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The Glory and Happiness of the Saints in Heaven

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE BLESSED STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS AFTER DEATH

NATHANAEL RANEW



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Or, a Discourse Concerning the Blessed State of the Righteous after
Death.

By Nathanael Ranew, late of London, Bookseller.

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TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

I Dare not suppose thee, in an Age of so much Light and Knowledge, to be ignorant of a future State and Condition, that doth abide thee and all Men after this Life; for this were to conceive of the contrary, not only to the sentiments of all Christians, but even of Heathens themselves. Neither can I think any to be so far blinded and hardened, as to believe that this State, which shall befall all Men after Death, to be the same unto all Persons, whether they be good or bad; for though the Wise Man tells us, in Eccles. 9.1, 2. That in this

Life, All things come alike unto all Men, and there is one event to the Righteous and to the Wicked, to the Clean and to the Unclean. So that in the way of God's common Providential dealings with Men in this World, no Man knoweth Love or Hatred by all that is before them. Yet when Death and Judgment come, a discriminating Sentence shall pass upon all Men, According to what they have done in the Body, whether it be good or bad. And then as the Apostle speaks, All those, who have not obeyed the Truth, but have lived in Sin and Unrighteousness, shall receive Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that hath thus done Evil; But to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, have sought for Glory, and Honor, and Immortality, shall be Eternal Life. And of this none that live under the Light of the Gospel can be ignorant.

Now as to the former of these, that State of Woe and Misery, that is to be the Portion of Sinners in Hell, it is not my design in the following Discourse to say anything: Having confined my Thoughts and Meditations therein unto the latter, and that is that State of Bliss and Happiness that shall be the Portion of Holy Souls in Heaven.

All Men now will say they desire and seek after happiness, but few there are that attain thereunto; not that there is no such Thing or State attainable; for Holiness always lays a sure Foundation for Happiness: But Man being fallen from God, and sunk into the Creature, cannot without the help of Divine Grace, raise up his Soul, his Affections and Desires towards God, towards Heaven and Heavenly things; but takes up with what is suitable to his Earthly and Fleshly part; and so the World and the Enjoyments thereof, being adapted to the Inclinations of his present State and Condition here below; accordingly with the greatest eagerness, he pursues the

Riches, the Honors, the Pleasures and Delights of this World; as those things which when attained, he vainly fancies will make him truly Happy; but when he comes to enjoy them, meets with Frustration and Disappointment: All Men being forced sooner or later to subscribe unto what the Wisest of Men faith, as a great Truth, concerning all things under the Sun, that they are but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.

Wouldst thou not, Christian Reader, when thou comest to die, be eternally deceived in thy Hopes and Expectations of Happiness: Let not the World and the Enjoyments thereof, take up thy Thoughts and Affections now. God hath provided the good things thereof, and by his Care and Providence brings them to thee daily for thy use, that with this Gracious and Liberal Allowance of his; thou mayest serve him with the greater Cheerfulness and Delight of Soul, in thy Passage through this World: But he never intended, thou shouldst take up with them as thy Happiness. Believe it, God hath provided better things for holy Souls in another World; he intends himself to be their Portion, his Heaven to be their Habitation and Dwelling place, Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, to be their Associates and Companions; where they shall live in the light of God's Countenance, see his Face, behold his Glory, and be filled with his Love to all Eternity. O blessed State of infinite Bliss and Happiness, beyond what words is able to express. Well may holy Souls with wonder and amazement cry out with the Apostle, and say, Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, nor can it enter into the heart of Man to conceive what God hath provided for them that Love him.

And why mayest not thou who now castest thine Eyes upon these lines, make one of that great number of holy Souls, that shall be thus Eternally Happy and Blessed? God hath not Excluded thee out of

Heaven, and why shouldest thou exclude and shut out thyself? God is now displaying before thee, the Excellencies and Glory of that Blessed State, and wherefore doth he do so, but to invite and draw Sinners to come and partake of this Happiness; not that God needs us, or anything that we can do; for he is as Happy without us, as he can possibly be with us: But we need him, and cannot be happy without him.

Now therefore since he is pleased to continue the offers of such rich Grace and Mercy, let none be found slights and contemners thereof. Disappoint not, O Sinners, the design of God in seeking to bring Souls to Heaven. Frustrate not your own Expectations of Bliss and Happiness. Make not yourselves Eternally miserable, by choosing any sinful course, or walking in any allowed way of Wickedness: Nor yet provoke God by any sinful delays, or any sluggish and lazy desires and endeavors in seeking to obtain this Everlasting Happiness, to deal with you as obstinate despisers and contemners thereof, and swear in his Wrath that you shall never enter into his Rest.

If God may be Glorified, and Souls receive benefit hereby unto Eternal Life, the Author hath the desire of his Soul, and an abundant Reward for what he hath done in the ensuing Discourse; and that a Blessing from Heaven may make is thus Successful unto all that shall read it, is and shall be the Prayer of the Publisher.

THE GLORY AND HAPPINESS OF THE SAINTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Introduction.

The Introduction. A State of future Glory and Happiness proved. What it is that makes the Happiness of Heaven so excellent and glorious, in a short and brief Description thereof.

The framing a Discourse of Heaven, that Place of inexpressible Bliss and Happiness, the Portion of Holy and Righteous Persons to Eternity, is a Work fitter for an Angel, one of those Heavenly Courtiers, who have ever since their Creation, and for many Ages and Generations now past, been happy partakers of that blissful State; than the lispings and stammering of any mortal Tongue: Sense here being the best Orator, and they fittest to describe Heaven unto others, who live in the fruition of it themselves. And indeed all Discourses of this nature, by poor frail Creatures, are rather a darkening and diminution of that Glory and Happiness, than an ample Illustration or Discovery what it is. And when the People of God shall come to the enjoyment thereof, they will soon find themselves wonderfully, but happily deceived by the most glorious Descriptions that ever were laid before them. What the Prophet saith in Hab. 3. where, after he had given us a short description of some of the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, he tells us in the

4th. Verse, His Brightness was as the Light; that he had Horns coming out of his hands; which usually are a signification of Strength and Might; but says the Prophet, There was the hiding of his Power: As if he had said, Whatever Strength and Might God had thereby put forth, it was so far from manifesting the fullness and greatness thereof, that it was rather a Hiding, than a Revelation of his Power; there being infinitely more Power in him, than was ever yet put forth by him. The like may truly be said concerning Heaven and its Glory and Excellency. Take all the Descriptions that since the Creation of the World have been made of the Glory and Happiness thereof, and put them all together, and we may say of them all, that they rather hide and eclipse the Glory of Heaven, than any way come near to a manifestation of the Fulness and Excellency thereof; still is there infinitely more hid from us, than can possibly thereby be made known to us. Heaven is like God himself, an infinite Good and Happiness; and so cannot be fully known or enjoyed by any who are but of finite Capacities and Understanding. And therefore after all that we have heard thereof from Men, or received from God himself, either by what he hath revealed to us in his Word, or secretly elapsed down immediately into our Souls by his Spirit; yet what holy Job saith of God, we may say of the Heaven of God; Oh how little a Portion of it is known! And therefore those Words of St. Paul need not be looked upon with admiration, when he tells us, Phil. 1.23. he desired to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; that is, in Heaven, where God and Christ are known and enjoyed; for that is it which makes Heaven so desirable; yea, to be best of all, as the same Apostle speaks. For why should any think it strange, that the blessed Apostle, who had been wrapped up into the Third Heaven by extraordinary privilege, as well as in an extraordinary manner, and there heard and saw so much of that Glory and Happiness that was there enjoyed, as

that himself said was unutterable, that he should long after a fuller enjoyment of it? Christians who profess their Hopes and Happiness is laid up in Heaven, should rather wonder at his willingness to abide here any longer in the Flesh. And certainly, had not Love; yea, great Love to him, who had prepared and purchased so great and inexpressible a Happiness for him, wrought very powerfully in him; it may seem almost impossible that Heaven and St. Paul should have been kept longer asunder, if anything in him, or to be done or suffered by him, could have brought him thither sooner than his appointed time.

Great and glorious things doth the Scripture speak concerning Heaven, the Palace, or City rather of the great God; but how great the Glory and Happiness of the Blessed shall there be, none are able now to express: The blessed Apostle therefore, in 2 Cor. 12.3, 4. when he sets himself purposely to relate his Journey into the other World, all that he tells us of it, is only this, That there he heard those Words that were unspeakable; and saw those Things that were not lawful, or not possible to be uttered. And other-where he tells us, Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, neither is it possible for the heart of Man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him. The Eye hath seen great and glorious. Things, and the Ear hath heard much greater; but the Heart of Man is able to imagine much more than either of them: But whatever the Eye hath seen, or the Ear hath heard, or the Heart can imagine; yet neither of them can reach to apprehend or conceive the great things that God hath prepared for them that love him Hence therefore it is that the same Apostle, 2 Cor. 4.17. calls Heaven a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, The Happiness that a Believer attains to even on this side Glory, when he hath received an Earnest, or Beginning of Heaven in some glorious work of Sanctification upon his Soul, Oh how doth the Joy of

the Knowledge and Assurance thereof pass all understanding; as the same Apostle speaks, Phil. 4.7. Who is able to utter the sweetness of that Peace of Conscience, and the spiritual Joy and Rejoicing of a Soul, on whom the Love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost!

Such a ravishing, overcoming Joy and Delight flows in upon the Soul, as it cannot express; no, nor sometimes is it able to bear up under it. And if there be so much sweetness in a Taste of Heaven, what is there then in a full enjoyment of Heaven. The Beloved Apostle St. John tells us, in 1 John 3.2. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; no, nor indeed can it appear now, for in our present state we are not able to bear it. Should but a little of the Glory of Heaven be revealed to us now, Oh how would it amaze and confound us! That weight of Glory would be so great, that it would overwhelm us. We read in Exod. 34.34. That when Moses had been conversing with God in the Mount, and came down to the People again, that his Face did so shine, that the Children of Israel could not behold him, until he put a Vail upon his Face. And did a small Ray of the Glory of God reflected upon Moses 's Face, shine so gloriously, that the Israelites could not look upon him? Oh what a dazzling, confounding Brightness and Glory would Heaven itself break forth upon us with, if the Vail between us and it, were removed out of the way; surely Flesh and Blood could not be able to bear it. When the same Moses therefore, in Exod 33.18. besought God to show him his Face, or, his Glory, which is all one; what Answer doth God return him? Not a positive Denial of his Request; for he doth not say, I will not show it thee: No, but he tells him, Thou canst not see my face and live. It is that thou canst not bear; it is an Object too glorious for thee to behold: As if God had said, Moses, thou hast had some discoveries of myself unto thee; and they have begotten farther desires in thee after more and greater manifestations thereof: What thou askest at my hands, is not

a thing too great for me to bestow; but it is too great for thee to receive: a happiness it is too great to be enjoyed in this Life; and therefore though I do not, nor will not forever deny thy Request, yet I must defer it till it may be a Happiness unto thee; and that is, till thou come to Heaven, where thou shalt forever see my face, and enjoy my Presence in as large and ample a manner as thou canst possibly desire; but now thou canst not bear it; for no man can see my face and live. And as no man can take in the Happiness of Heaven here, so no man can understand the greatness of it: So true are the Words of the Apostle, The things that God hath prepared for them that love him, are so many, and so great, that they cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive. The Psalmist therefore, upon this Consideration, cries out with Admiration, Psal. 31.19. Oh how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; great it was, but how great he could not express. And thus truly must we do; when we have said all we can concerning Heaven, we must sit down and admire the Greatness and Excellency of it; but the Fulness, Riches and Glory of it, we shall never understand till we come forever to enjoy it.

But though we cannot fully understand the Happiness of Heaven; yet for the raising of the Hearts, and exciting and quickening the Affections and Desires of Christians towards it; and that their pursuits after the obtaining of it, may be more diligent and servant, I shall endeavor to represent something of the Glory and Excellency of that Blessed State, that is to be enjoyed there, according to what God hath been pleased to discover to us thereof in his holy Word; though still when all that hath or can be said, it is the Enjoyment of Heaven only that can make known to us what the Happiness of Heaven shall be.

But before I proceed unto a particular and distinct Explication of the Happiness of. Heaven, it will be necessary by some convincing Arguments to prove the Reality and Certainty of that Glory and Happiness that shall be enjoyed by the Godly there. Now this I shall demonstrate by these following Arguments.

First, From the infallible Promises of the Truth speaking God. Now so many are the Promises scattered up and down in sacred Writ concerning the Certainty, Futurity, and Eternity of the Saints Happiness, that I cannot number them; and surely Believers, who have by those Promises an everlasting Inheritance of Glory and Happiness conveyed to, and settled upon them as their Portion, cannot be supposed to be Strangers unto them; upon the supposition whereof, I shall instance only in a few Fear not little Flock, says our Lord, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a Kingdom, Luke 12.33. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Matt. 5.8. My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, John 10.28. This is his Promise that he hath given unto us, even eternal life, 1 John 2.25. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us, says the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1.3, 4. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God, Rev. 2.7. To him that overcometh, will I give to sit with me on my Throne, even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father on his Throne, Rev. 3.21. Believers are the greatest Heirs in all the World; for, as the Apostle speaks, They have the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. And says the same Apostle, All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or

Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come; all is yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's, 1 Cor. 3.22.

