, and assurance of his love to you, and assured help in the time of need; taking special care to have corruptions weakened, and a growing mortification in your souls; that so when Satan comes he may find nothing in you to fasten his temptations on: This calls for your provident care, to store your souls against times of Trial.

Secondly, Times of desertion are spending times, which will need a full stock, when the Lord doth hide his face, and withdraw the sense of his love, and influence of his quickening presence: This the Lord may do, and hath done; he hath left the dearly beloved of his soul; gone from his habitation; compass himself about with a cloud; left his children in darkness as those that have been long dead. 'It is just with God (saith Mr. Cooper) to deny us the comfort of our graces, when we deny him the glory of them. Isa. 45. 15. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Savior. Job 23. 8, 9. Behold I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but cannot perceive him, on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. Isa. 49. 14. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me. This was one of the greatest sufferings on Christ, his apprehensions of his Father's forsaking him. O God my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Mat. 27. 46. Here was a total and final desertion that our Lord Jesus came under as to his sense, and the effects of it; he saw nothing of the comforts of the Divine presence, to the last breath of life, but died in this darkness. Verse 50. Jesus when he had cried again with a loud voice (that is, as he had done, verse 46.) he gave up the Ghost; and had no comfort to the last minute of life: And if God hath done so to the green tree, how much more may he to the dry? if he forsake his natural and only beloved Son, he may surely hide himself from his Adopted Sons, even to their dying hour: And this is a condition full of consternation and terror: The poena damni, the loss of God, and all good, is thought to be a far greater

punishment to the damned, than all the punishment of sense and torment. O the dreadful apprehensions that good souls have had about God's forsaking them! 'It is a Hell on Earth, and the beginning of the second death, to be under a real sense of God's removal from the soul. O the amazing dread, and consuming terror, that Job, Asaph, Heman, and others were filled with, by such apprehensions of God's withdrawment from them, and his wrath lying hard upon them! Soul, though now it be a time of light with thee, the Candle of the Lord shines upon thee; thou walkest in the light of his countenance, liest in his bosom, and art dandled on his knee; yet may the days of darkness be many, and thy soul lie in the shadow of death, and under real apprehensions of the Lord's departure from thee, and displeasure against thee, and then thou wilt find need of all the cordials, light and hope imaginable. O lay in sure and unquestionable satisfaction about this great case; that God is really and inseparably yours; and under all your clouds, fears and guilt, think well of God. 'It is hard (saith one) to think ill of ourselves, and well of God at the same time. Store yourselves with promises and experiences, with faith, hope, patience, and every grace that may bear you up in such a Trial, and cordial your fainting heart under such dangerous deliquiums. If God should damn me (saith one) I have two arms, the one of faith, and the other of love, with which I would embrace him, and carry him with me, and his presence would make Hell itself a Heaven to me.

Thirdly, Times of sore affliction, and distressing calamities, are spending-times, and will try your store of grace, and strength to bear it, and to get through it; and such you may live to see: The Cross is the usual way to the Crown, and affliction the lot of them that will live godly in Christ Jesus. And we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God, Act. 14. 22. The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, Prov. 17. 3. And the fan for the

wheat; the condition of Believers in this world cannot long bear prosperity without loss to their spiritual part. Christians under settled comforts in this world, are like standing pools, which soon gather mud; and as 'tis said of Moab, so 'tis with the people of God. Jer. 48. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity, therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. The sweetest nights that ever Jacob spent were in the field; so with Peter in prison; and David had those large affections to rise at midnight, and God's Word was sweet to him when his trouble was bitter, saith Dr. Harris. But by afflictions the Lord refines his people from their dross. Though the wisdom of the world (saith Mr. Bradford) think of the cross according to sense, and therefore flieth from it as from a most great ignominy and shame; yet God's scholars have learned to think otherwise of the Cross, as the frame house wherein God frameth his children, like to his Son Christ: the furnace that fineth God's gold, the high way to Heaven, the suit and livery of God's servants, the earnest and beginning of all consolation and glory. Acts & Mon. 3. Vol. page 322. If you will be Christ's Disciple, you must expect tribulation; If need be you are in heaviness for a season. God's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem: Prepare for afflictions, by which God prepares his people for himself. He is not fit for the reward in glory (saith Bernard) who is not ready to ascend the Gibbet as the way to it. We are fallen on the last times, which are times of abounding iniquity, Mat. 24. 12. sinning, and therefore like to be suffering-times, called perilous times; cruel times, 2 Tim. 3. 1. Beza renders it, troublesome times; Tremellius, hard times, <H&G>, it comes from <H&G>, to bring damage, or to overturn; they will be overturning times; times of desolation, as Christ prophesies of them, Mat. 24. 15. days of vengeance. Luke 21. 22. These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled: Great

tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be, Mat. 24. 21. called the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the Sun shall be turned into darkness, and the Moon into blood. Joel 2. 31. The Sun shall be turned into darkness, and the Moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. Cocceius thinks this time to fall under the sixth seal, Rev. 6. 12. under which 'tis said, These are they which come out of great tribulation. I rather think that the sixth seal reckons with the enemies of God's people, and brings redemption to the Saints under great tribulation. That which we may clearly gather hence is, that those last times will be times of sore calamities, both personal and public, to Nations, and to the Church of God; and what a portion of those amazing troubles may fall upon the people of this age, we know not: this is certain, God seems to give his call from Heaven, as well as out of his Sanctuary, to prepare to meet with him, Amos 4. 12. to gird up the loins of our mind, Rev. 16. 15. to keep our garments on; to watch, lest he come as a thief, Luke 12. 35, 36. to have our vessels stored with Oil, and our lamps burning; and to reckon on midnight sitting up, and be as men that look for the coming of their Lord: Matth. 25. 6. To watch and pray always, that we may be counted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man, Luke 21. 36.

Fourthly, The time of Death is a spending time, and calls for great provisions for that long journey; and great change the Soul is then passing into. Death is the King of Terrors: O how amazing is the sight of it to a natural eye, and an awakened conscience! the work that death comes to do is frightful work to flesh and blood; to pluck a soul out of its ancient dwellings, to take it from all its acquaintance, friends, relations, and earthly All, from the comforts of the whole World, never to see or enjoy them more, as they have done; nay, to pull down this earthly tabernacle, not to leave a stone upon a stone,

but quite to demolish it to the ground, is a great change: to lay a writ on the soul's back, and in a moment to bring it to judgment, from all its acquaintance, friends, and dearest relations, to the vision of an infinite holy God, there to receive its eternal doom, and to enter into a new estate, out of which he shall never depart, either of blessedness or misery. To take the soul off from all the means of salvation, and possibility of change out of that estate into which, by death he enters; that if the soul should die in his sins, there's no future repentance, or anything can be done to mend his ill condition: this will be terrible to a guilty conscience, sensible of many sins unrepented of, many duties neglected, much time lost, great hypocrisies uncured, many fears unremoved, and doubts unanswered. Now for such a soul, in a moment, to come to judgment, and to have no time allowed him to set things in order for so great a compearance, and to state his account for that final Audit, is an amazing providence. The time of death is also a time of the greatest light, when the soul's eye shall be opened to see things as they are, no more in a glass, but face to face; then the soul that hath been dark all its days, shall see clearly things it never knew. As 'tis said of the Mole, that it is blind all its time, till it comes to die, and then it sees: So they that would not see, shall then see, and be ashamed; then shall souls see things as they are, and find that to be evil which they thought good, and that to be good which they thought to be evil. Death is the greatest informer, and makes the largest discovery of things that ever was; it brings to light the hidden things of darkness, sins the world never knew, and sins it may be the soul itself never saw, or thought itself guilty of: then will the least flaw, error, unsoundness, neglect, failing, be fully seen; then the things that now seem to be small, will then appear to be great; and those things that were taken for mountains, will be less than one single grain of dust.