Secondly, The Certainty of a future state of Glory and Happiness, may be demonstrated from the great Undertaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed this was a Work fit for none but him to undertake; for none else were able to accomplish it. Whatever worth or excellency there is either in all the Men on Earth, or in all the Saints, and Angels in Heaven should they have proffered to have done and suffered all that their Natures are capable of, to have purchased the Love and Favor of God, to have been enjoyed, though but by one Soul, and that but for one moment of time in Heaven; it would have been rejected and despised by God. But now the Death and Sufferings of Jesus Christ were of equal worth and value with Heaven, and the Enjoyment of God to eternity; for his Blood was the Blood of God, and therefore the shedding of it deserved the Presence, Love and Favor of God to be bestowed upon Believers, as their Portion forever. This Jesus Christ hath done, for this he hath both suffered and died; and because he hath made a Purchase of these things with his Blood, Believers shall therefore enjoy them; for Christ will not lose his Purchase, nor shall Believers therefore lose their Happiness. The bringing many Sons unto Glory, was the End which Christ designed in the laying down of his Life, and therefore he willingly submitted unto the Way by which he was to accomplish it; and that was by his suffering Death; and from hence therefore the People of God are said to obtain an inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith in him.

Thirdly, Another Ground or Reason we have to believe a state of Glory and Happiness hereafter, may be taken from the Spirit 's introductory or preparatory working in the Hearts of Believers here

in this Life. By this now I mean, the Beginning of Grace wrought in the Soul; for Grace and Glory are one and the same thing; Grace is Glory, and Glory is Grace; all the Difference between them, is only in the degree; Grace is Glory begun, and Glory is Grace perfected. And when the Spirit of God works Grace in any Soul, he then gives the first Fruits, the Earnest, or Fore-taste of Glory. Grace therefore is sometimes called Glory in Scripture; so we read, 2 Cor. 3.18. We all with open face beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory unto Glory; that is, from one degree and measure of Grace unto another. And Grace there is called Glory, because, when Grace is advanced unto its highest degree of perfection, it is Glory. Now where ever any receive the first fruits of Heaven in Grace and Holiness, they shall receive the full Harvest of Glory itself. Grace therefore is called the Spirit 's forming, or fitting of the Soul for Glory. Hence the Apostle speaking of himself and others, as groaning and longing to be clothed with their House which is frown Heaven, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life. In 2 Cor. 5.3, & 4. he adds in the 5th. verse, He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God; who hath also given us the Earnest of the Spirit; which, in Ephes. 1.14. is called the Earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased Possession. Where ever Grace is in truth, it is always in Growth, and it shall be in perfection: So saith the Apostle, Phil. 1.6. He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the Day of Jesus Christ. Where the Spirit gives unto any the Nature and Disposition of the Children of God, he thereby gives them an undoubted Right and Title unto Heaven and Glory; yea, such a Right and Title as shall never be lost or broken off: So saith the Apostle, Rom. 8.16, 17. For the Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God;

and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint-Heirs with Jesus Christ; and if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.

Fourthly, and lastly, I might argue the Certainty of a future state of Glory and Happiness, from the constant believing Hopes and Expectations; yea, and Sufferings also of the Saints and People of God in all Ages. If Believers had hope only in this Life, they were then, as the Apostle speaks, of all men most miserable. But it is not so; for their Hopes and Happiness lies in those things that are to be enjoyed beyond Time, even in Eternity. And hence it is, that they have such strong Consolation as bears up their Souls above all the Sufferings that they meet with in this present Life; because they have sled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope that is set before them, which Hope they have as an Anchor of the Soul, that is sure and steadfast, because it entereth into that within the Vail, Heb. 6.18, 19. It is the Nature of the New Creature, where-ever it is, to cause the Soul to look upwards; and hence it is that the People of God are said to be begotten again unto a lively hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, 1 Pet. 1.3, 4. From this now springs great Joy and Consolation, and therefore upon this account it is that Believers are said to rejoice in hopes of the Glory of God, Rom. 35.2.

Should I now attempt to lay down a Description of Heaven, that Place of perfect Bliss and Happiness, I should prevent myself in what I intend to speak more fully and largely to afterwards: Only in the General, to excite and quicken our Desires and Affections after it, take this following short Sum of it.

Heaven is a Place where there is a total and everlasting exclusion of all that is evil and imperfect, and where there is a full perfection and

perpetual enjoyment of all that is Good, and that in the largest latitude and extent of it. In Heaven there is nothing to afflict or torment; but everything that is satisfactory and delightful. There is nothing of Sin there, and therefore nothing of Sorrow. Saints in Heaven enjoy the best Company. There is the Great and Glorious God seen and known in all his glorious Excellencies and Perfections. There is the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life and Glory, exalted in our Nature, at the Right Hand of God; through whose meritorious Undertakings we come to be presented unto God, and to stand in his Presence with Confidence and Joy, as having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. There are the glorious Angels, the Cherubim's and Seraphim's, with all the glorified Saints and Servants of God, that have lived in all Ages of the World; as, Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, who are always standing round about the Throne of God, crying, Hallelujah, Praise, Honor and Glory unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore. In Heaven there is not only a perfect freedom from all Sin, but from all Inclinations; yea, from all Temptations thereunto. Grace and Holiness are there in their Fulness, in their Perfection and Glory. There it is that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on Immortality. There it is that these vile Bodies of ours shall be made like unto the glorious Body of Jesus Christ. There it is that these Souls of ours shall be enlarged in their utmost Capacities and Desires, and yet filled and satisfied to the utmost also. There it is that there is fullness of Joy, excellency of Glory, with an Eternity of Enjoyment of both. This now is the Building of God, that House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5.1. This is that Kingdom that is to be inherited by the People of God, prepared for them from the foundation of the World, Matth. 25.46. This is that City that hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is

God, Heb. 11.10. The Streets whereof are paved with Gold, and the Gates whereof are Pearl, Rev. 21.21. In which there is no Temple; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it. Where there is no more Night no more Candle, nor any need of the Sun, or of the Moon to shine in it; for the Lord God giveth them Light, and they shall reign forever and ever, Rev. 22.5. This now is Heaven, and much more than all this; for when we have spent all our Days and Time in Hearing, in Reading, in Discoursing, in Meditating upon Heaven, and upon nothing else; yet after we have done all we can, said all we can, thought all we can; yet can we never set forth the Thousandth Part of that Happiness that is to be enjoyed in Heaven; for it is that which is beyond expression, beyond imagination; but blessed be God, it is not beyond enjoyment; for the having and possessing of these things in their Fulness, in their Perfection, and in their Perpetuity, is that, which, as it makes the Happiness of Heaven so excellent and glorious, so doth it make it also so desirable to be enjoyed.

CHAPTER II.

A more particular Consideration of the Happiness of Heaven.

A more particular Consideration of the Happiness of Heaven. Of the Company and Society Believers shall enjoy in Heaven; as, (1.) Communion with all the People of God. (2.) Communion with Angels. (3.) Enjoyment of Jesus Christ their Redeemer. (4.) Sight and Fruition of God. What kind of Sight or Vision of God, Saints shall

have in Heaven: Which shall be, (1.) Immediate and clear. (2.) Transforming. (3.) Joyful. (4.) Permanent and perpetual. This Sight and Vision of God in Heaven will be a great Happiness; because God is (1.) A Universal Good. (2.) A Pure and Unmixed Good. (3.) A Suitable Good. (4.) An All sufficient Good. (5.) A Satisfying Good. (6.) An Everlasting Good.

Having in the Conclusion of the Former Chapter, laid down a brief Description of Heaven, and the Happiness thereof, I now come to a more particular distinct handling of the several Branches of it.

Now here the First Thing that I shall instance in, as a Part of that Happiness, is the Company and Society that the Saints shall eternally enjoy in Heaven. Which is comprehended in these Four Particulars: Fellowship with all the Saints. Communion with Angels. The Sight of Jesus Christ, as our Blessed and Glorious Redeemer. And the eternal Vision and Enjoyment of God himself.

First. The Happiness of Believers in Heaven consists in their Fellowship and Society with the Saints and People of God, that have lived in all Ages of the World. The Communion of Saints, and the great Delight the People of God have taken therein, is that we often read of in Scripture. Holy David speaks of it with great pleasure, Psal. 42.4. I went, says he, to the House of God with the voice of Joy and Praise; But why so? it was, says he, with a Multitude that kept Holy-Day. Such Society were the Delight of his Soul: Psal. 16.3. But to the Saints, the excellent ones of the Earth, in whom is all my Delight. O how rejoicingly doth his Soul speak when such Company came unto him! I was glad when they said unto me, Come, let us go up unto the House of the Lord, Psal. 122.1. It is true, David 's greatest Delight was in God, and in the enjoyment of him; and therefore says he, I will go

unto God, my exceeding Joy and Cheer, Psal. 42.4. But next unto God, the People of God, and Communion with them, were those he most esteemed: And therefore, though his going to the House of God, was chiefly to meet with God, whom his Soul did most pant and breath after; yet was it no small matter of Joy to him, that he went to the House of God in such Company. And if the People of God now be accounted by a Godly man to be such delightful Company here on Earth, whilst Sin as well as Grace is in them in conjunction; O how delightful will their Company be in Heaven, when they shall be free from all Sin and Corruption! having nothing but Grace in them in Perfection. Here on Earth, the Communion of Saints is sweet and desirable, though mixed with Communion with the World; so that while we have Fellowship with them, we are to have Fellowship with Sinners at the same time; and indeed there is no Society so pure and holy, but there are, and will be a Number of unholy ones among them. To be full of Holiness ourselves, and to have none but holy ones in our company, is a desirable thing on Earth; but enjoyed only in Heaven: Here the Chaff and the Wheat must grow together. All that are now called by the Name of the Lord are not all holy; but Saints and Sinners dwell together in the same House; sit together at the same Table, lie together in the same Bed; yea, eat both of the same Spiritual Meat, and drink the same Spiritual Drink; enjoy the same Ordinances, partake of the same Sacrament, even the Body and Blood of our Blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So that the People of God, though they have Communion one with another, yet have they Fellowship with Sinners also. And this will always be the state of the People of God while they are here. But now in Heaven, Believers shall have Communion with the Saints and Servants of God, and with none but them; for all Sinners shall be eternally excluded out of that holy Place; nothing or person that is defiled or polluted, shall ever

enter there; and certainly this must needs be sweet and delightful. Were it a thing that we might suppose possible (as indeed it is not) that here we could have Communion with the People of God, and with them only, yet the best of them have now so many Weaknesses and Imperfections, as would render the purest Society of them sometimes uncomfortable; for here being in their imperfect state, they must be born withal in many things; for they are still Men subject to like Passions and Infirmities with others. Moses, a Man eminent for Meekness, so that there was none like him on Earth; yet sometimes spake unadvisedly with his lips. Job, a patient Man, even to a Proverb; yet had sometimes his Fits of Impatience and Discontent. Jonah, a Prophet of the Lord, yet very froward and peevish, and justifies his Passion and Anger, not only before Men, but even unto the Face of God himself, saying, I do well to be angry, even unto the death. Yea, most, if not all the Saints and People of God mentioned in Scripture, though eminent for Grace and Holiness, yet have they had some Sins, some Infirmities or other recorded of them, that it might be known they were Men; yea, sinful Men also, as well as Saints; and if we expect Communion with any while we are here, that are not Sinners as well as Saints, we must then go out of the world; as the Apostle speaks; for all the People of God here have Flesh in them as well as Spirit; Sin and Corruption in them, as well as Grace and Holiness. And yet notwithstanding all their Frailties and Infirmities, they are still the best Company, and Fellowship, and Society with them most desirable. And if, while they have their Spots, their Stains upon them, their Company is so excellent and desirable, what shall they be when they shall be free from all their Imperfections, when they shall have no Ignorance, no Blindness, no Pride, no Impatience, no Spots, no Blemishes, nor anything whereby they may be polluted or defiled; but shall be adorned and beautified

with all Grace and Holiness in the Fulness and Perfection of it: Surely then their Company must needs be far more desirable; yea, even a kind of a little Heaven itself.

Secondly, The Happiness of Believers in Heaven, consists in their Communion with Angels, the highest, the noblest, and most excellent of God's Creatures. The Welfare of Man is that in which the Angels delight. When Man was at first created, those Morning-Stars sang together, and those Sons of God, as holy Job speaks, shouted for joy, Job 38.7. When Jesus Christ, the Savior of Mankind, came into the World for this very end and purpose, that he might be a Redeemer unto Man, it is said, that a multitude of the Heavenly Host joined together in praising of God, saying, Glory to God on high, on Earth Peace, and Good Will towards Man, Luke 2.13. And when any Sinners are turned unto God, there is joy, says our Lord, among those Blessed Spirits, Luke 15.10. This Heavenly Host of God, now as the Apostle speaks, rejoice to be ministering Spirits unto the Saints, Heb. 1.14. They are therefore called Ministering Spirits, sent forth by God to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation. Many Offices of Love and Kindness they do for the People of God now when they are in danger, which they cannot observe, nor take notice of; for though their Help and Assistance be always real, as to the effect and operation thereof; yet is it always invisible as to their knowledge and observation; it being impossible for them to understand, how often, and after what manner they are employed by God for their Benefit. The Angels are the continual Guardians and Attendants of the People of God while they are in this world; hence therefore our Lord bids those he spake to, in Matt. 18.10. Take heed that they offended not any of those little ones that believed in him; for, says he, in heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in heaven. And that the Angels do protect and defend

the People of God here, is very clear, in Psal. 34.7. The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. And that's a great Scripture, and adds much to the confirmation of the Happiness of the People of God, both in respect of their Fellowship with the Saints, and their Communion with the Angels in Heaven, in Heb. 12.22, 23. Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect. While we carry about with us these earthly Tabernacles of our Bodies, we are scarce capable of Communications with such spiritual heavenly Creatures; but at Death, the Saints shall know their old Friends and Fellow-Servants, and then those Heavenly and Triumphant Chariots shall carry up their departed Souls with Shouting's and Acclamations of Joy, into the Presence of God; where they shall make Relations of the strange and wonderful Providences of God towards them while they were here, and join together in the high Praises of God for evermore. In this world the sight of one Angel, though a Messenger of Peace, and one that brings good Tidings along with him; yet doth cause Fear and Amazement. But in Heaven the Saints shall behold all the Angels of God, and that not only without Dread and Horror, but with Joy and Delight, as being their Fellow-Creatures, with whom they shall eternally maintain a blessed Communion and Correspondency. And oh, what happy and delightful Company will those Glorious Creatures be, in whom there is nothing but what is Amiable and Lovely; yea, nothing but what is Admirable and Wonderful! And though this Communion with Angels, be a part of that Happiness which the Saints shall enjoy in Heaven, and a Truth of great Certainty, yet the Way and Manner of the Saints converse with them there, is very dark and obscure, and that to which we are now altogether strangers. Let therefore the

Certainty thereof, suppress our Curiosity, and satisfy our Minds until we come thither; when we shall have a full Revelation and Enjoyment thereof together, being made not only like unto, but equal with the Angels.

Thirdly, The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, lies in this, that there they shall have a Sight and Enjoyment of Jesus Christ, as their Blessed and Glorious Redeemer. Now this is a Happiness so great, that a Saint cannot but account himself recompensed with infinite Gain and Advantage, though he lost his Life in the attaining of it. Christ (says the Apostle, Col. 3.11.) is all in all. It was doubtless a blessed and glorious sight to behold the Lord Jesus Christ, when he was here upon Earth, when in the days of his Flesh, he humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a Servant; for certainly he was the comeliest Person for Flesh and Blood that ever was born; in respect whereof, he might well be said to be fairer than the Children of Men; and therefore the sight of him daily among the common People with whom he lived, was no small Privilege; but much greater was the Happiness of his Disciples, who had constant converse with him, being those he made choice of to make known himself unto, declaring to them the things relating to himself, and to their Salvation and Happiness through him; in respect whereof our Lord calls them Blessed, in Mat. 13.16, 17. Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you, many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see the things that you see, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not seen nor heard them. Yea, even then when his Visage was marred more than any man's, and there seemed to be no Form nor Comeliness in him; so that as to outward appearance, there was no reason why any should desire him; yet was he then most lovely and beautiful. And was the Sight of him so glorious and so desirable when he was on

Earth, and came with Sin upon him, that is imputed to him; O how glorious will the Sight of him be in Heaven, when he shall appear without Sin?

The Scripture gives us an Account of two great Desires the Blessed Apostle St. Paul had, upon which his Soul was much set; the one was in reference unto this World, and the other in reference to the World to come; but the Object of both was Jesus Christ: That which he desires in this World, was, to know Christ and him crucified: That which he desires in reference to the world to come, was, to see Christ glorified. Concerning his knowledge of Christ crucified, we read in 1 Cor. 2.2. I determined, says he, to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And in comparison of this knowledge of Christ, all other things were but as Dung and Dross unto him; so himself tells us, in Phil. 3 8. And concerning his knowledge of Christ glorified, we read in Phil. 1.23. I desire, says he, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ: And concerning this knowledge of Christ, which comprehends Enjoyment also, he tells us in the following Words, that it was best of all. Whatever Sight the People of God have of Christ in this World, though in itself it be very sweet, and that which is more desirable than all the Pleasures and Delights that the World can afford; yet is it but imperfect, and a small thing, compared to that Sight and Enjoyment of Christ which God intends his People in Heaven; when their Graces shall be full and perfect, and their Souls fully and completely like unto him whom they shall behold; not as once he was the Object of the Scorn and Contempt of the World, not as one beholding to others for a supply of his Wants and Necessities; not as dying, crucified, and rejected; but Jesus, the lively and express Image of his Father, and the brightness of his Glory; Jesus, the Lord of Life, and King of Glory, accompanied with Thousands and Millions of Angels, all of them at

his Command, and yet at the same time not disdain, but graciously smiling upon all the Saints in general, and upon every Saint in particular, who shall equally behold the blessed Face of him who did suffer so great and wonderful things to obtain that eternal Life and Happiness for them, into which they are now instated, and shall be possessors of in his glorious Presence to all eternity. When holy Job, that Man of Sorrows and Troubles; for as there was none like him for Patience; so was there none like him for suffering of Affliction. How heavy was the Hand of God upon him both in Soul and Body? How did Satan worry and torment him? His Friends and Relations, who should, as might well be expected, have pitied and compassionated his sad Condition, censure him for a Hypocrite, in Job 19. from ver. 1. to 22? Now under all his Sorrows and Sufferings, what was that which supported him? Why, it was the consideration of a time that was coming, when he should have a Glorious Sight of his blessed Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is wonderful to read in what Triumphant Expressions he discovered his Faith and Hope herein, Job 19 from ver. 23. to 27. of that Chapter. O that my words were now written; Oh that they were printed in a Book; that they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead, in the Rock forever. I know, says he, that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth. And though after my Skin, Worms shall destroy this my Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another for me, though my Reins be consumed within me. As if he had said, though by this Affliction that now lies upon me, I should die, as die I must one time or other; yet I do not, nor will not give up all for lost, I am not an undone man hereby; for I have Faith and Hope in a Blessed and Glorious Redeemer left me still; not as in one who may possibly come for my Redemption and Salvation; but as in one whom

I am sure will come: For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand upon the Earth; that in my Flesh I shall see God, that mine Eyes shall see him, and that I shall see him for myself; that is, so see him as to be made happy in the eternal Enjoyment of him: And this doubtless was that which this holy Man's Faith had an Eye unto, and was the Support of his Soul under his present Sufferings.

Now that this Sight of Christ will add much to a Believer's Happiness in Heaven, is not to be questioned; for the beholding of Christ in Heaven, is doubtless the most Glorious Object the Saints can look upon, next to the Beatifical Vision itself; for as the Apostle speaks, Col. 2.19. In him, that is in Christ, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And how can they but rejoice when they behold him who was wounded for their Transgressions, who was bruised for their Iniquities; who laid down his Life for their sakes, and shed his Blood a Ransom for their Souls, and a Propitiation for their Sins? And that they should not lie eternally under the Wrath of God in Hell, did himself suffer willingly under the Wrath of God, what was equivalent to an eternity of Sufferings, for their sakes? Certainly therefore when the Saints in Heaven shall look upon the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and be able to say upon certain evidence, as then they will, that this was he by whose wounds they were healed; that this was he that once had a Crown of Thorns platted upon his Head, that they might now wear a Crown of Glory; that this was he that once died for their sins, but arose again for their Justification and Glorification; that this was he that with the price of his own Blood, not only bought their Pardon, but purchased that glorious Inheritance for them, which now they are instated into the possession of; this must needs put a new Life of Joy into their Souls, and create a new kind of Happiness in them, which they never were acquainted with, nor was it possible for them to understand before.

Christ is the Desire of all Nations, the Joy of Angels, the Delight of God himself; he in whom he is always well pleased. All the Glory and Happiness of Heaven is wrapped up in him. The Treasures of the Divine Wisdom, Love, and Kindness, which were sometimes hid and concealed, are now laid open in Heaven to the view of all the Saints. O with what ravishing Joy and Delight then must those Souls be eternally filled with that live in the Sight & Possession of him, as theirs forever! Is not his Love better than Wine? Will not the lifting up of the light of his Countenance upon the Soul, administer more cause of Joy and Rejoicing than the greatest increase of all worldly enjoyments whatsoever? O is not this the Language of holy Souls, His Love is! Life; yea, his loving kindness is better than Life O how shouldst thou chide thyself, O Believing Soul, whose Faith gives thee an Interest in him, that thou art so afraid of his Appearance! Whence is it that thou art so backward to go unto him? Is the Enjoyment of him in Glory, who is all Love, all Life, all Joy, all Peace, a frightful thing? How comes it to pass that thou art so unwilling to die, and be forever with him whom thou callest thy Savior? Hath he laid down his Life, and shed his Blood to redeem thee, and will he now make an eternal Slave of thee? What, hath his Ascension into Glory changed his Nature, and rendered him less lovely; or the Happiness of Heaven in the Enjoyment of him, less desirable? No certainly, he is not less lovely in himself, because of his Exaltation into Glory; but the more: Nor is the Happiness of Heaven in the Enjoyment of him, less, but the more desirable, and the more easily to be obtained; for as the Apostle says, If when we were Enemies we were reconciled by his Death, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his Life. And because he lives glorified in Heaven, therefore shall Believers live with him there; and therefore also should they be the more desirous to be there, because he is there.

Awake therefore, O ye drowsy Saints, rouse yourselves up out of your Security and Slothfulness; for a careless indifferent frame of Spirit doth not become those who are Expectants of so great and glorious a Redeemer, and of so great a Happiness as is the eternal Enjoyment of him. O what a holy Impatience and Unquietness of Soul should rather be found in Believers after this Blessed Redeemer? Is it not he by whom you expect to escape the Wrath and Vengeance of God? Was not his Body broken and his Blood poured forth to make an Oblation for your Souls? Was it not he, whose Death and Sufferings have made full satisfaction to the Justice of God for your Sins? Is it not he, who, to deliver you from the Curse of the Law, was himself made a Curse for you? Is it not he by whom alone you escape everlasting Burnings, and hope to obtain an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you? Is there anything either in this World, or in the World to come that is comparable to him? Look upon him well, O Believing Souls, both in respect of what he once was, and in respect of what he now is, and you cannot but say he is made up of Love.

Henceforth therefore wonder not, O blind and ignorant World, that the People of God express such passionate, longing Desires after the Enjoyment of this Blessed Jesus; but rather wonder at yourselves, that such Blindness and Darkness should be found within you, that you should not be able to discern those Excellencies, and that Loveliness that is in him: Were the Eyes of your Understanding opened; had you but a Spirit of discerning bestowed upon you, to see into those glorious Excellencies and Perfections that are in the Lord Jesus, and the Happiness that is in the Sight and Fruition of him in Heaven, you would then say, We see now there is the greatest Reason in the World, why the Saints and People of God have such vehement Desires after him, are so covetous of being in his Presence, and

beholding of his Glory: For, what Soul that knows him, that hath tasted of his Love, and experienced the Manifestations of his Grace and Favor towards it, but doth most earnestly wish, not only to see him, but to live forever with him

O my Soul, Whence is it then that thou, that canst say thou lovest him in Truth and in Sincerity, dost yet make it no more thy daily Care and Study to gain more and farther Knowledge of him, and, a more dear and intimate Acquaintance with him, that so thou mayest be brought into a more full and immediate Enjoyment of him? And O thou infinitely Blessed Lord Jesus, who hast all Loveliness and Amiability in thee; look down graciously upon thy poor Creatures, and discover unto them more of those ravishing transcendent Beauties and Excellencies that are in thee; and let us every day have more and farther insight into those, never to be fully known, Perfections of Glory and Loveliness that are in thyself, that thereby we may be enabled, not only to commend thee a thousand times more feelingly and affectionately unto others, but may thereby also win upon; yea, command the Affections and Desires of all that hear of thee, unto thee, that nothing short of the Enjoyment of thyself, and the Manifestations of thy Love and Favor in Eternal Glory, may satisfy and content us, or them, but that we may continually be crying out in that known Language of thy Church, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Fourthly, and Lastly, The Saints Happiness in Heaven, consists in this, That there they shall have the Vision and Enjoyment of God himself, being always where he is, seeing his Face, and beholding his Glory.

Now in speaking to this great Happiness of the Saints, the Beatifical Vision of God, I shall content myself with those things that are most plain, and will be most beneficial.

Now the Sacred Scripture gives us an Account of this Great and Mysterious part of the Saints Happiness, in many high and lofty expressions; calling it sometimes a seeing of the Face of God, Rev. 22.4. They shall see his Face. Sometimes it is set forth by our becoming like unto God, and seeing him as he is; so, in 1 John 3.2. Now, says the Apostle, we are the Sons of God, but it doth not, no nor can it yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. These are some of those great and glorious, those deep and mysterious Expressions by which that unknown Happiness of the Saints in the Vision of God, is set forth to us in Scripture: What is comprehended in these great and mighty, I had almost said, almighty Expressions, of seeing God, of beholding him Face to Face; of being made like unto him, and seeing him as he is; at present we are much in the dark about, being beyond the reach of our finite Understandings. Certain it is that there is something of an extraordinary Happiness intended unto the People of God thereby; but how full, how glorious a Happiness it is, and in what way and manner it shall be communicated to them, are things that pose our Reason, and nonplus our Understanding to search into the bottom of. O this great Word, GOD, as it signifies the Divine Essence and Being, and as it holds forth a Happiness that shall be communicated unto the People of God, according to the meaning of those Expressions before-mentioned, of seeing of God, of beholding him Face to Face, of being made like unto him, and seeing him as he is; of which, our Ignorance at present, is greater than our Knowledge: I say, this great Word, GOD, hath more in it than all other Words can express to us; yea,

there is more in it than all the Understandings of Men or Angels can unfold to us: A Happiness there is contained in it, that is so great as can only be known and understood by the Enjoyment of it; yea, it is a Happiness so great as shall never be fully understood; no, not by those that enjoy it; for from this Blessed Vision of God, which Glorified Souls always behold, there shall continually arise such fresh Discoveries of new and glorious Excellencies in the Divine Being, as shall ravish the Saints with new Joys and Pleasures to all Eternity.

In speaking to this Vision of the Saints, I shall endeavor to explain these Two Things:

First, What kind of Sight or Vision of God the Saints shall have in Heaven.