Death is a time also when conscience hath its quickest senses, and liveliest acts, when it sees, hears, feels, fears, all things as they are, and without any other witness, becomes both Accuser and Judge: then Judas needed no Accuser to charge him, or Judge to condemn him, but his own conscience; nor Executioner to dispatch him, but his own hand. What's the matter, man, (said Mr. Perkins to a Malefactor, going up the ladder, and his countenance showing the inward terrors of his soul,) art thou afraid to die? O, no Sir, said he, but of a worse matter. So another upon her death-bed, and under a terrible sight of her wicked life, when one that was by offered something to comfort her against the fear of death, replied, Were it but to die, it were nothing: A world (said another, upon the border of eternity, and under conscience affrighting's) for one inch of time! O give me one inch of time! Luther speaks of an Eremite who, a little before his death, stood very sad, never stirring out of his place for three days, having his eyes fixed towards Heaven; and being asked the reason of this posture, answered, he was afraid to die: His Scholars began to comfort him, telling him he need not to fear death, who had been so holy in his life; but he replies, 'tis true, I have lived well, and been obedient, but God's judgments are otherwise than Man's judgment, Tom. 4. fol. 50.

The time of death is a time of great temptation also; then Satan usually brings forth his chiefest strength to weaken the soul's faith; 'tis his last onset, and that is the hottest; as men that storm a Garrison, in their last assault they usually put forth their utmost strength: Then he opposeth us with most armed force. In this last assault, (saith Luther) 'tis not as in other temptations, where faith and hope doth fight; for here he sets upon the very resistance, and the strife is about striving, and the war is maintained by another war: Here the fight is, that it may be lawful to fight, and to resist him whose greatest policy is then to dissuade from resisting; laughing at

our hope, as if it were already vanquished, and it were to no purpose to resist. This is a critical time, and hard to stand; the last enemy is death; when the soul must have the whole armor of God, and be found not in his own righteousness, but take sanctuary in the grace of God, the righteousness and faithfulness of Christ. Death is somewhat dreary, (saith Mr. Cooper) and the streams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiously; but they stand still when the Ark comes: let your anchor be cast within the veil, and fastened on the rock Jesus; let the end of the threefold cord be buckled to the heart; so shall ye go through. When thou art tempted, (saith Luther) and seest no way to escape; shut thine eye, answer nothing, and commit the cause to God: This (saith he) is the chiefest wisdom we should attend to in the hour of death. This was Bernard 's course and comfort, when on the point of death; I have lived wickedly, (saith he) but thou, Lord Jesus Christ, enjoyest Heaven by a double right; first, because thou art the Son of God; then, because by thy death and passion thou hast obtained it: thou keepest the first thyself by thy birthright; the last thou bestowest on me, not for my works but of thy grace. Christians, you had need be well furnished for the hour of death, (your greatest and most difficult hour) laying in all the provisions you can for a sure and comfortable passage to glory. Thus you see Wisdom's Merchants have more to do than keep up present life and comfort, they must lay in for times to come; for times of temptation, desertion, affliction, and the hour of death.

Advice 4.

Fourthly, If you have good trading with God, then lay out for God. This is reasonable work, pleasing work, honorable work, profitable work.

First, 'It is reasonable work to lay out for God; he deserves it, 'tis his due; all your mercies are his interest; I will return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof; I will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness, Hos. 2. 9. Though God gives his people the use of mercy, yet he keeps the propriety in his own hand: God is the Alpha, and should be the Omega, the Author, and 'tis reasonable he should be the end of all our mercies. James 1. 17. Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights: And (as beams from the Sun) is derived from his bounty, as his peculiar offspring. My goods are thy gifts (saith Augustine) All our good is either himself, or what comes from him: Both trading and thriving are from him, and should also be for him, both principle and interest are God's own, Mat. 25. 27. If you lay not out your mercies for God, you rob him of his due. Your mercies are the Lord's, not only by that interest he reserves in them, but by your resignation of them unto him. Christians, when you gave up yourselves to the Lord, you gave up all your interests and capacities also, 2 Cor. 5. 8. To keep back any part of your All from God, is to lie to the Holy Ghost. Acts 5. 3. Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the Land: No lower terms will pass in reconciliation with God, than what Ahab yielded to Benhadad, 1 Kings 20. 4. My Lord O King according to thy saying I am thine, and all that I have. If you are not your own, much less anything you have, is absolutely yours. God gives his people But a conditional interest in all things beneath himself, so far as it suits his pleasure, use and glory. To keep back any part of your capacities and interests from God, when by his Word and Providence he calls for it, for his service, name and people is hypocrisy, lying, fraud and rebellion, and contrary to the Lord's undoubted interest, both by creation, redemption, and your own grant, Hos. 2. 8. 2 Cor. 7. 20.

Besides, you receive not your mercies as Owners, but as Stewards, to keep and use them for him, and according to his instruction, 1 Pet. 4. 10. As everyone hath received the gift (whether of grace, or gifts of grace, inward or outward gifts, spiritual or temporal, 'tis all one if he have received it) so let him administer the same, as good Stewards of the manifold grace of life. Your interests are God's gifts; your abundance, his Bounty and trust to be bestowed to his use and pleasure, for which you must give an account.

Secondly, 'It is pleasing work to lay out for God: Paul counted not his life dear to lay out for Christ, Acts 20. 24. Peter and John rejoiced that they were counted worthy to part with their name, and to undergo reproach for Christ, Acts. 5. 41. Nazianzen was glad that he had something of value, to wit, his Athenian learning to part with for Christ. The Mother of William Hunter the Martyr rejoiced, that ever she was so happy as to bear such a child as could find in his heart to lose his life for Christ's Name sake, Acts and Mon. p. 13. 96. Nothing seems burdensome to do or part with for Christ, to a soul that loves him: How willingly did Jonathan strip himself of the Robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle, because he loved him; much more pleasing will it be to a soul loving Christ, to part with his All for Christ, 1 Sam. 18. 4.

Thirdly, 'It is honorable work also to lay out for God; He that gives to the poor lendeth to the Lord, Prov. 19. 17. And is not this honorable to make God a debtor, and to get him who is over all blessed forever, to become bound to his creature: O what honor is this, that the Giver of All should seem to be beholding to his creatures, who have their All from him! Have you anything you can part with for Christ? think what honor 'tis that God entrusts you with the bestowing of such gifts for him; the Lord might have made you beggars, not givers; who hath

made you to differ? why is grace, gifts, strength, estate, time, put into thy hand, and not into others? it shows a good opinion God hath of thy faithfulness, and so bespeaks honor: O let not God have cause to revoke this estimation!

Fourthly, 'It is profitable work: The more you lay out for God, the more you get for yourselves; there's no such way to gather, as to scatter for God; your improvements of mercy to God's end, are but as sowing of seed, which will come in again with greater increase, 2 Cor. 9. 6. He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully. Laying out for God is Trading secured, not liable to hazards, as earthly undertakings are, but under a promise of sure and great returns, as hath been proved, and that is profit. Laying out for God, is lending to God upon interest, Mat. 19. 29. where both principal and interest are sure. Prov. 19. 17. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again. The Lord takes it as done to himself, and will repay with large use; he lends to the Lord upon bond for use, as the Hebrew imports, <H&G>, and he will surely repay it. God is bound for it, and therefore the debt is sure. It is a great mistake in men, and that which starves their expensiveness for God, to think the more they give, the less they have; whereas laying out for God brings in principal and use; it sanctifies what is left, and brings it under a promise of increase. As the pouring out of the Widows Oil filled her vessels; the more she poured out, the more she had, 2 Kings 4. 5, 6. And as the Widow of Zarephath, by giving first to the Prophet, secured her own provision in a time of famine. 1 Kings 17. 13, 14. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of Oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. Mal. 3. 10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open

you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. 'It is men's niggardliness to God, and close-handedness to the poor, and pious uses, is one reason doubtless of the wastes and blasting's on their outward interests this day. Prov. 11. 28. The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Cartwright and Baine think this is meant of spiritual gifts, as the former verse is of external good things. But as Mercer well observes, the sentence is general, and takes in any supplies that are given to such as are needy Such shall be made fat; he shall be so far from being impoverished thereby, as it shall increase his substance; He shall be watered as with showers in Autumn: The latter rain, which is fruitfulizing: The streams of charity are not like running water that passeth away, but as fruitful showers that come again with increase. Prov. 3. 9, 10. Honor the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty. Multitude of promises might be heaped up, which give in a joint-testimony to this truth; as Mat. 25. 29. Eccles. 11. 1. Prov. 28. 27. Prov. 22. 9. Isa. 58. 7, 8, 10, 11. with many others, and are abundant security for the blessing to such as lay out for God.