Secondly, Wherein it doth appear that this Sight and Vision of God will be so great a Happiness to the Saints in Heaven.

First, What kind of Sight or Vision of God the Saints shall have in Heaven.

Now to this I Answer,

First, The Saints Vision of God in Heaven, will be immediate and clear. What Representations the Saints have of God in this Life, comes to them by the interposition of some Means by which God is pleased to make himself known, which is a dark and imperfect way of Revelation, (though suitable to our present State,) compared with what the Saints shall have in Heaven. In this Life the People of God see him, as the Spouse saw her Beloved through the Lattice, Cant. 2.9. Or as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 13.12. Through a Glass, that is, darkly; and indeed it can be no otherwise, because it is through a

Glass. Now the Word of God is a Glass, in which great Discoveries are made of God. The Works of God also are another Glass held before our Faces continually, in which we may see more of his Excellencies and Perfections displayed: But neither in the Word of God, nor in the Works of God, is God so clearly discovered to us, as he shall be to the Saints in Heaven. While we are in this World. God makes use of the Ministry of Men like ourselves, to instruct us in the knowledge of himself; and though they may do something towards the enlightening of our Minds, and the building up of our Souls in the Knowledge and Love of God, when assisted by the Spirit of God; yet is it but little that they themselves know of God; and therefore is it but little that they can communicate unto others: So saith the Apostle, and he puts himself into the number, 1 Cor. 12.9. We know but in part; and therefore We prophesy but in part: As if the Apostle had said, There are great and glorious things to be known hereafter when we come to Heaven; but at present our shallow Understandings cannot reach them. All that we can do in our present state, is to receive and take in a little knowledge of them, to know in part: And according to that Knowledge which we have, such is the Knowledge we communicate unto others; we know but in part, and therefore we prophesy but in part. This now is the present state of a Christian, and the highest he can attain to in this World, to know something of God, to have some Sight of the Divine Excellencies and Perfections; but it is but mediately, and but in part; not immediately, and clearly, as the Saints shall do in Heaven. This is indeed according to their present Capacity, and according to their present Necessity; but not according to what shall be. It is according to their present Capacity; that is, according to what they can bear; for should God make immediate Discoveries of himself unto us, this would sink and overwhelm our Beings, and we should not be able to bear up under

them. It is also suitable to the Saints Necessities; for when a Soul is begotten again by the Word of Truth, unto a lively hope of Glory and Immortality, the building up of that Soul in Grace and Holiness, that it may be sit for the Vision and Enjoyment of God, is to be carried on gradually in the Use of Means and Ordinances instituted and appointed by God for that End and Purpose. But as it is in a Building, when that which is designed thereby, is accomplished and perfected, the Scaffolding, and other Instruments that are made use of for the erecting thereof, are all taken down, and removed out of the way: So is it here, while Believers are in the way to Heaven, that is, in a state of Preparation for the Enjoyment of God, Means and Ordinances are necessary; but when they are come to Heaven, these things are at an end: Prophesying and Teaching shall there cease, as the Apostle speaks; there being no use of them in Heaven, because Believers are there come to their perfect State, and God will there communicate himself to them immediately and clearly. In Heaven God unveils himself to the Saints, displays himself to them in his Glory, according to their ability to receive and bear it; and that which adds much to their Happiness, in this blessed Vision of God, is this, That there the Understandings of the Saints shall be enlarged, and strengthened, that they may be able to take in according to what a finite Capacity can bear of the Fruition of an infinite God; in which Vision and Enjoyment of God, they shall be spending an Eternity, with everlasting Joy and Delight.

Secondly, The Saints Vision of God in Heaven, will be transforming; not barely speculative, or notional, but influential and operative upon the Mind and Soul. By seeing God, we shall become like him. It is not so with us here; if a deformed Man look upon the most beautiful Persons, or Objects in the World, yet is there no transforming Power coming from them, to work any alteration in the

Complexion of the Beholder, rendering him the more beautiful by the sight of those Persons, or Objects. He may carry away an Idea of the Beauty and Comeliness of those Persons, or Objects that he hath beheld, in his Mind, which may delight his Fancy in the thoughts of them; but there is no Alteration made in him, but the same Deformities and Blemishes remain still, notwithstanding: But it is otherwise in Heaven; the Sight of the Glorious and Holy God, makes the Saints that behold him, to become like unto him in Holiness and Glory; for so are the Words of the Beloved Apostle, who lay in the Bosom of Christ, 1 John 3.2. We shall be like unto him, that is, unto God; and the Ground or Reason of it follows in the next Words; for we shall see him as he is. It is true, the People of God are like unto him while they are in this World; but their Likeness to God here, and their Likeness to him in Heaven, greatly differ. The Likeness that the People of God have unto God in this Life, is both an imperfect Likeness, and a growing Likeness; neither of which are the People of God capable of in Heaven.

First, The Likeness they have to God here, is an imperfect Likeness. In some things they are like unto God, and in other things they are not. Wherein they are like unto God, they are comely; but wherein they are like unto the World, they are deformed, and therefore uncomely. It was the Complaint of the Church, whom Christ called his Love, and his Fair One, that she was comely; but yet she was black also, Cant. 1.5. I am black, but comely. She was comely with Grace, and there was her Likeness unto Christ; and that made her so lovely: But yet she was black with Sin; and there was her Imperfection and Deformity. And hence it is that we read, Cant. 6.10. That the Church is said to look forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon; now the Moon, though she be one of the great Luminaries of Heaven, yet hath she her Spots; and the Morning-Light is but small

and imperfect unto a Noon-Day -Brightness; and therefore it increaseth more and more unto the perfect Day. Thus it is with the best of God's People here. Grace gives them a Likeness unto God; but with the Moon, they have their Spots; Sin and Corruption still remaining in them, while they are in this World. But now the Saints Likeness to God in Heaven, by the Vision they have of him there, it is such a Likeness as excludes all Sin, and all Imperfection. They are so like unto God, that they are nothing but what he is; not as to his Being and Essence, for that is incommunicable; but in Grace and Holiness; and so according to their Capacities, they partake of the Divine Nature itself. And Oh what a blessed State will this be, when we shall have nothing in us, but what we partake of from God, and wherein we shall be in everything like unto him!

Secondly, That Likeness the People of God have unto God here, is a growing Likeness. That Grace and Holiness Believers have in this Life, wherein consists their Likeness unto God, it is always growing and increasing in them. Hence the Apostle tells us, That the state of Christians here, is like unto newborn Babes, who are always desirous of the breast, for their Nourishment and Growth, 1 Pet. 2.2. As Newborn Babes that desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. No Saint or Servant of God ever attained to that degree of Grace and Holiness here, but still there was something lacking in his Faith, something defective in his Love, something wanting in his Patience, something that might be added to his Heavenly-mindedness, to his Meekness, to his Humility, and to all his other Graces. Hence therefore it is, that the People of God are so often commanded to add to their spiritual stature, to increase with the Increases of God, to grow in Grace, and in the saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And to explain this Truth no farther, that of the Apostle is full to this purpose, 2 Cor. 3.18. We all

with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image from Glory unto Glory. That is, from one degree and measure of Grace and Holiness unto another. Believers are now like unto God, but this Likeness is Imperfect; and therefore while they are here, they are still growing into a greater Conformity unto him: But now in Heaven, Grace in the Saints is in its Perfection. Heaven is a Place where the Spirits of just Men are made perfect. Holiness is the Advancement, the Elevation of the Soul, a higher pitch of Glory and Excellency it is not capable of; for Holiness is the Glory of God himself; and therefore though God is said to be Infinite in regard of his Wisdom; Almighty, in regard of his Power; yet is he only said to be Glorious, in regard of his Holiness: So we read Exod. 15.11. Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in Holiness? Now in Heaven, the Saints Holiness shall be in the highest degree, in the greatest eminency and perfection; and because herein they shall be like unto God, they also shall be glorious in Holiness; for they shall then have as much of Grace and Holiness as they can desire, or as God would have them to have; for when that which is perfect is come that which is imperfect shall be done away. And O what a blessed state will that be, when the Saints shall have nothing in them that is weak and imperfect, nor nothing that is wanting or defective, but shall be forever like unto God himself, perfect in Grace and Holiness.

Thirdly, The Saints Sight and Vision of God in Heaven, will be happy and joyful. A Believer is the only happy Person in all the World; his Life is a Life of continual Joy: either he doth, or he may always rejoice. He hath always the Presence of God with him; he hath always the Love of God towards him; he hath always the Hopes, shall I say; nay, he hath the Assurance of Heaven and Glory in the Promise, continually set before him. And who may rejoice, if he may not? He

hath the Great, the Almighty God for his Shield and Protection here, and to be his exceeding great reward hereafter. And shall not such a one rejoice? Is not here cause of Joy? O how happy is the Person that is in such a case as this! Such are commanded to rejoice evermore, 1 Thes. 5.17. Nay, in the most afflicted state and condition, such have cause of Rejoicing. I am, says the Apostle, exceeding joyful in all our Tribulations. And says our Blessed Lord, Matth. 5.11, 12. Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my Name sake: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven. Thus, whatever condition the People of God are in, yet still they ought always to joy and rejoice in God; and the Reason is this, because they have the special Presence of God with them; and where that is, there are frequent, though secret discoveries of God's Love unto them. How often doth God lift up the light of his Countenance upon such, whilst they are attending upon him in holy Duties, secretly whispering to their Souls, that they are accepted in the Beloved; vouchsafing to them some Discoveries of the invisible and unseen, but yet real, Glory and Happiness of Heaven, and of their Interest in it; whereby their Souls are even ravished with an excess of strange and unusual Joy and Delight, beyond what they are able to express: And yet all this is, whilst, as the Apostle speaks, Believers walk by Faith, and not by Sight. Now if this little Sight, and these small Enjoyments that the Saints have of God here, which, in comparison of what they shall see and enjoy of God hereafter, may be said to be no Sight; for so the Apostle calls it, 1 Pet. 1.8. Whom as yet having not seen; if this Sight of God, which as it follows in the next Words, is only our Believing in God; if this fills the Soul of a Believer with so great Joy and Delight, what then shall the Beatifical Vision of God in Heaven do? If Faith and Hope do so ravish the Souls of Believers with Joy and Delight,

even then whilst we are absent from the Lord; for as the Apostle speaks, Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord. If yet the Joy of Faith and Hope be so great, O what then shall the Joy of Vision be, when Believers shall not only be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord, but shall be ever present with the Lord both in Soul and Body, seeing him face to face, and enjoying him as he is? Surely this Joy must needs be unspeakably great and glorious; indeed this Sight of God is that which will not only amaze the Eye with wonder, but ravish the Heart with eternal Ecstasies of Joy and Delight.

Fourthly, The Saints Sight and Vision of God in Heaven, shall be permanent and perpetual. In this Life the People of God have not always the Presence of God with them, nor the Manifestations of his Love and Favor towards them; but are often in the dark; for either they sin away God's Presence from them, which is most frequent; or else God for wise and holy Ends, sees good to withdraw himself from them for a time; and when either of these happen, it is a sad time with such Souls; especially, if Sin hath been the Cause of it: Such therefore walk very dejectedly; and the Truth is, their Case is very sad; but yet it is that which many of the People of God have experienced. See how the Church complains, Esa. 49.14. But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me. So the Spouse, Cant. 5.6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, my Soul failed when he spake; I sought him but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no Answer. And as it hath been thus with the People of God formerly, so sad Experience tells us, it is so with many of them still: Sometimes they enjoy something of God, his Presence, and the Manifestations of his Love towards them, in a Duty; and O how sweet and delightful is it to their Souls, when they thus meet with God! It is Heaven upon Earth; but

these things do not last; for when Duties are ended, the People of God grow careless and remiss, yield to Temptations, give way to Sin, become vain and worldly, and so lose the Presence of God, by reason whereof, they walk in Darkness, have no Manifestations of his Love and Favor towards them; insomuch that their Souls are even ready to faint and sink within them, under a despair of Mercy. This now is the Case of many a Child of God in this World; sometimes he hath the benign Instances of the Divine Favor darted into his Soul, which makes him greatly to rejoice; but what God thus graciously gives, he doth not wisely and holily retain. These joyful Seasons abide not always with the People of God; but they soon lose them; the Light of God's Countenance is eclipsed, and his Face hid from them, by reason of their Foolishness. But it is not thus in Heaven; no Sin comes there to intercept between the Face of God, and those holy Souls forever. There is no complaining of any Saint in Heaven, that God hath forsaken him, or hides his Face from him: But it shall ever be with those holy Ones, as our Lord tells us it is now with their Angels, Matth. 18.10. They shall always behold the Face of God in Glory. This blessed Object of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, shall never be withdrawn from them to eternity; nor shall their Sight ever be wearied with beholding of it; nay, without this constant Vision and enjoyment of God, Heaven would not be a Happiness great enough to fill and satisfy the Desires of the Saints. Their Souls are so raised, so capacious, that they cannot be content with anything, even in Heaven itself, unless they enjoy God there. Should God bestow upon them the Glory of all the Creatures either in Heaven or in Earth; should he confer upon them the Glory of all the Kings and Emperors in the World; yea, should he add to that the Glory of the Sun, Moon, and Stars; nay, should he add to them, the Glory of all the Angels and Cherubim's in Heaven, yet still they would say, they

had not enough to make them happy; for all these are not God. When therefore God hath given Heaven to the Saints, he must there give them the Vision and Enjoyment of himself, or else they will not account themselves happy. Nay, I will go a little farther still; it is not the Vision and Enjoyment of God in Heaven for a little time; suppose it were for a few Days or Years; nay, were it for many Thousands of them, this would not give their Souls full Satisfaction and Contentment, unless they could eternally enjoy God: This only, can make them completely happy; and now, and never till now, do they say they have enough. And O how sweet is this Word Ever, unto the Saints in Heaven, in the sense I am speaking of! Ever to be with the Lord; ever to have him smile upon the Soul; ever to behold his Face; ever to have his Presence with it; and ever to be under the Manifestations of his Love and Favor: Here, here is Heaven and Happiness indeed, thus to see, and enjoy God for ever.

And so much for the First Thing; What kind of Sight or Vision of God the Saints shall have in Heaven.

Secondly, Wherein doth it appear that this Vision of God will be so great a Happiness to the Saints in Heaven?

To this I answer in general; There is in God everything that can make a Man perfectly blessed and happy. It is beyond all disputation, that the Happiness of Man must be that which is good; for that which is evil in itself, is not, nor cannot be desired as such, by any rational Creature; much less proposed by him as his ultimate End: No, the Object of Man's Happiness, must be something that is Good; nor yet is it any Good that will make a Man completely happy neither; but it must be a Good in which all Good is contained; now such a Good is

God; and only he is such a Good: and therefore, to be a little more particular in the Answering of this Question, consider,

First, God is a universal Good, a Good in whom all Good is contained. It is impossible there should be any desirable Perfection but what is in him. All the Creatures here below, are the several effects of the Divine Bounty and Goodness; and though they are good in themselves, yet have they their several particular limited Goodness. Health hath its particular goodness in it; and Wealth its particular goodness; and Learning its good; and so I may say of all other things whatsoever; they are all stinted to their particular ways of Beneficialness unto Man: To instance a little; The Air refresheth us, but it doth not feed us; our Food nourisheth us, but it doth not clothe us; our Clothes warm us, but they do not quench our Thirst; Water cools and cleanseth us, but it is not a Habitation for us to dwell in; our Houses preserve us from the Injuries of the weather, but they cannot secure to us our Health. And all these put together, cannot defend us against Losses in the World; much less can they keep away Death from us, which will be the destruction of them all. Nay all these things, and whatever else there is, or can be imagined of goodness in all other things put together, and enjoyed at once, in the fullness of them; yet have they not All Good in them; no, so far are they from having all Good in them, that they are no way beneficial to us farther than they have the Blessing of God going along with them; for it is he that is all in all unto us in and by the Creatures. It is he that feeds us more than our Food. He warms us more than our Clothes. He is more a Habitation to us than our Houses. He is more our Health and Strength than Physic and Means are. Yea, he is more our Life than our very Souls are. The Light of his Countenance, the Smile of his Face, is more our Joy and Consolation than all the Enjoyments of this World can be. Now God, that is all

these things to us in the use of them, he is a thousand times more than all these things in himself: And if there be any of these things aforementioned, that are desirable, certainly then that God that makes them desirable, is infinitely more desirable himself. It is God's Prerogative alone, that he is eminently good, and altogether good, and everything that is good is in him. And surely if God be so good to his People in the Enjoyments he vouchsafes to them here, when they have but some small Tastes of his Bounty and Goodness; O how good will he be to them immediately by himself in Heaven! And this is that enjoyment of God which manifests it to be so great a Happiness to the Saints in Heaven, that there God will be all in all unto them.

Secondly, God is a pure unmixed Good. He is so good that there is nothing that is evil or hurtful in him. All Earthly good things are defective and imperfect; there is something of Sweetness in them; but withal there is something of Bitterness also; if there be a drop of Honey, there is a drop of Gall mingled with it; no Rose is without its Prickles, nor is there any Condition without its Troubles; no Enjoyments God bestows upon his People, that have everything that is good, and nothing but what is good in them; no, there is still a mixture of some evil with them. And this is the Reason why a Believer cannot find Happiness in anything on this side Heaven, and the enjoyment of God there. God indeed is such a Good in whom there is no Evil. He is Light, says the Apostle, and in him there is no Darkness at all, 1 John 1.5. Light here below, is very pleasant and delightful; but yet when it shines in its greatest Luster, it is scarce enough to be a Shadow of the Light above in which God dwells; yea, which God is, and unto which no man can approach; as the Apostle speaks, 1 Tim. 6.16. While we are in this World, our State without us, will be like our State within us: Now in us, even in the best of us, there is Sin, as well as Grace, Flesh as well as Spirit. Now because all

is not well within us, therefore all is not well without us. A Mixture of Sin and Grace causes a mixture of Joy and Sorrow in every condition here below: But it shall not be thus with the Saints in Heaven; for God, who is the Object of their Happiness, is a Good, in whom, as there is all good, so there is nothing in him but what is good. Now that which is not only good, but contains in it all good, and hath nothing in it but what is good, that must needs be an Object that must always be desired, and always be delighted in. Such an Object now is God; and hence therefore it is that after he hath been Millions of Years enjoyed by the Saints in Heaven, yet still is he as much desired as at the first moment of their entrance into Heaven: And hence therefore also it is, that that Life which the Saints shall always be spending in Heaven, but shall never be spent unto Eternity, shall be a Life of Joy and Praise. And this is it that makes it appear that the Saints Vision and Enjoyment of God in Heaven, will be so great a Happiness unto them.

Thirdly, God is a suitable Good; and therefore the enjoyment of him in Heaven must needs be a great Happiness to the Saints. The things of this World, when enjoyed in the greatest abundance, cannot make up a Happiness suitable to the Desires of a godly Man. Worldly Enjoyments have some Suitableness in them unto the vilest part of a Saint, his Body: But as to his better Part, his Soul, which is that by which he is denominated to be a Man; so these Worldly Things have no Suitableness at all in them unto him, no not while he is here below. What hath a Spiritual Soul to do with Earthly Objects? What Communion hath Light with Darkness? The like may I say here: What Communion between a Spiritual Soul, and all Earthly Objects? Earthly Things are of too gross a Nature and Quality to agree with the refined Nature of the Soul; yea, it is a great Affront and Abuse that we put upon our Spiritual, Heaven-born Souls, when we give

them nothing to feed upon, or to delight in, but what the Dregs of Earthly Enjoyments will afford them: Alas, the Soul is of so pure and refined a Constitution, that it cannot live in, much less be delighted with the foggy, thick, Air of Earthly and Sensual Enjoyments. It is a debasing the noble and high-born Soul of Man, to attempt to match it with the low and base things of this World. Spiritual Beings and Existences must have spiritual Objects to be pleased and delighted with; for they can take no Delight in other things, because they are unsuitable to them. But now, when Souls are joined unto God, spiritual things are joined unto that which is spiritual; the spiritual Soul unto God who is a Spirit, and the God of Spirits: And therefore from the Soul's enjoying of God, and having eternal Communion with him, who is the Father of Spirits, those Joys & Delights that hereby will everlastingly fill the Soul, must needs be inexpressibly great and glorious: And the Reason is this, because here is a suitability between the Soul and the Object to which it is united; and Suitableness always produceth Love, and where there is Love, there will be Joy and Delight: And always the more of Suitableness there is between one Person and another, or between a Person and an Object, still the more of Love; and the more of Love, the more of Joy and Delight. Thus now it is between God and the Soul; no Object so suitable unto the Soul as God; no Object so loved and desired by the Soul as God; and consequently, no greater Joy and Delight can befall the Soul, than in the eternal Enjoyment of God. And this shall be the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven forever.

Fourthly, God is an All-sufficient Good; and therefore the Enjoyment of him must needs be a great Happiness to the Saints in Heaven. Were it possible for a Man to live in this World free from all Pain and Suffering, in the Enjoyment of all outward Abundance, even to the utmost of what there is in all the Creatures, to make a Man happy;

yet if all that Good that he enjoys, be not enough, if it doth not answer all his Wants, and fill all his Desires to the full, so that he can crave nothing more; this Man notwithstanding all his Enjoyments, hath not attained unto Happiness. It is true, he is in a happier condition than most men are, in regard whereof, possibly he is become the Envy of his Neighbors; but yet is he not completely happy; because there is an Insufficiency in all things here below, to make a Man happy.

The Philosopher tells us, that Happiness is a State wherein there is an aggregation, or meeting together of all good things whatsoever: So that according to this Definition of Happiness, if a Man could be supposed to enjoy all good things, and yet want but one, that Man could not be a happy Man. But God is an All-sufficient Good, and in the Enjoyment of him, we enjoy all that is good. He is Self-sufficient for himself, and All-sufficient to his Creatures. This Title he gives himself, Gen. 17.1. I am, says he to Abraham, God all-sufficient. There is in him a Sufficiency of all that is desirable, an immense Fulness, an Ocean of Goodness; all that Good that is in all other things whatsoever, is in him, with the addition of an incomprehensible Over-plus. Whatever Good any have found in Relations, Friends, Health, in Learning, Wisdom, Wealth, and Honors; all this, and much more is to be found in the enjoyment of one God. The whole World, and God put together, are not at all more excellent than God alone; for whatever Excellency there is in the Creature, it is more eminently and transcendently in God already; all Additions to him therefore signify nothing! Nay, let me add, all the Creatures in the World, if they stand by themselves, are but so many Cyphers, that signify nothing, unless the great God, as a Solid Number, be added to them. Set God aside, and in the whole Creation there is not an All-sufficiency to be found for one Soul: But that Soul

that enjoys God, hath an All-sufficiency; such an one may say with the Apostle, I have all, I abound, I am full; and with Holy David, The Lord is my Portion, I shall not want. For having him who is all, to be ours, we have All. And this now is the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, that there God shall be all in all unto them.

Fifthly, God is a satisfying Good, and therefore the Enjoyment of him, must needs be a great Happiness to the Saints in Heaven. Pleasure and Delight is of the Essence of Happiness, and flows from that satisfaction that our Desires receive in the enjoyment of a Good we possess. And whatever it be that we enjoy, if it be not enough to fill and satisfy our Appetites from craving more, we are still short of Happiness, let our Enjoyments be what they will. Such a Good now is God; a Good beyond whom there is nothing imaginable to be conceived; and therefore it is impossible there should or can be anything desired: But nothing else is so; if we leave God out, whatever we take in, the Heart will still be capable of desiring more. All the World, and all the Creatures that it is stocked withal, should they conspire, and meet together, to make up a Happiness for one Soul, they could not do it. God hath not given a Commission to anything here below; no, nor to all of them put together, to give us Contentment and Satisfaction; he hath commissioned the things of the World to feed us, to clothe us, to strengthen us, and to refresh us in the House of our Pilgrimage; but it is only himself that can give us Contentment and Satisfaction. Worldly Things are so far from giving us Contentment, that there is this Curse of God upon them all, that whoever sets his Heart and Affections inordinately upon them, shall never be satisfied with them; for as the Wise Man saith, Eccles. 5.10. He that loveth Silver, shall not be satisfied with Silver; nor he that loveth Abundance, with Increase. Now the true Reason why nothing here below can give Satisfaction and Contentment unto the Soul, is,

because none of these Things are so good as the Soul; nor none of them are so great as to be able to fill up the vast capacity of the Soul: The Soul of Man is like unto a bottomless Gulf; throw in what you will of worldly things; nay, throw in the whole World itself, yet is there a Vacuity and Hollowness, that cannot be filled up thereby. Moreover, the Soul of man is of a Noble and Excellent Being, and next to Angels, the Top and Flower of the Creation, and all Things here below are inferior to it; nay, they are Dregs and Lees compared to it. Now that which is our Happiness, must not be something below, but something better than ourselves, because it must perfect us; but all Things in the World are worse than ourselves; and the Soul, in cleaving to them, is secretly conscious to itself, that it doth both debase and disparage its own Excellency in adhering to them; and therefore it meets with no Satisfaction in them: For so long as all Things here below are both less than the Soul, and worse than the Soul, it is impossible the Soul should receive Satisfaction and Contentment in them. But now God is infinitely great, and therefore he can fill the Soul; and God is also infinitely good, and therefore he can satisfy the Soul, so that it shall not desire anything above him, or besides him. As nothing can be the Perfection, so nothing can be the Satisfaction of the Soul, but he that made it. The Soul is never at rest till it return unto God, who is its Rest and Centre; therefore says David, Psal. 116.7. Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. When God deals so bountifully and graciously with the Soul, as to bestow himself upon it, then the Soul hath Rest and Satisfaction indeed, and never till then. The Enjoyment of God is that ultimate End, and perfect Good that is only able to fix the Spirit of Man; which, otherwise not meeting with its Match, is tossed to and fro laboring under perpetual Disquietments, and restless Fluctuations. God is that Almighty

Goodness, and Sweetness, who alone is able to draw out all the Appetites of the Soul unto himself, satisfy all its Cravings, charm all its restless Motions, and cause all its Faculties, in the purest and most complacential manner to conspire together how to give up themselves wholly and entirely to himself. The Enjoyment of no Good, short of the highest and the chiefest Good, can satisfy the Soul of Man; now this Good is only God himself, and the Enjoyment of him in Heaven, is that which only gives full contentment to the Soul in all its Capacities and Desires. The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven shall be the same which God himself enjoys: Now the infinite Blessedness of God consists in the Fruition and Enjoyment of himself; for himself is his own Happiness: Now this also is to be the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, even an intimate and immediate Enjoyment of God; and surely this must needs be infinitely satisfactory to them. Enlarge therefore, O holy Soul; make room for thine own Glory and Happiness, spread forth thyself wide; yea, stretch out thy Desires as large as Heaven itself; for the God of Heaven will fill and satisfy them.

Sixthly and Lastly, God is a permanent and everlasting Good; and therefore the enjoyment of him must needs be a great, yea the greatest Happiness of the Saints in Heaven.