Besides, this is a proof of your love to God, 2 Cor. 8. 24. Wherefore show ye to them, and before the Churches the proof of your love, 1 Joh. 3. v. 17. Whoso hath this worlds goods, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 1 John 4. 20. For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? By true charity to your poor Brethren you evidence your love to God; that secures all your true and needed mercies.

Fifthly, This also is pleasing to God, Phil. 4. v. 18. Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a

sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God, Heb. 13. 16. Isa. 56. 4. and that is surely prosperous.

Then Christians, if God hath first given unto you; if you love him; if you would please him; if you would prosper in soul, body and estate, lay out for God: If you have freely received, freely give; whatever God hath entrusted you with, expend it for him.

First, Lay out your time for God: Among the many wastes of mercies souls are guilty of, this is not the least; waste of precious time: Though there is no creature-blessing of greater worth than time, in which a foundation is laid, of all those mercies that are eternal. Time is a talent, a treasure; not only a mercy, but that without which there can be no mercy: Consider for your improvement of Time,

First, Your Time is not yours, but God's, made by him, and for him. Psal. 76. 17. The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the Light and the Sun. Time is that space between two Eternities, limited by divine pleasure, to divine use. Job 14. 5. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass. And if Time be the Lord's, then 'tis fit it should be used for God. Give unto God the things that are God's. When thou sinnest or triflest away this Time, think on this; now I rob God, and spend another's goods. You that hate robbery of men, be not thieves to God and your own souls: Time is God's, not thine own.

Secondly, Think how much you have lost of past Time, and this should make you choice of present Time. Psal. 90. 9. We spend our years as a tale that is told; which vanisheth into the Air and is soon gone. Much of our time (saith one) is plucked away from us, more is stolen away, but most of all doth slide away. O how little a piece of life is that we live! How much of thy time hath been consumed in the

grave? How much in the market-place? much slept away in the Vineyard: When nature, self, the world and sin have had their shares of every day, how little a portion hath been left for God? Hence 'tis the Apostle advises Saints to redeem their Time; to get Time for God and their souls, though with some loss to other interests, because it hath been taken captive by self, sin and the world, and held prisoner so long. This waste of former Time makes it absolutely needful for them that will reach their journey's end before their day be gone, to redeem Time from their callings, recreations, refreshments, idleness and rest, for the recovery of neglected work, or they will find it wanting when they come to die. Give me my time again, said a woman on her deathbed, being under fears about her eternal state; nothing could relieve her troubled soul, who had lost salvation-time.

Thirdly, Consider how short and uncertain your remaining Time is, or may be: The whole Time of thy life is but a span, a hand-breadth, a post, a weaver's shuttle, a vapor, a tale that is told, as a flower of the field, things of no duration, Job 9. 21. Psal. 39. 5. James 4. 14. Time (saith one) is a short parenthesis in a long period; so short, that before we can name it, our present Time is become past Time. Our whole life (saith another) consists but of two days, the day of our birth, and the day of our death; for no sooner born, but we begin to die. Time is on the wing, hastening to Eternity every moment: Time travels when you sleep, and runs when you creep: Time goes on when you stop; and gets ground when you go back: As the stream hastens to the Ocean day and night; so doth Time to Eternity: O use your Time for God while you have it! it will shortly be none of yours; if you do not use it, you will lose it; you were as good let God have your Time, as to let it run away to no purpose; if duty do not improve it, rust will consume it; the Devil, World and Flesh will engross it; and 'tis better give it to God, than let the Moth and Caterpillar devour it. Besides,

Fourthly, Can you put it to better profit than to lay it out for God? he is the best chapman for your Time; nothing will give you so much interest for Time as God will; put all the gain of other Time into the scale, with the incomes of God's Time, and you will soon see the difference. Time laid out for God will be the best security for your own Time: Give God his Time, and he will give you your Time; all that Time that is needful for a blessed Eternity; There's no such way to enjoy Time, as to use it for God. Prov. 3. 16. Length of days is in her right hand. Time expended for God will not only secure, but sanctify your Time also, as the first-fruits did the lump, Rom. 11. 16. Besides, Time devoted to God brings in eternal interest; Though Time be but a thing temporal, yet improved, it will bring to things eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18. nay it will bring you mercy in the time of need: Give God your working-time, and he will feed you when in your unserviceable time. When I was a young man (said Mr. Bruce) I was diligent, and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old, and am not able to do so much, yet he condescends to feed me with lumps of sense. [Fulfill. of Scripture.]

Fifthly, you must give an account for your time to God; he takes notice of men's time, how 'tis spent; and accordingly will judge them: Luke 13. 7. These three years I come seeking fruit on this Fig tree, and can find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground? Psal. 95. 10. Forty years long was I grieved with this people. Luke 19. 44. Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. God looks for fruit from his people, according to their months, Ezek. 47. 12. O how much is it your concernment to order your disbursements of time to a consistency with your comfortable account in the day of Christ! then you will wish God had more of your time, when you come to reckoning for it: what a blank will there be in our account of time, if it be not better bestowed than hitherto? That time will yield you most comfort when you come to eternity, which was spent for God here.

Sixthly, How can you bethink a little time for God, who hath not thought an eternity of mercy too much for you? Christians, 'tis salvation, with eternal glory, he hath prepared for you, 2 Tim. 2. 10. A Crown incorruptible, an Inheritance that fadeth not away, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken: Upon this very argument the Apostle presses the Saints to unweariedness in present work, Gal. 6. 8. Think how disingenuous 'tis thus to requite the Lord that hath dealt so bountifully with you; to with-hold your time from him, who first gave it to you, and hath denied it to others; and will shortly close up your troublous time with eternal rest, in blessed mansions of purest pleasures with himself: Let this love of Christ shame you for misimproved time, and constrain you, for the future, to lay out all possible time for God.

Secondly, Lay out your strength for God; he is the God of your strength, he hath right to it, and use for it, Psal. 43. 2. He hath work for you which calls for all your strength: His works are great, greatly to be sought out of all that have pleasure therein, Psal. 111. 2. His mercies are great, and greatly to be praised: Psal. 86. 13. His anger is great, and greatly to be feared: 2 King. 23. 26. His trials and rebukes on his own children are many times great, which need great faith and patience to bear up under them, and the strength of grace to make a right use of them: Psal. 71. 10. Which hath shewn me great and sore troubles: You do not know what need you may have of all the strength your hearts and graces are capable to receive, to carry you through your remaining trials and troubles: you have not yet resisted unto blood, or been brought to fiery trials, nor seen such days as never yet were or shall be And therefore you had need be girded with strength, and to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and one way to it, is to use what you have for God, Heb. 5. 14. God's service also calls for expended strength: Luke 10. 27. Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy strength, 1 Chron. 26. 8. The strength of thy

heart laid out, inward strength for God in his service, the strength of your whole souls; and outward strength, the strength of your bodies also in the work of God. So did our Lord Jesus, he wasted his strength in the service of his Father, that at thirty-four years old, he was taken to be near fifty: he was weary in his work. And Paul did spend, and was spent for Christ, 2 Cor. 12. 15. And David cried out, My knees are weak through fasting, Psal. 119. 24. Glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are the Lord's: 1 Cor. 6. 20. In labors more abundant: 2 Cor. 11. 23. Striving for the faith of the Gospel. Religion is no easy work; Ministers (saith Mr. Burroughs) must venture their strength for Christ, and so must all that are Christ's: 2. Cor. 11. 27. In weariness, in painfulness, in watching's. Religion is worth all your labors and exhausted strength; men tire themselves for the world; how much more should they for God and Glory?

Thirdly, Lay out your gifts and graces for God, and the good of souls: 1 Cor. 12. 7. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal: that's God's end why he gives gifts to any, that everyone who hath them should improve them to his glory, and the good of others. A capacity of serving God, and furthering his Kingdom in the World, is such a privilege as the Saints in Heaven enjoy not: and the Angels, when employed in any subserviency towards it, readily and cheerfully prosecute it. Angels are vigilant creatures, and wait for opportunities; and when they come, will not lose them, [Greenh.] Yea, 'tis such a prize, as being once lost, can never be enjoyed again; nor gracious souls ever more return to their stewardship, when once 'tis given up; and therefore should be heedfully regarded, and faithfully used whiles continued. God gives not talents to be napkinned up, nor lights to be hid under a bushel: none of us liveth to himself, Rom. 14. 7. All the characters of Saints, and those relations they stand in, engage to usefulness: They are the lights of

the world set in a candlestick, that they may cause their light to shine forth before men, Mat. 5. 14, 15. They are the salt of the earth, of purpose to savor others. Mat: 5. 13. If salt hath lost its savor, 'tis good for nothing but the dunghill. They are stars in God's firmament, to communicate their light and influence unto others, 1 Cor. 15. 41. Vessels in God's house to be meet for use, 2 Tim. 2. 20, 21. Stones in his building, which have a mutual usefulness to bear up each other, and toward preserving the whole, Eph. 2. 2. Branches in the Vine, that yield their fruit for the cheering the hearts of men, Judge. 9. 13. Trees in God's garden full of sap, Psal. 104. 16. Members in the body, to impart their nourishment to each other, Eph. 4. 16. and discharge their respective duties, of sympathy, care, and helpfulness to their fellow members: 1 Thes. 5. 14. We exhort you, brethren, to warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men: Use all your capacities for God while you have them, lest he take them from you, or opportunity to improve them.

Fourthly, Lay out your earthly interests for God, Prov. 3. 19. Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of thy increase: Give God his due in maintaining his Messengers, and keeping up his worship; alluding to those first fruits of Israel 's increase, which were the Lord's by special appropriation to his service, Exod. 22. 29. and supply of his ministry among them, Lev. 23. 20. the equity of which obliges in Gospel-times, though their ceremonial and judicial respect cease: and this duty is reinforced under the Gospel by more ample arguments taken from the light of Nature, the law of Moses, and will of Christ, 1 Cor. 9. from ver. 9. to 15. To this head is referred that command; Gal. 6. 6. Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things; for God will not be mocked: (as they do who pretend Religion, and yet are defective in this manifest duty,) pressing them to unweariedness in this

expensiveness for God, whatever discouragements they meet with upon the assurance of the blessed fruit of obedience to the will of Christ herein, ver. 7, 8, 9. 'It is not the maintaining or welfare of a few men in the World, that is the design of this great command of Christ; but the tendency this hath to the promulgation of the Gospel, and keeping up the instituted worship of God, the conversion of Sinners, and edification of Saints successively in every generation, to which these supplies are necessary, that the servants of Christ might attend on their ministrations without distraction; and whoever (a subject of Christ, and sharer of this privilege) draws back from this duty, he is chargeable not only for violating the royal righteous law of Christ, but for being guilty of subverting his Government, Crown and Dignity; and endeavoring in his measure, the ruining his interest, of hindering the conversion and edification of souls; and whatever damage hereby comes to the spiritual or eternal welfare of souls; it will be laid on their heads in the day of the righteous judgment of Christ.

Another greatly concerning duty contained in this Scripture, is charitable communications, feed the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the oppressed. [Bede Alapid.] This is to honor God with your substance; not to spend it on your lusts, to live high, to fare deliciously, to build your nests on high; but to make your abundance a supply for the good of those that are in wants, 2 Cor. 8. 14. Isa. 58. 7. 10. Mat. 5. 42. Jam. 1. 27. Heb. 13. 16. Luke 14. 12, 13. Otherwise,

First, All your Religion is in vain, James 1. v. 26, 27. Your knowledge, desires, affections, frames, tastes, enjoyments, marks, experiences, seeming graces, duties, are all nothing, and can never prove the truth of your grace, the safety of your estates, and goodness of your religion, if you are found defective in this great duty of Charity. Psal. 112. 4, 5. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; he is

gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man showeth favor, and lendeth. Let men say what they will, if they be covetous, hard-hearted, have no compassion to them that are in wants, have no heart to give or lend to needy ones; they have no true grace in them. Verse 9. He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth forever. Men may talk, and pray, and seem to be eminent Christians; profess love to God and their neighbors, and yet all the while be deceived, and have not a jot of grace in them, while their hearts are cruel, their hands shut to their poor Brethren. Remember the young man in the Gospel, and fear thine own estate if thy heart be glued to thy possessions: — How dwelleth the Love of God in him! 1 Joh. 3. 17. He loves not God, and God loves not him; that shuts up the bowels of his compassion from his poor and afflicted Brother. That's pure Religion, and undefiled before God to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world, Jam. 1. 27. Show me thy faith by thy works. Jam. 2. 18. Religion (saith one) is not only contemplative, but the greatest part of it like the Mathematick's

Is in demonstration: there can be no assurance to thy soul thou art in God's favour without charity. Indeed faith is the life of a Christian, but the breath whereby he is known to live is charity, Adams on Peter. If I have not Charity (saith the Apostle) I am nothing, I am as a sounding brass, or a tinckling Cymbal, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Which Cahrity lies in the spring (pure love within) and the streams: communications of Love without.

Secondly, Acts of Charity are part of Religious worship; if you give not to the poor liberally, you worship not God fully. What we interpret that word in James, Religion, Beza renders it Worship. In feeding the poor we worship God. A Christian (saith a Reverend Divine) hath a holy a holy Art of turning duties of the second table,

into duties of the first, and in respects to men, they worship God, Dr. Manton. To do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb. 13.16. In the former verse he encourages then to acts of Worship upon the account of their High Priest in Heaven, By him therefor let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually: And in this verse is part of this Religious Worship, and that which God takes most delight in, he puts them on duties of Charity, which he also calls Sacrifices, <H&G>, God will have mercy rather than sacrifice, Mat. 9. 13. The neglect of justice and mercy rendered the most specious duties of Gods Worship an abomination in his account. Bring no more vain oblations, Incense is an abomination to me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity even the solemn Meetings, Isa. 1. 13, 14, 17. Though God hath appointed these duties, and was glorified by them when duly performed, yet done by persons who lived in the constant omission of mercy and justice, they were a loathing to him. Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Thirdly, God is much glorified by these duties of Charity, Mat. 5.16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven. By charitable deeds the bowels of others are refreshed, and the glory of God advanced. 2 Cor. 19.12. For the administration of this service, not only supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God. In this shine forth the virtues of God in his people; they see the truth and excellency of his grace in them, by reason of which they glorify God. It causeth men to think well of God, and to speak well of his people and ways. As the Heathens of old, when they saw the patience and unbroken courage of the Christians under their cruel torments, cried out, Great is the God of the Christians. So when the world shall see the Goodness and Charity of

the Saints, they will adore the bowels of Christ in them, and be convinced that there is an excellency in that Religion which yields such excellent fruit; whereas the stinginess of Christians brings a great deal of dishonor to God, and disgrace on that Religion they profess while they give occasion to carnal men to reflect this severe charge on them: None more covetous than Professors: in bargains, how will they stand for a penny! in charity, how cold are they! how hard is it to screw an alms out of their hands! if this be Religion, the Lord keep me from such Religion. This begets an odium in the men of the world against Religion, and the ways of God: But woe to that man by whom offenses come; it had been better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the midst of the Sea, Mat. 18. 6, 7.