Were God an universal Good, as he is; and did the Saints, in the enjoying of him, enjoy all Good in Him; Were God, as he is, a pure and unmixed Good, and in the Enjoyment of him, were there no mixture of anything that is Evil, as there is not; Were God the most suitable Good unto all our desires, as he is; Were he also an All-sufficient Good, able to relieve and supply all our Wants and Necessities, as he is; Were God also a satisfying Good, that could give full Contentment to the Soul, as he can: Yet if he were not a

permanent and an abiding Good, the Soul could not be Happy in the Enjoyment of him; for the Thoughts of losing so great a Good, though it were after Millions of Years Enjoyment thereof, is that which would fill the Soul with Bitterness and Sorrow, while it doth enjoy it. O how would the Soul sigh and say; It is true in the Enjoyment of God, I now partake of a great Happiness, yea, the greatest that I can possibly enjoy: But alas, there's a Time a coming when I must part with this my Happiness. O my Soul thou shalt not be always thus Happy; thy Blessedness is every moment wearing away; thy Happiness grows less and less daily, because the Time of enjoying it grows shorter and shorter. And must not, yea can it be otherwise, but that the Thoughts of losing so great a Happiness shortly, must abate much of the Comfort and Delight that otherwise the Soul would take in it.

But now on the other side, when a Godly Man considers with himself, It is true the Enjoyments of this World, whereof I have a large share, and wherewith I have been often refreshed and delighted, are of a perishing Nature, and but of a short continuance; if not long before, (as is the Case of many,) yet to be sure at Death they and I must take our eternal leaves one of another: But this is my Comfort, I have an Interest in that God, between whom and me Death shall never part; nay, between whom and me Death shall be so far from making a Separation, that it shall bring us the sooner and nearer together; in whom I shall enjoy everything that is good; not only universally, unmixedly, suitably, sufficiently, and satisfactorily; but perpetually and everlastingly; and never shall I be separated from the Enjoyment of him, nor from the Enjoyment of all that is Good in him; for in his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his right Hand are Pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. ult. These Things now put

together, make it very evident, that the Saints seeing and enjoying of God in Heaven, is a great Happiness.

CHAPTER III

Further Discoveries of the Saints Happiness in Heaven.

Further Discoveries of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, manifested in their being freed, (1.) From all Afflictions. (2.) From all Temptations, both from Satan and the World. (3.) In a perfect Freedom from all Sin. (4.) In the Perfection of Grace and Holiness. (5.) In partaking of Fulness of joy; which is pure, spiritual, full, and everlasting. (6.) In excellent Glory and Honor, that shall then be put upon them.

Though much hath been already said concerning Heaven and the Happiness of the Saints there, yet is there much more of that Happiness still to be explained; in the Reading and contemplating whereof, holy Souls cannot but be much delighted: As,

First, In Heaven the Godly shall enjoy a perfect freedom from all that is troublesome and afflictive. In this Life the People of God are always subject to Afflictions; they are their Lot and Portion, while they are here. The Legacy our blessed Lord hath bequeathed to all his Followers to the end of the World, in Luke 14.27. He that taketh not up his Cross, and followeth me, cannot be my Disciple. John 16, 33. In the World you shall have Tribulation. What is said of Man in general, that he is born unto Troubles, as the Sparks fly upward, being but of few days continuance here, and those full of Trouble; is much more true of the Godly in particular. Afflictions are the daily Diet-drink of a Christian, the Path-way in which he walks to Heaven, Acts 14.22. Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God. 2 Tim. 3.12. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus

must suffer Persecution. They who are not of the world, but chosen by God out of the world, are sure to meet with the World's Hatred; so our Lord tells us, John 15.19 John 17.14. A Saint's Peaceable and quiet State is yet to come. In this Life they receive all their evil things from God, from Men, and from Devils; and when they arrive at Heaven, their afflicted, persecuted State is over; and instead thereof, they shall forever be partakers of Peace and Joy. O all ye Saints and People of God, that now can set upon no Work or Service for God, but you meet with Opposition; yea, and if you will go through with it, are sure, not only to lose the Love of the World, and to part with many of your outward Comforts and Enjoyments in so doing, but also to meet with many Enemies that will afflict and persecute you in the discharge of your Duty; yet be not affrighted at it, but persevere therein; and for your Encouragement, know, that while you do so, you are secure of the Love and Favor of God to you; and the Time is almost come, when you shall see an End of all your Persecutors; yea, and of their Persecutions also. How quickly will Death come in to your Relief, and put you out of the reach of all their Malice to harm you forever: For in Heaven you shall never meet with any company that shall discourage your Hearts, or weaken your Hands, but such only as will gladly further you in your holy Work, by joining Hearts and Voices with you in everlasting Joys and Praises. And until that Time doth come, let Faith and Hope support and bear you up, that you may always in Patience possess your Souls: And whatever Reproaches you meet with for well doing, bind them as so many Crowns upon your Heads; value them, with Moses, as greater Riches to you than all the Treasures of the world; yea, as the blessed Apostle says, in Jam. 1.2. Let it be all joy unto you, when you fall into divers Temptations; remembering God can deliver you from them; however, he will quickly deliver you out of them, recompensing

Tribulation to them that trouble you; but unto you who are troubled, Rest and Peace forever.

In this Life also the People of God suffer many Losses, meet with many Disappointments: But in Heaven there are no such things. All Treasures laid up on Earth are subject to the Moth, to the Rust, and to the Thief. Inward Corruption, or outward Violences do often deprive us of them; or if we lose them not so, Death to be sure will put an end to our Enjoyment of them: But it is not so in Heaven; Treasure laid up there is safe and secure; there's no Moth nor Rust to corrupt it, nor no Thieves to rob and spoil us of it. A Saint's Happiness in Heaven cannot be lost, nor shall a Godly Man ever meet with any Disappointments there, unless it be by finding a Happiness far greater than ever he imagined. All in Heaven is like unto the God of Heaven, permanent and abiding. It shall not be with a Saint there, as it is with him here: Now his Condition is subject to Change and Alteration; sometimes he is high, and sometimes low; sometimes rich, and sometimes poor; sometimes in peace and liberty, and sometimes under restraint and imprisonment: But the Happiness of Heaven is always one and the same, subject to no Changes or Vicissitudes. And as for the loss of Friends and Relations, a great Affliction unto many in this World, it shall not be so with us in Heaven; for whoever of them we meet with there, they and we shall never be parted. Saints in Heaven have not only the best Company; but they have that Society with the greatest Advantage, being such as shall never be broken, but continue everlastingly. Here the People of God greatly love and delight in the Society of one another as they are Saints; but because they are also Sinners, Death will make a separation between them: But when once Sin is extirpated out of them, as it shall be in Heaven; then as they shall be the best Company, so they shall be a perpetual Society. Here the Fear

of losing our Friends and Relations is a great Disquietment to us while we enjoy them; but in Heaven all such Fears are abolished. Let but Husband and Wife, let but Parents and Children, let but Friends and Relations make Heaven sure to their own Souls; let them but clear up to themselves their Title unto that Happiness that is to be enjoyed in Heaven through the great and blessed Redeemer; and then though Death will part them one from another for a Time, yet it shall certainly bring them together again in Heaven; and though some of them are more Happy than others, because by dying before them, they get to Heaven sooner than they, yet shall they all come thither in their appointed Time, and then shall they be freed from all Fears of ever being parted asunder anymore: And instead thereof they shall know themselves to be confirmed in the Happy and Everlasting Enjoyment of one another in Glory.

In this Life also the People of God are often afflicted with many Weaknesses and Distempers of Body, in respect whereof their Lives may be called a Dying Life: Oh! what wearisome Days, what tiresome Nights do they sigh and groan away by Reason hereof? Oh! what mournful Complaints are there made by them upon this Account; some daily crying out, Oh, my Head! Oh, my Stomach! others, Oh, my Side! Oh, my Bowels! seldom are they free two days together from some Distemper or other; yea, so racked and tormented are they with Extremity of Pain, that their Lives are little better almost than a continual Burthen to them. But now in Heaven all these Complaints shall cease; they are only the Effects of Sin; and therefore to accompany us only in our sinful State; and when Sin shall be expelled out of the Soul, as it shall be in Heaven, Sickness and Distempers shall never more annoy these Bodies of ours. As Job speaks of the Grave, there the weary are at rest; that is, those who now are wearied with labors and pains, when they come to lie down

in their Graves, shall be at Rest: And if it be thus in the Grave, how much more shall it be so in Heaven, and that not by insensibleness and want of feeling as it is with those that are dead; but because the Happiness of that State is so great, as is not only exclusive of, but cannot possibly admit of any such thing as Pain and Sorrow; being a State made up of perfect Joy and Delight, in an eternal Perpetuity; for they obtain joy and gladness, and Sorrow and sighing flee away, Isaiah. 35.10.

Secondly, in Heaven the Saints shall enjoy a perfect Freedom from all Temptations.

In this World Temptations make the Lives of God's People very uncomfortable to themselves, and very disquieting unto others. Now as to the Temptations that most afflict the People of God in this Life, they are such as either come from the World and the Flesh, or such as come from the Devil. As for those Temptations that come from the World and the Flesh; as their Numbers cannot be expressed so their Burthen cannot be born without the Assistance of Divine Grace: While we are in this World, we walk in the midst of Snares, Temptations lie in wait for us in all our Ways, attend us in all our Enjoyments, follow us into all Societies, keep us company in all our Solitariness's; we can scarce cast our Eyes anywhere, but we are in danger by something or other to be drawn away from God. Every Condition, every Place, every Duty, every Mercy, and every Relation administer matter for a Temptation. When we behold those that are much above us, then a Temptation to Envy assaults us. When we behold those that are low in the World, and much our Inferiors, then a Temptation to Scorn and Contempt presents its self to us. Hath God blessed us in the World, that we grow rich, and become Men of great Estates, how strong, and almost invincible are our Temptations

to be proud, and to forget, yea to deny God? If God lay us low in the World, O how hard is it to be Poor, and not to be Discontented; nor to make use of unlawful means for our Relief, rather than to wait patiently God's time for the Supply of our Necessities? When we are in our Health and Strength, O how stupid, how careless are we as to the Concerns of our Souls! How few Thoughts have we of, and how little Preparation do we make for, our Eternal State? If God deprive us of our Health and Strength, and by Sickness warns us that Death is making haste towards us, then the sudden Approach of that King of Terrors distracts us with such Fears and Horrors, as overwhelms and sinks us into Despair, so that we give up all for lost.

But now when by Death a Saint comes to take his leave of this World in his flight towards Heaven, his Soul is escaped out of all these Dangers and Temptations; all these Snares are then broken in pieces forever: For whither he is gone, none of them can come after him. In Heaven there's nothing but what tends to the advancing of our Joy, and the promoting our Eternal Happiness.

And as in Heaven Saints shall be free from the Temptations of the World; so shall they be free from the Temptations of Satan, the grand Enemy of their Souls, and the continual Disturber of their Peace. The Apostle tells us, he is always going up and down, like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5 8. And because he cannot destroy the People of God, nor hinder them from Heaven hereafter, therefore he will do what he can to disturb and disquiet them here.

And, Oh how doth it make a godly Man inwardly to sigh and mourn, that he can never set about anything that is good, but the Evil One is working against him with his Temptations, either to dissuade him from doing of it, or to disturb him in the doing of it; filling his Mind,

not only with vain and foolish, but with wicked and sinful thoughts, that continually indispose to, and distract him in it! And, if notwithstanding all this, a godly Man will persevere, and go through his Work, till he hath finished what he is about; then to find the Wicked One discouraging him after his Performance; telling him, that because of those Wanderings and Distracting's, which himself hath been the cause of in a great measure, therefore God will not own nor accept what he hath done: This certainly must needs be a great Disquietment to a gracious Heart. And yet these are the daily Temptations and Discouragements that a godly Man is striving with, and contending against, by reason of that Evil One.

This, if anything, will bring a Saint upon his knees, and make him, with the Apostle, to pray again and again; yea, to besiege Heaven day and night with Prayers and Tears, that he may be delivered from that cruel and bloody Hell-hound, and from all his wicked Solicitations.

Well, be patient, O all ye Tempted holy Souls; for though the Temptations you meet with, be so black and horrid, that nothing can match them but the Blackness of Hell itself, from whence at first they came; though you are at present engaged in a very unequal Match; for what can Flesh and Blood do to contend with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedness's in high Places? Yet remember, stronger is he that is in you, than he that is in the World. And in this hour of your Temptation, and Contest with the Powers of Darkness, there are these Two Things, among others, that may comfort you; the one is, Let the Temptations be as black and dismal as Hell can make them, yet if a godly Man yields not his consent to them, they are none of his Sins, nor shall they be charged upon him as such. The other is this; That the God of Peace will shortly tread Satan under his feet; nay, he himself shall shortly trample him under his own feet. The

Time is hastening apace, and it cannot be long before Death will come in to thy relief, and set thee beyond the reach of all his Temptations. It is true, while we are in the Wilderness of this World, the Devil will never let us be quiet; but will be continually casting his fiery darts at us, following us with one Temptation after another; and when at any time, in the strength of our great Lord, we have worsted him in one Temptation, yet are we sure to be vexed by him in some other.

But yet be not discouraged, O Believing Soul! notwithstanding all the Assaults of this Evil One; But maintain thy Conflict, keep thy Ground; yield not basely and cowardly unto any of his Temptations; but continue to resist him steadfastly in the Faith; for the Time of thy wrestling and contending with him, cannot last longer than thy short and transitory Life; and remember for thy Support, that as now thou neither standest nor fightest in thine own strength, but in the strength of another; so certainly shalt thou in that strength overcome; yea, obtain an everlasting Conquest over all Satan's Temptations. The Time of thy Death will be the Time of thy eternal Deliverance, not only from all his Temptations, but from all his Malice and Envy, that put him upon those Temptations. O what a Happiness will this be! And O how greatly should a Believer long for the accomplishment of it! for then shall the Devil be as unlikely to tempt, as our Hearts to close with his Temptations, and both alike impossible.