Fourthly, Acts of Charity purely done will evidence your right to glory. Mat. 25. 34, 35. 36. Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundations of the world; for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came to me. The enquiry in that great day will not be after men's profession, light, frames and duties of Worship, but after the fruits of their faith and love as evidential, not causal, of their right to glory, Here is held out (saith one) not the cause of their salvation, but the sign and testimony of them that believe, &c. The Kingdom is obtained by way of Inheritance: (Come inherit the Kingdom:) and prepared for them, as a portion for children, not purchased by them as the procurements of their works: The reward is freely bestowed on all interested in Adoption-grace, of which title the bearing proof in that day will be the fruits of love to those that are Christ's; words will not be sufficient to demonstrate this love then; it will not serve men's turn to say they loved Saints, except it were extended to all, yea the

least of Saints, and proved by acts of love, and communications to all their necessities; and that not some small pittance of their abundance, which they valued not, but it must be such portions and kinds of relief, which their necessities call for; in visiting, feeding, clothing, owning, comforting, receiving into their houses, and whatever help they were capable to express, and this as readily and heartily expended to them as they would lay them out to themselves and theirs, that being the rule of Charity: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, Matt. 22. 39. The want of this evidence, whatever else may be pretended, will finally and eternally cast souls in that last and terrible day, Mat. 25. 41. to the end. Do not deceive thy soul with false hopes of glory; not one mark will pass for Heaven, where there is a hard heart, and close hands towards poor and distressed Saints: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy, Jam. 2. 13. There is no room for you in Divine bowels, if you shut up your own bowels against them that are in misery. See in that Parable, Mat. 18. 33, 34, 35. the dreadful end of those who are any way cruel to their fellow servants, having themselves tasted the mercy of their Lord. The liberal distributions of your estates to the poor, is the only way to make them truly serviceable to your souls, while this becomes the occasion of your reception into everlasting habitations. Luke 16. 9. Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations The mammon or riches of this world, is called the riches of unrighteousness, because they are unrighteously gotten, or unrighteously kept, to the detriment of those that need them; or unrighteously spent to the hurt of those that have them; but the way to change their nature, and to make them profitable, is to lay them out to the poor, who will receive you, or witness for you in that day, to prove the truth of your love, by which you shall be received into glory.

Fifthly, They are the sure way to blessing here. Luke 6. 38. Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom; for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again: Intimating, that giving to the poor, is but lending to the Lord, as hath been showed, and it shall be surely repaid in this life, either in kind, or in value, in such things as they need; yea oftentimes in the same coin, and that to sufficient requital, good measure amplified by three metaphors, pressed down, shaken together, and running over; that is (saith Scultetus) God will so bless them, that they shall be sensible they are sufficiently repaid, 2 Cor. 9. 6. Deut. 15. 10, 11. Mat. 10. 41, 42. Psal. 41. 12. Prov. 11. 24. Job was a man of great Charity, Job 29. 12, 13. a man of great prosperity in the world, v. 6, 7. and though for the trial of his faith he was stripped of all for a season, yet did the Lord after all turn his water into wine, chap. 42. 10. Rahab entertained the spies, and saved herself and family from ruin by it: The Shunamite, the Widow of Zarephath got by laying out acts of Charity to the Prophet. Tiberius the second was a person of great liberality to the poor; 'tis said of him, that whatever Justinus his predecessor had contracted by covetousness, Tiberius freely distributed to the poor: And when Sophia, Justine 's Widow, reproved him for his excess of Charity, he replies, I trust in the Lord that our Exchequer shall never want money, while the poor are maintained out of it. Neither did his expectations fail; for as the same Author reports, he found a vast treasure in his Palace, hidden under the pavement, which could scarce be emptied for divers days: Thus God blessed his bountiful hand. Mr. Gouge, in his Surest and Safest Way of Thriving (a book worth your getting, and to which I refer you) gives many modern instances of this great truth; I shall for their sakes who have not the Book mention this one, concerning the pious and imitable resolution of Mr. John Walter, Citizen of London, who having a sufficient estate to maintain his Charge, resolved what

further estate God should entrust him with, to bestow the same on charitable uses; after which vow he found his estate wonderfully increasing: A worthy president to such as have enough to live comfortably upon, to put bounds to their further purchases, and entitle their surplusage to the service of Christ, and refreshments of his Saints; a course men will one day find more gainful, than to join house to house, and field to field. 'It is the best way (saith Chrysologus) for a rich man to make the bellies of the poor his barn, to succor the fatherless and needy, and thereby to lay up treasures in Heaven. Gregory the Great was so devoted to Charity, that all what he had seemed to be the common granary of the Church. 'It is said of Cyprian, he was the blind man's eyes, the lame man's legs, the naked man's garment; he was a man of so great Charity. Mr. Fox, the Author of the Acts and Monuments, never denied to give to any that asked for Jesus sake. Augustine sold the Ornaments of the Church to relieve the poor. And Bazil in a time of great famine sold his Land, and other goods to maintain the poor. A Duke being asked by some Ambassadors whether he could show them some hunting-dogs, gathered a great many poor people together, and showing them to the Ambassador, said, These be the Dogs I daily keep, and with which I use to hunt after Heaven. O that Christians would have other games in chase, than that which perishes in the using, and lay out their estates to better advantage than what appropriating them to self-interest can afford! Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give to him that lacketh, seeing such blessed encouragements do attend this Christian duty.

Fifthly, If you have good trading in grace, then lay up for glory: If you are Wisdom's Merchants, Heaven is your Country and home, the place of your rest and eternal residence: The world is a strange Country to you, a spot of ground where you are set for a while to trade in to get commodities for your Country; and sent into it as

Jacob was to Syria, to provide for his own house, and then to return into his Country; Gen. 30. 30. This is not your rest, Mich. 2. 10. Christians, you are not sent hither to take root in the Earth, or with the Raven, let out of the Ark to build your nests in the world; or with the fool in the Gospel, to take your rest in your full barns, and increased goods; but as Joseph was sent before into Egypt to make provision for his own Country; and as Solomon 's ships were sent to Tarshish to transport what materials were useful for the House of God, and his own house. All that you are allowed here, is but as factorage for present maintenance: Some viands and refreshments in the way, but your great business is to get such goods as will vend in your own Country. Remember, you are all this while left here, to fill your sacks for your own home, where your kindred and habitation lies: Your Father's house, and your own mansions, your treasures, pleasures, crowns, thrones, and all that you are like to have forever, lies in your City above, whose maker and builder is God. We know but little of Christ's love (saith Mr. Cooper) till all be perfected and spread before us in Heaven. O lay up for Heaven! treasure up all you can for the other world whither you are going: Especially lay up these four things for Heaven:

1. Hopes for Glory,
2. Desires for Glory,
3. Treasures for Glory,
4. Preparations for Glory,

First, Lay up sound Hopes for Heaven. 1 Pet. 1. 13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Sure hopes of Heaven are of wonderful use to quicken a soul's dispatches

for Heaven. Acts 26. 7. Unto which promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come. 'Twas their hopes to enjoy those great and glorious things in the promise, that did put them on such diligence in those ways that lead to it; to strive in every duty that seemed to have an eye to this glory, they did stretch out their hand to take hold of eternal life, as one that was near the prize. Hope puts strength and activity into the soul in its motion after God, and makes it restless and unwearied till it enjoy him. This argument the Apostle useth to provoke the Hebrews in their race towards glory: Heb. 12. 1. Seeing then we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. The weight of the argument lies in the sure and blessed issue of well-grounded hope attested by so many witnesses in the former Chap. who ran so great adventures, sustained so great losses, underwent such cruel deaths in chase of this eternal Crown; and not one of them miscarried, all got safe to glory, through their many fears and deaths. And seeing all that had this true hope hither to have sped well, and the same promise is made to us; Chap. 11. 40. having provided some better thing for us, (better privileges, better promises,) Let's pluck up our spirits, and at it again; and if no visible comfort or evidence meet us in our way, yet let us hold on with patience till we come to the end of our race.

Hopes of glory do also guard the soul against discouragements and difficulties. 1 Thes. 5. 8. Putting on the breast-plate of Faith; and for an helmet, the hope of Salvation. Hope arms head and heart, and keeps off the venomd darts of Satan from ruining the soul; while well-grounded hope of a blessed end is kept up, Israel prevails, and the Believer is kept from being overcome: 1 Joh. 5. 4. This is the victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.

Hope of glory maintains a patient expectation and quiet waiting for the fruition of it. Rom. 8. 25. If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it; and this is no small mercy: Impatience hath a dangerous influence on a Christian's heart, discouraging it, and exposing to temptation of giving over; saying, Wherefore should I wait any longer? 2 King. 6. 33. which danger Hope secures from.