Thirdly, In Heaven Saints shall enjoy a perfect Freedom from all Sin.

There is no Evil in the World the People of God complain of with greater Grief and Sorrow, than they do of Sin; this makes them go bowing down greatly; yea, to sigh and mourn continually. What says

holy David, Psal 38.3, 4, 5, 6? There is no soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger; neither is there any rest in my Bones by reason of my Sin. Mine Iniquities are gone over my head, as a Burden too heavy for me to bear. My Wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my Foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. Thus holy Paul complains also, in Rom. 7.14. I am carnal, and sold under sin. Verse 21. I find a Law, that when I would do good, Evil is present with me. And, 23 I see another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my Mind, and bridging me into captivity to the Law of Sin that is in my Members. In the sense whereof, he cries out as a Man greatly oppressed, in the next Words; Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? In-dwelling Sin renders the Lives of God's People very bitter and uncomfortable: And how can it be otherwise? For Sin is the constant Source and Fountain of all their Miseries. There is no Distress, or Trouble befalls a Godly Man, but Sin is the meritorious procuring Cause of it. Sometimes Sin disturbs his Peace, sometimes it impairs his Grace, sometimes it breaks his Bones, but it always pollutes and defiles his Soul. Oh what sad work doth Sin make continually! and the best it can end in, is Repentance and godly Sorrow. A Christian in this Life is always in a Conflict with Corruptions. Sin and Lust are continually warring against the Soul: So saith the Apostle, Gal. 5.17. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; and these two are contrary the one unto the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Sin draws a godly Man one way, and Grace draws him another; Sin in him will not yield, and Grace in him cannot yield: And though through the strength of the Spirit; enabling him to exercise Grace, he is daily getting ground of his Corruptions; yet is it very slowly; what he gains, is as it were, by Inches; every step he takes through his

Enemies Country, he is fain to force his way; and he never obtains a Victory over Sin, but it is with great struggling and wrestling. He is always standing upon his Guard; and if he chance to slumber never so little, or be negligent in his spiritual watch, he is presently surprised by a diligent Enemy, that always lies in wait, and observes him. This now is the constant Life of a Christian, always to be maintaining a Warfare with Sin, that is continually stirring in him, and ever ready to put forth itself one way or other to do him Mischief.

Sin is continually making the Life of a godly Man uncomfortable; and while Sin is in him, it will not be otherwise: Now Sin will always be in him while he is in this World; and therefore he will always have some Troubles, some Perplexities, to afflict and disquiet him. But when Death, that Friend of the Saints (for so Death is to them, and to none but them) comes, they shall be perfectly free from all that which now afflicts and troubles them; because they shall be perfectly free from Sin, that is the Cause of it. And therefore, that I may note it by the way, With what rejoicing of Soul should a godly Man, upon this account, entertain the thoughts of Death? How welcome should the approach of this Friend of his be unto him? For certainly a Saint hath not a better Friend in all the World; for next unto Jesus Christ, who hath made satisfaction for a Believer's Sins, and obtained Life and Salvation for his Soul, Death must needs be his best Friend; because it frees him from all Sin. He that frees us from the Evil of our Sins, and from suffering eternal Punishments due to us because of them, by satisfying the Justice of God for them, must needs be our best and chiefest Friend; and next unto him, he that frees us from the being of Sin, that we may no more offend God thereby, and that is Death. And indeed none in the World can be kinder to a Saint, or do such an Office of Love for him as Death doth; for at once it sets him not only

out of the reach of all his Enemies, but perfectly frees him from that which caused them to be so, and that is Sin; and herein the Goodness of God is greatly to be observed, that Death, which is a Punishment for Sin, should be turned into the destruction of the very Being of Sin; and so it is to every Believer: For after Death, Sin shall not only cease to act, but shall cease to be.

Two Things commend Death, and ought to make it desirable to every Believer: One is, That it frees him from all Sin; and the other is, That it brings him to the everlasting enjoyment of God; and the latter depends upon the former; for till a Believer is perfectly freed from all Sin, he can have no entrance into Heaven, where God, the Fountain of all Bliss and Happiness, is seen and enjoyed. And certainly where Sin is felt as a heavy Burthen, by any Soul, and where God is the Delight of that Soul, Death must needs have an amiable Aspect; and so it will, if the Soul act as it ought to do. Should God ask one Godly Man after another, What is it that you most desire; tell me, and it shall be given you? would they not all with one consent, say, Lord, that we might be freed from Sin? Oh that we might be delivered from our Corruptions, that we might never offend and displease God; Lord, thou that knowest our hearts, knowest that nothing in all the world is so great a Burthen to us, as these sinful Hearts and Natures of ours, whereby we are necessitated to offend thee; this is the constant Language of their Prayers, of their Cries, of their Tears day and night, that they might be rid of Sin. Would it not be the most welcome News in the world to them, that the Time were come, wherein they should sin no more? Certainly were it offered to their choice, there is no godly Man in all the World, but would rather choose to be freed from Sin, than to be made the Heir, yea, than to be the Possessor of the whole World. What good, says a Godly Man, would the World do me, so long as Sin, and a naughty Heart inhabit

in me? These, Lord, saith a gracious Soul, would do me more hurt in one day, than the Enjoyment of the whole World to Eternity, can do me good: O Lord; therefore whatever thou dost with me, or whatever thou dost for me, deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death that I continually carry about with me.

Why, know, all ye holy and gracious Souls, whoever you are, that thus go up and down mourning and complaining by reason of Sin, know for your eternal Comfort, that when you have continued waiting but a few days long, God will grant your Desires; for when you come to Heaven, whither Death will certainly and suddenly bring you, Sin, an unholy Heart and Nature shall never more afflict or trouble you; for Sin, that was here your Burthen to feel, shall there be your Delight to be forever without; that impenitent, unbelieving Heart, those vain, yea, sinful Thoughts, which were wont to lie down, and rise up with you, which did use to follow you to every Duty, and accompany you in every Place and Service, and which you could no more leave behind you when you went to Pray, to Hear, to Read, or to Meditate, than you could leave yourselves behind you, shall all be left behind you, when you come to die; they did, and would keep you company while you lived, but they shall not go one step with you beyond Death; then you take your leave of them, bidding an eternal Farewell to all Sin. O my Soul, when shall that blessed day come that thou shalt thus take thy leave of Sin, never to wound thy Conscience, never to defile thy Soul, nor never to displease thy God thereby anymore! O what a blessed state will that be, when Death shall send a godly Man to Heaven, perfectly free from all Sin, not only as to the Power of it, but also as to the vexing and disquieting Presence of it, where he shall spend all Eternity in serving and praising of God without the least interruption, imperfection, or weariness of Soul forever. And doth not Death in this appear a Believer's great Friend,

in that what Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans, together with the assistance of the Spirit of God did gradually, that is mortify and destroy Sin; that Death doth for a Believer at one blow, perfectly freeing him from the Burthen and Being of Sin forever?

Fourthly, In Heaven the People of God shall arrive unto a Perfection of Grace and Holiness.

As all that the Saints have here, is but mean, compared to what they shall attain to hereafter; so all that the Saints do here, is but mean, compared to what they shall be enabled to do hereafter. Grace in a godly Man in this Life, is in its minority, and therefore the acting of Grace must needs be accordingly. The Excellency and Beauty of a Saint lies inward, in the hidden Man of the Heart; or as the Psalmist speaks, he is one that is all glorious within. And because Grace in him is inward, therefore its Excellency is not so visible and apparent. Grace in a godly Man, neither doth, nor can shine forth in its Glory and Beauty here, because Sin in him eclipses the splendor of its appearance. The imperfection of Grace is discernible here; but the Perfection and Beauty of Grace is neither known nor attainable here. The highest degrees of Grace and Holiness that the best of God's People reach unto here, comes infinitely short to what they shall attain to in Heaven. It is true, a little Grace in a Saint now, makes him glorious in the eyes of those who have a Spirit of discerning to behold it; in respect whereof, the Saints are called the excellent ones of the Earth, Psal. 16.3. Now if the weakness and imperfection of Grace (for that which the People of God attain to of Grace here, it no more compared with what they shall attain to in Heaven,) if this weakness and imperfection of Grace be so excellent and glorious, O how exceeding glorious will the perfection and beauty of Grace be hereafter? How glorious have some of the Saints of God of old

appeared, when their Excellency hath chiefly appeared in the Oriency and sparkling Beauty but of someone particular Grace; as for instance, How glorious was Abraham for his Faith; Moses, for his meekness & self-denial; Nehemiah for his zeal for God and his Glory; David, for his Love to God and his Ordinances; Job, for his Patience; S. Paul, for his unwearied Industry and Laboriousness in the Work of God, and the Service of Souls? O how eminently glorious have the particular acting's of these particular Graces in these Servants of God made them in all Ages; insomuch that the Spirit of God hath thought good to record their Excellencies in the holy Scriptures; and their Praise shall be in all the Churches of God to the end of the World. Now if the Saints Eminency in some particular Graces. have made them so glorious, notwithstanding their Imperfections other ways, how glorious and excellent will they appear, when all that Grace and Holiness that shall accompany them to Heaven, and is there necessary unto their Happiness, that they may see and enjoy God to eternity, shall be fully and completely perfected, having nothing of the least allay of any spot or imperfection in their Graces, or in their Persons, to take off from the Beauty and Glory of the one or of the other forever? In Heaven Grace in a Saint is in its excellency, and in its visibility, there is Grace, and nothing but Grace; there is Grace, and all Grace; yea, there is all Grace shining forth in its fullness, and utmost perfection of Glory to eternity. In this Life Grace in the People of God is never perfect; in some things they are always defective, in other things always wanting; they are continually aiming at, and going on unto Perfection, though while they are here they do not attain unto it. In the Work of Regeneration, they are truly sanctified and made holy; but it is in Heaven only that they are perfectly sanctified. The Lord Jesus Christ now loves his Church, and he hath abundantly manifested that he doth so, in giving himself for

it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, as the Apostle speaks: But he never presents it to himself a Glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle till he brings it to Heaven. By a work of Sanctification he is now daily cleansing and purifying of it; but the full Perfection and Beauty of Holiness is not put upon it, till the Marriage between him and his Church be consummated in Glory. Here in this Life there is much Imperfection in the Righteousness and Holiness of the Saints, many Faults and Infirmities they have, that others may censure and condemn, and themselves ought to bewail and mourn for; but in Heaven they shall be Faultless, so saith the Apostle, Jude 24.

Whilst the Church is Militant upon Earth, though she is black, and hath her spots, yet is she comely; but when she comes to be Triumphant in Heaven, then will she be as a beautiful Bride, adorned with fullness and perfection of Grace and Holiness, fitted and prepared for her Lord and Husband's Company, Rev. 22.2. where every Saint shall behold and love the Blessed and Holy God, and their dear Lord Jesus, with a Love equal to Angels and Cherubim's, satiating and delighting their Souls in him, with a Joy far exceeding the highest Joys that any of the People of God ever were acquainted with here, continually singing Praises and Hallelujahs unto the great God, and to the Lamb that sits upon the Throne, and be no more weary thereof than the Angels themselves are; understanding perfectly the Will of God, and readily obeying it, without so much as one vain Thought passing thorough their Minds, or one idle Word dropping from their Mouths, or one wry Look in their Countenances, to Eternity. O what a blessed Frame is here! What would not a Gracious Soul give or do that he could attain to it now! How would he rejoice to find a connaturality or perfect suitableness and agreement in himself unto Divine and Heavenly Employments! O

how happy would he think himself, were his heart always as holy as his work! Unto this tend all his Duties and performances, even unto the perfecting of him in Grace and Holiness; it is for this that he so often fasts and prays; it is for this that he so often hears, reads, and meditates upon the Word of God; for this it is he so often partakes of the Supper of the Lord, and is so frequent in the Communion of Saints, even for the destroying of Sin and Corruption, and the increasing and perfecting of Grace in his Soul. Oh how full of longing Desires is he after that Day and Time! Oh, how earnestly doth he cry! when, when will the shadows flee away, when will Days and Nights be at an end, when will Time be spent, when shall the Curtains be drawn, that he may not only look at, but eternally possess that blessed Place, where Sin shall be forever excluded both out of him and it, where Grace and Holiness shall be perfected in him, and where he shall always behold it shining in its ravishing Beauty and Glory? Well, be of good Cheer, O all ye Holy and Gracious Souls whose Desires are thus bent; for in Mount Zion there shall be both a Deliverance from Sin, and a Perfection of Holiness. In Heaven the Spirits of just Men are made perfect. Let the Thoughts therefore of your perfect Holiness in Heaven support you against all your natural Infirmities and Failings here on Earth: Yea, let all those that have a real Love to Holiness, and a Hatred unto Sin; long for Heaven, and be desirous to die, that they may sin no more, but be forever perfect in Grace and Holiness.