Hope settles, and stays the heart; stilling its fears, scattering its doubts, and strengthening its confident expectation of glory, turning persuasions into the highest certainty, even a kind of knowledge. 1 Joh. 3. 2. But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. Well-grounded and improved hope in a Christian's life, doth usually end in a triumphing confidence at his death: I shall shine (said a precious servant of God on his deathbed,) I shall see him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and shall have my large share: it is no easy thing to be a Christian; but as for me, I have got the victory, and Christ is holding forth his arms to embrace me; I have had my fears and fainting's as another sinful man, to be carried through creditably, but as sure as ever he spake to me in his word; his spirit witnessed to my heart, saying, fear not; he had accepted my sufferings, and the out-gate should not be matter of prayer, but of praise; [Mr. Rutherford 's last words.] And a little before his death, after some fainting, he said, Now I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoyce, I feed on Manna, I have Angels food; my eyes shall see my Redeemer. O what rich cheer will hope of glory find on a death-bed! What brightness is that I see? (said Mr. John Holland the day before his death,) have you light up a candle? a stander by answered, no, 'tis the Sun shines: Sun shine, (saith he) nay, it is my Savior shines; now farewell World, welcome Heaven; the day-star from on high hath visited my heart. O speak it when I am gone, and preach it at my Funeral; God dealeth familiarly with men; I feel his Mercy, I see his Majesty; I see things that are

unutterable: Hopes of glory will make the World seem a very poor thing in a Believer's eye; he that by faith can stand on Mount Nebo, and get one glance on the promised Land, as his, feeds on the first ripe Grapes of his own Country; in comparison of which, all the World's dainties are bitter things. Hopes of glory cheers the heart in the way to glory. Rom. 5. 3. And rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rom. 12. 12. Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation: It makes the soul go merrily on, like a Ship under sail, that hath both wind and tide; whereas the doubting Saint drives heavily on, when winds and waves beat against him, being unwheeled of Faith and Hope: Sure hope of Heaven gets honey out of the rock, and meat out of the eater, which makes his rough ways plain, and his passage to Heaven pleasant: 'It is Christians losing their hopes of Heaven, makes them so uncomfortable in their passage through the World.

Lastly, Well-grounded hopes of Heaven have a great influence towards preparation for it, while it hath an advantage to further his holiness. 1 Joh. 3. 3. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he is pure. When the Apostle speaks of the faith of God's elect, which is after godliness, Tit. 1. 1. as a furtherance of this holiness, lays this hope upon eternal life; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the World began: Expectations of Heaven well laid, cannot but constrain a soul to utmost measures of holiness. 2 Pet. 3. 14. Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless. Heaven is a place of perfect holiness, no unclean thing can enter there; which the eye of faith seeing, and the soul's right to it, puts a person upon perfecting his holiness, that he may be ready to enter in. O then lay up hopes of glory, which have such precious fruits hanging on them.

Quest. But what are those sure hopes of glory, which will never fail of glory; and from which we may expect such excellent fruit?

Sol. First, Sure hopes of glory, which will never fail of glory, are issued out of a saving union with the Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory. Col. 1. 27. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Christ united to you, and dwelling in you by his spirit, is this glorious treasure spoken of in the former part of the verse. Here are two arguments to endear the Lord Jesus to Believers.

First, That in their union with him they are invested with great and unsearchable treasures; he himself being that glorious and hidden riches opened in the Gospel, and made over to them in their reception of him into their hearts by faith; part of which treasure they have in hand in their present union and communion with him, and the blessed fruits and consequents of it here.

Secondly, Another thing that renders Christ precious to Believers, is, that in their union with him is laid the foundation of their right to, and evidence of their hope of glory; [Quatenus est in illis eatenus habent spem gloriae. Dav.] and assurance of their future and eternal enjoyment of himself, and all his treasure laid up in glory: There's no other way to have a right to glory, but by union with Christ, who hath purchased glory only for those that are his, and have this spiritual union with him. Hence 'tis that the Lord Jesus Christ is called a better hope, John 17. 21, to 27. Heb. 7. 19. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near to God: That is the Lord Jesus in his Priestly Office, of which the Ceremonial Law was a forerunner, did bring in a ground of better hope in opening the way to God in grace and glory: All right to glory is through him who is the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8. and hath the

disposal of it to whom he pleases, John 17. 2. even to all the Father hath given him to be his; and to these he gives eternal life, John 10. 28. They that have union with Christ cannot perish, being members of his body, flesh and bones; should a soul that hath received Christ here, miss of glory hereafter, then would a member of Christ perish, and his body in Heaven be maimed and imperfect, which cannot be, his Church being the fullness of him who filleth all in all, Eph. 1. v. 21. And Christ hath past his word for it they shall not perish, John 10. 28. Not one of them is lost who are truly in Christ, John 17. 10. They are his servants, and shall be where he is, John 12. 26. His Spouse, which shall be ever with him. Try then your union with Christ; Have you received him into your hearts by faith? Are you one Spirit with him, having the same mind in you that was in Christ Jesus? you would be holy as he is holy; nothing short of complete oneness with Christ can content you: Indeed, you have carnal desires within the borders of your souls, that crave for satisfaction, and sometimes will have it whether you will or no; but there is another Law in your mind warring against this Law in your members, that cannot rest till you arrive more to his likeness, who is your life, righteousness and glory. Are you implanted into Christ's death and resurrection, brought into some conformity to him? And do you live upon him as the branch upon the root for all your grace and supply, and stay upon him as the stone upon the foundation, for your support in grace unto glory, as your only Lord and Righteousness? Then are your hopes for glory sure speeding hopes.

Secondly, Truth of grace secures your hopes of glory, it being the earnest, seal, and first fruits of glory. 2 Cor. 1. 22. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Grace is God's seal for glory, and what greater security can there be? 'It is his earnest penny, which is never taken away, as a pledge may be, but secures the whole sum; yea 'tis part of pay: Grace is that seed of God

which remaineth in him, 1 John 3. 9. and secures the soul's state against final Apostasy, through its union with the Spirit dwelling in him, Rom. 8. 11. Prove your truth of grace (though never so weak) and you will prove your title to glory: Doth your grace owe its being to the fullness of Christ, John 1 16. owning its derivation thence; and dependence there? Doth your grace spread itself into every part and faculty of your soul, wholly sanctified throughout? 1 Thes. 5. 23. Cannot your grace mingle with sin, or own the least appearance of evil, Rev. 2. 2. but hath according to its measure an irreconcilable enmity against every known sin? Gal. 5. 17. Cannot your grace rest in any measures short of perfection, but hath desires and endeavors after more and more grace? 1 Pet. 2. 3. Hath your grace pure and ultimate designs for Divine Glory, aiming in everything, Phil. 1. 20, 21. that Christ may be magnified, John 3. 30. and self-annihilated? then is your grace true grace, and will in time turn to glory.

Thirdly, Your mortifiedness to the world will be a good proof of your title to Heaven. The heirs of Glory are chosen out of the world; are not of the world, John 15. 19. Redeemed from the earth, Rev. 14. 3. They have not received the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. and are crucified to it, Gal. 6. 14. dead to the desires, pleasures and interests of this world, Col. 3. 1, 2. Dead men have no favor or delight in things; no more have they who are dead to this world, any acquiescing pleasure in earthly things, which can no more satisfy a heavenly soul, than dung can feed a living man. Christians, try how your hearts stand affected to earthly things; are these great in your eye, amiable to your affections, attractive on your desires, prevalent on your wills, beyond the things of Heaven? then are your hopes of Heaven unwarrantable by any Divine evidence, and will at last leave your names written on the earth.

Fourthly, Your hopes for Heaven, if right, will be active lively hopes. 1 Pet. 1. 3. Who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Hopes that put life in your affections and spirits, and makes you vigorous after holiness, and the way to glory, Ephes. 2. 10. Right hopes for Heaven will make you run in the way to Heaven, and put you on all manner of holy conversation. Paul 's hopes for Heaven put him on labors and strivings after perfect holiness, 2 Cor. 5. 8, 9. Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. Try your hopes; do they quicken you to duty, or leave you dead? You have no heart to the ways of God, or delight in approaching to him; his commands are grievous to you; this bespeaks unsound and frail hopes for Heaven, which will at last deceive you: But sure hopes for Heaven are backed with suitable labors for Heaven.

Fifthly, If your hopes be right for Heaven, then will your conversation be in Heaven. Phil. 3. 20. But our conversation is in Heaven, whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body. You will be taken up about heavenly things, and driving on heavenly concerns: You will be maintaining intercourse in Heaven, and keeping up your converses with God; you will be often taking journeys to Heaven in your contemplations and desires; your business will be much in Heaven, and your occasions thither frequent; though you live on Earth, yet you will converse in Heaven. As Dr. Preston said when he was near death, I shall but change my place, not my company. O try your hopes for Heaven by your conversation, if that be engaged about the things of Heaven now; if your work be in Heaven, your rest shall be in Heaven also.

Sixthly, If your hopes for Heaven be right, you will willingly undergo whatsoever sufferings and dangers lie in your way to Heaven. He that is sure of reaching home at last, will venture through any dangers in

his way. O what hazards will men run through to get an earthly Crown! no difficulties will discourage them; how much more will hopes for Heaven carry souls through the Red Sea of afflictions and bloody sufferings they may meet with before they come to it! Acts 20. 24. chap. 21. 13. He that cannot consent to drink of the cup Christ drinks of, and which the Father shall give him to drink, and to submit to the cruelest death, losses, shame, trials and torments, which his faithfulness to God may bring him to, must reckon again, and take up other conclusions about his future state; easier terms cannot be granted: Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14. 33. He that will come after me, must deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me. Matth. 16. 24. We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. Acts 14. 22. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him, 2 Tim. 2. 12.

Secondly, Lay up desires for glory, not only some desires of glory, but such desires as nothing else can satisfy but glory; which nothing short of a whole God can content. Most souls in this life limit their desires, and take up their wishes too short of true blessedness: My soul thirsteth for God (saith God) but it was only for some sights of his power and glory, as he had seen him in his Sanctuary, Psal. 63. 1, 3. Some looks through the lattice; some embraces of Christ in the arms of faith, pleased the Spouse, and doth satisfy most souls here: Alas, how few are the desires of gracious souls, which a little of God will not content! One desires grace, another peace; some are for quickening's and comforts; others for enlightening's, for higher measures of knowledge, for some sights of God through a glass; but how few breathings are there, to see as we are seen, to know as we are known? 1 Cor. 13. 12. And indeed 'tis strange that Heaven-born souls, that heirs of glory, and fellow-citizens of Heaven, should have no more longings after their own home, and not only for some first-

fruits, but the full ripe fruits of their own Country. David had sometimes workings after this, not only for God to come to him, but for himself to go to God; when his heart takes a leap from the path of life, into the presence of God, where is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Psal. 16. 11. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. From the beholding of his face in righteousness here, he longs for the satisfying visions of God in glory. Psal. 17. 15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. Paul also under the highest enjoyments of God here, had his unsatisfied longings to be with him as best of all, Phil. 1. 23. and in respect of which he counts his greatest intimacy with Christ in the body, to be a kind of absence. 2 Cor. 5. 6. Knowing that whiles we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Do not terminate your desires upon anything that can satisfy you on this side glory: Get such desires raised, which cannot be answered till you come to Heaven, with such kind of breathings as these: O when shall I come to that blessed state, to know as I am known; to have every corner of my heart filled with the immediate emanations of his glorious fullness! O when will that time, or rather eternity come, when I shall be satisfied with looking on that blessed face which is every day the Angels wonder, and the Saints joy. Here alas! I lie among the pots, all sooty and defiled, whiles the vessels of my Father's house, and the bowls before the Altar, out of which my Lord always drinketh, are bright and glorious. Now I have my habitation where Dragons lie, while a glorious Pavilion stands empty for me: Here I feed on my own dung, and oftentimes eat the excrements of Devils, and all the while there's bread enough in my Father's house, and my Brethren fare deliciously at the King's Table. O when shall my work be done, that I may be gone! When shall the things for cleansing be given me, and the days of my purification be accomplished, that my turn may come to go in to the Lord my King!

When shall the Nuptial garments, the Bridal ornaments, the Robe, the Ring, the Royal Vestments bespangled with costly Jewels, be given me, with this most welcome message, Arise my Love, my Dove, my Fair One, and come away! Lay up such kind of breathings after the Mountains of Spices, the Everlasting Hills, the Rivers of Pleasures, the Bride-chamber of Glory, where you shall be ever with the Lord. This will hasten your pace to Heaven, and mount you on the wings of a Dove: This will help you to pass by the world's glory with a holy scorn, and to bear its cruelty with incredible patience.

Thirdly, Lay up all the Treasures you can to greaten glory: Though the lest portion of glory is satisfying, yet the highest measures of glory are desirable, because in it there is the greatest conformity to God, 1 John 3. 2. Luke 10. 17, 19, 20. Dan. 12. 3. and the fullest enjoyment of God. The Lord Jesus doth propose degrees of glory for the encouragement of his people to greater improvements of grace; and therefore the highest degrees of glory are desirable: O get as much as you can here to greaten your felicity in Heaven. Do all you may to make your Crown more massy, and your mansion more fair, and your pleasures more full to all Eternity.

Several things have a tendency to greaten your glory. The more grace you improve now, the greater will be your glory; he that gained ten pounds, had ten Cities: Grace is seed sown, according to its measure will be the harvest: What a man sows, that shall he reap, Gal. 6. 7. The less seed is sown, the less crop will there be; and the more seed, the larger increase, 1 Cor. 3. 9. Glory is a Crown of Righteousness proportioned to the utmost improvements of Grace. The more work you do for God, the greater will be your wages of grace in glory, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 4. 2 Cor. 5. 10. That everyone should receive according to what is done in the body.

The more you lay out for God, the more shall you receive from him, 2 Cor. 9. 6. who will certainly repay it.

The greater your sufferings are for God, the greater will your rejoicings be with him: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, Ps. 126. 5. Look what disproportion there is between the Seed-time and Harvest, far greater is there between the Saints sufferings, sorrows, and triumphing joy: Their sorrow lies within the compass of a short night, their joy begins with that morning which hath no evening to follow it, Psal. 30. 5. Their tears will scarcely fill a bottle, but their pleasures are so vast an Ocean, as that they cannot be received, but must be entered into, Mat. 25. 21. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Yea the present consolations of the Saints oftentimes abound in their sufferings; The ringing of my chains hath been sweet music in my ears, (said Guy de Bres;) all my former discourses were but as a blind man's of colors, in respect of my present feeling: O what a precious comforter is a good conscience! How unspeakable then are those rejoicings, when all tears shall be wiped off, when sorrow and mourning shall fly away, Mat. 5. 10, 11, 12.

The more your losses are for Christ on earth, the greater will be your gain in Heaven. Heb. 10. 34. And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. Men can never bring their goods to a better Market, than to have them spoiled for the sake of Christ: your goods you lose for Christ are capable of being spoiled; your goods you shall receive in Heaven are above all injury; the very bags wax not old, much less the treasure: time will mar your best interests here. Alas, what is a little old goods, moth-eaten garments, rusty silver subject to change; compared with that substance, whose duration is as long

as eternity, and whose extension is as large as immensity? and such is God in Christ, the Saints eternal treasure: Mat. 19. 29. And in the World to come life eternal. Carnal reason judges them the greatest fools that dare to be undone for their profession; whereas divine truth reckons such the mad men, who to escape them that can but kill the body, durst encounter him who can damn both soul and body in Hell, Mat. 10. 28. And to lay a foundation of a few days safety upon the ruins of themselves and others. How dangerous (said Mr. Cooper) is their estate, who cannot rise but with the fall of many? *Et quantum sit illud propter quod nos reliquisti?* How poor are those things (saith he) for which you have left us? whereas the Saints losses for Christ are their greatest gain, while the things they part with are but temporal; but those they gain are eternal, 2 Cor. 4. 18.

Lastly, The more souls you help to Heaven, the more treasure you prepare for Heaven: Dan. 12. 3. They that be wise (the margin hath it, they that be teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever. As nothing doth sink a person deeper into Hell, than to have the blood of souls upon its head, and to become the occasion of others perishing, Jer. 2. 34. So it wonderfully greatens a persons own blessedness in Heaven, to be the means of getting others to be blessed also: 1 Thes. 2. 19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.

Lastly, Lay up preparations for glory: Glory is a great thing: O what a change doth Heaven make upon a Believer's state! We shall all be changed, 1 Cor. 15. 51. from corruption to incorruption; from sin to spotless purity; from imperfection to perfection; from darkness to knowledge; from faith to sight; from espousals to a marriage-day: and what preparations do such a change call for? What if death

should surprise you, and take you in your old clothes? 'tis not your daily garments, no not your best raiment's are good enough for your marriage day: your attire must be all new when you solemnize your eternal nuptials to the King of Glory. O what manner of persons should you be who look for new Heavens, and a new Earth! If a Paul be not sufficient to carry a love-token to Christ's Spouse here on earth, 2 Cor. 2. 16. Who is sufficient for these things? Who then are fit to lie in the Bridegroom's arms to all eternity? Few think what a change must be before the Saints can get to Heaven: 1 Cor. 15. 50. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. If so much preparation-work must be dispatched before an Esther could be fit for the embraces of an earthly King, Esth. 2. 12. six months for purifying with oil of Myrrh, and six months with sweet Odors, and with other things? How much sanctification-work is needful to meeten a soul for the immediate enjoyment of God in glory? and how unready are the most of souls for such a change? O Believers! hasten about your preparations for Heaven, seeing you have no fixation on earth, and know not what hour your Lord will come. In order to which, take these six directions.

First, Get your hearts more loose from this present world; men that change places, knock up, and take abroad things they must carry with them: Your hearts (Christians) are the principal things you must take with you to Heaven; it may be you have gone to God in duties many a time, and left your hearts behind you; but you cannot go to God in glory, except your hearts be with you. And O what a difficult work is it to go the heart (upon choice) loose from everything below God! and till this be done, there's no getting to Heaven: Things fastened to the free-hold (they say) cannot be removed; how then can that heart get to glory, that is nailed down to the world, and things below. Be daily loosening your hearts from the world, estates,

houses, lands, trades, friends, relations, and everything below; for you may not have time to get them off without loss, when death comes: you must leave them all shortly, and you know not how soon, to go to better friends and interests: these have been snares and spears to your souls, and have given you many a wound, and still hinder your speeding to glory; and why should you be loath to part with them? O Christians! if you are willing to be with Christ, you will give your hearts warning to be gone from these tabernacles, and to take their leave of this world daily.

Secondly, Press after more maturity in your graces; the more ripe, the more fit for gathering, Joel. 3. 13. Tamar must tarry a Widow till Selah be grown, Gen. 38. 11. and your marriage day must be delayed till you come to a full age: The Saints must be as a shock of corn that cometh in in its season, Job 5. 25. Ripen a pace in your graces, if you would get to glory: Get your faith, hope, patience, and every grace increased daily; especially your love to God; that's the grace shall abide in glory, 1 Cor. 13. 8. Faith and Hope are the soul's helps, and companions in the way; but Love will be an eternal inhabitant with you. Get purer, deeper rooted, stronger, more enlarged love to Jesus Christ every day, till you be downright sick for him; this will make your life a death without his presence here, and your death to be life in being with him forever. 'Twas love to Christ made Ignatius so dead to all things below, and so longing to be with Christ: 'It is storied of him, that when he was dead, and his heart taken out, they saw the name of Jesus written in it in letters of Gold: The more love to God, the more fit for God; for God is love, .

Thirdly, Get and keep the testimony of a good conscience, that may witness for you in the day of Christ: when you die, you are to have a trial for your life, your inheritance, your All; and you had need have your witness firm, and ready: Now there are two great witnesses you

will need in that day to clear your title; the witness of Conscience, and the Spirit: have the one on your side, and you will not want the other. Get your consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and purged from dead works by the Spirit of Christ, that it may be able to appear for you in that day. The blood of Christ will put words into the mouth of conscience for you, to plead the general issue, and the benefit of pardoning grace, wherein you have been transgressors; enlightened conscience will accuse you that you have sinned; and besprinkled conscience will plead for you that you are pardoned; and purged conscience will testify for you that you are changed, and that you hate the evil you have done, and love the holiness you have neglected. O of what wonderful use will the testimony of a good conscience be when you stand at the Bar of God! Get it true to you now, and sure for you then.

Fourthly, Maintain more constant walks with God daily; this will fit you for your eternal fellowship with him. Converse with God is begun acquaintance here; and in Heaven is perfect friendship, and perpetual fellowship. It will much fit you for Heaven hereafter, to begin the work of Heaven here, which lies in maintained intercourse with him. Through these gallery-walks with God, do the Saints pass into the Presence-Chamber, and sit down with him forever: Communion with God now, is Heaven begun; such are fittest for his presence in glory, who are trained up in his company here.

Fifthly, If you would prepare for Heaven, dispatch your work on Earth: Heaven is a state of rest, and rest follows the finishing of labor, Heb. 4. 9. Rev. 4. 13. Paul must end his fight, finish his course, and keep the faith, before he can reach the Crown: 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. In the grave there's no wisdom, device, or work; this is your only time for labor while you are in the Vineyard. O how much work is behind with most! which will make a departure terrible to an awakened

conscience. Haste about your neglected work; you have (it may be) much work to do with others, in your families, with your relations; possibly there are some souls in their graves, and you have not done what you might to bring them forth; dead Husband, Wife, Children, Servants, for whom you must do more, or cannot comfortably appear before God. O hasten about this work, that you may give up your account with joy! There's soul work to be done, to get corruptions subdued, graces strengthened, your accounts stated, evidences cleared, and lamps trimmed, which must be attended with utmost vigor. If you would get home, finish your work.

Lastly, Be always ready, waiting for the coming of the Lord: Luke 12. 35, 36. Let your loins be girt about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men, that wait for their Lord when he will return from the Wedding; that when he cometh, and knocketh, they may open to him immediately: 2 Pet. 3. 12. Looking for, and hastening to the coming of the day of God: Not only be waiting for your change, but longing after it, as persons that are ready for a desired journey think the time long ere they go. Why are the wheels of his Chariot so long a coming? Judge. 5. 28. The Spirit and the Bride say come, Rev. 22. 17. With the Virgins go out to meet him, Mat. 25. 1. If you knew the welcome that abideth for you when you come home, ye would hasten your pace; Rutherford. The more ready you are for the coming of Christ, the more will you long for his appearance; and the more grateful will his approach be. The uncertainty of that time when the Lord Jesus shall appear, and the unseasonableness of that surprisal for preparation work, should put Christians on continual readiness, lest coming in an hour they know not of, they be found unfit to enter in, and the door be shut, Mat. 25. 10.

O how dreadful will a miscarriage be at last! All the hopes, labors and comfort of your life depend upon your final safety, and happy

conclusion of your day: 'It is a great thing to live a sanctified, and die a saved soul. O how few imagine the difficulty of being a Christian indeed, and the infinite concern of securing an immortal soul, and a sure title to the unsearchable riches of the other world! O the folly and madness of rational creatures, to make everything sure but salvation, and to spend their time and strength about the many things of a perishing life, and lose the better part! Whoever thou art that castest thine eye upon this discourse, thou wilt one day find Religion to be thy chiefest interest; when thou comest to take thy farewell of a vain deceitful world, and seest all thy Lovers, for whom thou hast slighted thy precious soul, thy Sovereign Lord, and dying Redeemer, to prove miserable comforters, not able to afford one drop of balm, to heal, or cordial to cheer thy fainting heart, and affrighted conscience: When thou seest pale death deliver thee a summons to appear before the holy God, and to give an account of thy Stewardship, when thou seest the Books opened, and such a fearful charge against thy guilty conscience, which thou canst not deny or answer; then wilt thou find godliness in the power of it, to be the greatest gain; and wouldest give ten thousand worlds for such an evidence as Hezekiah and Paul had, when within view of death and eternity. And is not Religion as much thy concern, and should be as grateful now, and all those great and important duties of piety which this Book lays before thee; thought to be as advisable now, when time and capacity may render them feasible, as in a dying hour, when desires and purposes may be too late? O do not content thy treacherous heart, to cast a transient glance upon these lines, to approve or commend them, and after all to shake hands with these vast and concerning Truths in them, and live and die a stranger to this great and heavenly work; but resolve to set about it presently, to pursue it thoroughly, that when your Trading-day is done, your enriching Eternity may begin, and you receive that vast Inheritance that fadeth not away, eternal in the Heavens.

FINIS.

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions June 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, Or 97068