Fifthly, The Saints in Heaven shall be Partakers of Fulness of Joy. Joy is the peculiar Privilege of a Saint: None in all the World, notwithstanding all their great Possessions, have that Cause of rejoicing that a godly Man hath. That which makes a wicked Man rejoice, is something that delights his Senses, something that pleaseth his Fancy; all which is vain and vanishing. But that which

delights a Godly Man is that which is solid and substantial, something within that reacheth the very Soul and Conscience, and that is God reconciled to him in Jesus Christ, evidenced to his Soul upon Scripture grounds, followed with the Testimony of the blessed Spirit in his Conscience, witnessing with his Spirit, that he is among the number of the Children of God; upon which follows the Love of God, shed abroad in his Heart by the same Spirit, filling him with that Joy and Peace by Believing that is unspeakable and glorious. Now though this be the Privilege of a godly Man, yet hath he not always the sense and feeling of this Joy; but though he hath not always the Comfort of it, yet hath he always the ground of this Joy: for Light is always sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart, Psalm 97.11. Though it doth not presently spring up and break forth, yet the Seed of it is there. None in all the World do, or might lead such a pleasant, joyful Life as the People of God, were it not their own Fault, they giving way to the omission of some Duty, or the commission of some Sin, and this mars all their Joy. It is true, the Devil doth what he can to disquiet them, and the Wicked of the World give them molestation and trouble; sometimes they are tempted with the Allurements of Profit and Advantage; and sometimes they are awed with Fears and Threatening's: But if they would put forth their Grace into Exercise, and by Prayer implore Divine Assistance, they would be enabled not only to stand up against all the Enemies of their Peace; but with a holy Joy and Triumph to vanquish and overcome them. This is that Life a godly Man might lead, were he so watchful as he ought. But Experience tells us, it is not so; for there are many Clouds of Discontent and Trouble, that darken the Sun-shine of a Believer's Joy. O the Complaints of past Sorrows! O the Sense of present Evils, and the Fears of worse for the future! these in a great measure share our

Lives among them. But in Heaven it shall not be so; there's no Sorrow, no Troubles, no Evils, no Dangers, no nor so much as any Fears of them; for all is Peace; there's nothing but Joy, nothing but Pleasure and Sweetness: Nor can it be otherwise, with a godly Man in Heaven; because that which was the Cause of all his Grief and Sorrow, which is Sin is now perfectly taken away.

Now in the Joys of Heaven there are these four Properties; they are pure, they are spiritual, they are full, they are everlasting Joys.

First, The Joys of a Saint in Heaven are pure Joys, and pure they are in respect of the Object of them, and in their being free from any Mixture.

First, They are pure in respect of the Object of them. The Joy of the Wicked is terminated upon some carnal Object: His Joy is in the Flesh, not in the Spirit. When he rejoiceth, it is among his wicked Companions; his Delight is commonly in something that is sinful or sensual, in Chambering and Wantonness, or at best in Corn, Wine and Oil. But now the Joy of a Saint is in God; he now cries out with Holy David, Psalm 73.25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee: Thy Favor, O Lord, is Life, and thy Loving Kindness is better than Life. And with how much greater Joy and Delight doth a Saint say so of God, and of the Enjoyment of him in Heaven? It is true, Saints in Heaven enjoy the Blessedness of Peace and Rest from all their former Troubles and Sorrows, which they remember with Delight and Praise unto their Deliverer; but though this eternal Peace and Rest be a great Blessing, and that which passeth all Understanding; yet is it the least part of the Saints Happiness in Heaven; for their greatest Satisfaction and Contentment ariseth from the Joy and Delight which proceeds from

beholding the Face of God in Heaven: This is that which fills and satisfies; yea, ravisheth the Soul of a Saint, when enlarged to its utmost Capacity, with that Joy and Delight that is inexpressibly great and glorious.

Secondly, The Joys of Heaven are pure Joys in regard they are free from any Mixtures. The Joys of the Wicked are always mixed with Fear and Sorrow, and so are oftentimes the Joys of the Saints also: And herein God manifests great Wisdom and Goodness to his People thus to temper their Joys. Even as it is with Men of weak Constitutions, who must have their Wine mingled with Water, for fear of distempering their Bodies. And so must the Godly in this Life (such is their Weakness) have their Joys mingled with Fears and Sorrows, lest they should grow proud or wanton. Sometimes their Joys are mixed with Fear: Hence it is, Psalm 2.11. that we are commanded to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling. And thus we read of the two Women, Matth. 28.8. who though assured by Angels that Christ was risen; yet 'tis said, they departed from the Sepulcher with fear and great joy. And so is it with a godly Man, though by an Eye of Faith he beholds the Death and Sufferings of Christ, and looking into his Grave, is assured that he is risen from thence, for his Justification and Salvation; yet cannot but have his heart filled with a fearful trembling kind of Joy. And as a Saint's Joy here is mixed with Fear, so is it also sometimes mixed with Sorrow; for when a Believer by Faith looks upon Christ crucified, and considers that a person so infinitely great and glorious should die such a painful, shameful, cursed Death, for so vile a Sinner, and so great an Enemy unto God as he was, the consideration of this so great, and incomprehensible a Love manifested towards him, in reconciling God and him together, in delivering him from Wrath and Hell, and in obtaining Eternal Life for him in Heaven:

Though this Love of Christ in doing all this for him, cannot but affect him with great Joy; yet the Consideration of his Sins that pierced and wounded; yea, crucified the Lord of Life and Glory, cannot but break his Heart with godly Sorrow.

But now in Heaven the Joy of a Saint will be free from all mixtures both of Sorrow and Fear; there shall be no Sorrow for present Troubles, nor any Fears of future Dangers; all their Sorrows will then be turned into Joy. The sight of their Eyes will then affect their Hearts, that is, the sight and knowledge of the great God, the Supreme and Infinite Good, whom the Saints shall always have with them in Heaven, is that which will fill and ravish their Souls with unspeakable Joy.

Secondly, the Joys of a Saint in Heaven are spiritual Joys. Now spiritual things are things both of the greatest Reality, and of the greatest Excellency: Spiritual things are things of the greatest Reality, all other things comparatively are not, they are such things as have no Being, no Subsistence; therefore says the Wise Man, Why wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not? speaking of the admired things of the World. We do but abusively call Men that abound with worldly Enjoyments, rich, substantial Men; for Substance is nowhere but with God; he only is the true, substantial Good, the things of this World are no more than a shadow. If a Man were hungry, would painted Bread satisfy him; if a Man were starving with Cold, would painted Fire warm him? No, why truly all the things of this World will appear no better to a Man when he comes to die; there's no Comfort nor Satisfaction to be fetched from them: The Reality and Substantialness of Good is only laid up in God, and in the Enjoyment of him, who is the Saint's Happiness both on Earth and in Heaven There is a Vanity, as in all the Troubles of

the World; so also in all the Comforts of the World. There is a Vanity in the Troubles that the Saints endure, they are but skin-deep, a varnish of Trouble; so says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6.10. as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. And as it is with the Troubles of the World, so is it with the Comforts of the World; all that sense looks at, it is merely outside and appearing; all the Enjoyments of the World are but a shadow, an appearance of that which is Good: God and Heaven are Realities; but whatever else is Good, is but appearingly so. The things of the World are not when they are; they are not in Reality when they are in Appearance. It is a very great mistake to think nothing to be real, but what we can touch and handle with our hands, or what we can see with our Eyes, such as Gold, Silver, Houses, Lands; these are not really, substantially good things; they make a fair show outwardly; they have a Gaudery and Excellency as to Sense, but nothing of real Excellency as to the Soul. Nothing is real but what is spiritual, though the Body be more seen than the Soul, yet the Soul is a more real Good, because it is a spiritual Good, and comes nearest to God who is a Spirit, and who only is; so says the Prophet, speaking concerning God, Isai. 43.11. who only art, and there is none besides thee. God, Christ, Grace, and Heaven, these are spiritually and substantially good; and therefore it is said of Christ, I cause them that love me to inherit Substance, Prov. 8.21. And the Apostle tells the believing Hebrews, Heb. 10.34. Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing that in Heaven you have a better and an enduring Substance. The Joys and Delights of Heaven they are real, because they are spiritual.

But this is not all; for the Saints Joys in Heaven, because they are spiritual they are therefore excellent, yea the most excellent. There is nothing that is earthy in Heaven, but all of a spiritual and refined

Nature, and therefore the more real and the more excellent; and by how much the more spiritual, by so much the more real, and the more excellent also. All Joy and Delight placed upon anything below God, is carnal and earthly, that which hath dregs in it, and comes not up to the Excellency of the Soul, it may refresh the Senses and delight the outward Man, but it reacheth not the Soul and Conscience: it must be something that is spiritual for its Nature, and refined for its Excellency, that must suit with, and be the Delight of a Soul that is spiritual, and such is Heaven, and the Joys and Delights that are there superlatively excellent and spiritual, flowing into the noblest and most excellent part of Man, his Soul and Spirit, from God who is a Spirit.

Thirdly, The Joys of Heaven are full Joys. The Psalmist calls them Fulnesses of Joy, and Rivers of Pleasures, for the abundance of them, Psal. 116.11. And the Apostle speaking of Believers, tells us, 1 Pet. 1.8. That though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of Glory. If now the Joy of Faith in the Promises of God, from some small experience of his Love and Favor to the Soul, be above expression, what will be the Joy of the Beatifical Vision of God in Heaven? If now the believing Soul doth so greatly rejoice in hearing from its Lord and Savior in preaching and reading of his Word, wherein there are such secret Messages of Love sent down from Heaven unto it; O what will be the Joy of such a Soul in seeing him, and dwelling with him forever? It shall never be said unto the Saints in Heaven, what our Lord said unto his Disciples, Hitherto you have asked nothing, ask, and you shall receive, that your Joy may be full. No, the Joys of the Blessed in Heaven, are always perfect and full: For how can it be otherwise, when there is nothing in Heaven but what is Matter of Joy to the Saints? They are there in their Father's House, come to the Inheritance and

Possession of Children in an everlasting glorious Kingdom, where they continually behold the Face of God, and of the Lamb. The Joys of Heaven far exceed, not only all earthly Joys, such as the Joy of Marriage, the Joy of Harvest; but the Joy of Ordinances, the Joy of Faith; yea, the Joy of the Holy Ghost: All these Joys are swallowed up in Heaven, and are almost as no Joys, compared with the Joys thereof; for in that holy Place, there is nothing to disturb, or to diminish the Joys of the Saints forever: O why then do not the People of God more fetch their Joys and Delights from Heaven while they are here! This, if anything, should comfort their Hearts, and support their Spirits under all the Troubles they meet with here; for though this World be a Valley of Tears, yet in Heaven there will be Fulness of Joy, and Rivers of Pleasures, of which they may drink as deep, and take in as much as their Hearts can hold, though enlarged to their utmost capacity.

Fourthly, The Joys of Heaven are permanent and everlasting; and this makes it full Consolation indeed. When our Lord told his Disciples he was to leave them, and to return to Heaven unto his Father, their Hearts were filled with Sorrow thereupon; what course now doth our Lord take to comfort them? Why, he tells them, John 16.20. Their Sorrow should be turned into Joy; But when was this to be? Why, it was when he should come again, and receive them to himself. Not that they were to be without comfort until then; no, for he tells them when he departed he would send the Comforter to them, who was to continue with them while they continued in the World. But the Fulness and Perfection of their Joy they were to wait for till they come to Heaven; and then when he shall come for that end and purpose, to receive them to himself, their Hearts should rejoice, and their Joy no Man should take from them; for at God's right hand there are Pleasures for evermore. A Believer hath always

cause of Rejoicing in God; but by reason of many sharp Trials that God sees good to lay upon his People, there are some sad interruptions of his Joy for a time.

The Joy that the People of God partake of in this Life, is like the Joy of the Husbandman in time of Harvest; which though it be great for the present, yet is it soon over; and if he expect to partake of anymore of the same nature, he must first be at the pains and trouble of a Seeds-time. So after the People of God have had their Joys here, they again sow in Tears before they receive another crop of Comfort. It is in Heaven only that our Joy will be everlasting; there is fullness of Joy without any mixture of Sorrow, a continual Feast, a Joy that is ever in fullness and perfection, even as the Fruits are in time of Harvest. A Believer shall never sow in Tears there, but have a perpetual Joy without weariness, because there shall continually arise infinite variety of fresh Delights in God, which shall fill the Soul with a continual Festival of Joy forever.

Sixthly, In Heaven the Saints shall partake of excellent Glory and Honor. Heaven is the Palace of the great King of Glory, the Presence-Chamber where he unveils himself, and manifests his Glory both to Saints and Angels; and this indeed is the most glorious Sight in Heaven, and that which makes Heaven to be the most glorious Place. We read in Acts 6.15. That when Stephen stood before the Council, his Face did shine with an Angelical Brightness. This was a glorious Sight, to see the Face of a Man to shine as the Face of an Angel. But this is nothing, compared with that Glory with which the Saints shall shine when they shall stand before the great God of Heaven, seeing him face to face.

The Scripture describing to us this part of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, abounds with variety of Expressions, that discover the Greatness and Excellency thereof: Thus the Saints Glory there is set forth by the Glory of Kings at their Coronation, and taking possession of their Kingdoms, which is the greatest and highest of all worldly Glory. Every Saint in Heaven is a Crowned King, having taken possession of a glorious Kingdom, prepared for them before the foundations of the world; when also they receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. Sometimes it is described by the Glory of the Sun; Thus our Lord tells us, Matth. 13.43. The Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Sometimes it is compared to the Glory of the Angels, who, as they excel in strength, so do they also excel in Glory all the Princes of the Earth: Hence we read, the Saints in Heaven shall not only be like unto, but equal with the Angels, Luke 22.36. Sometimes also this Glory of the Saints is set forth by the Glory of Christ himself, who is the Lord of Glory, which is the highest pitch of Glory that can be. Thus we read, that when Christ shall come at the last Day, to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in them that believe, the Saints also shall then appear with him in Glory, Col. 3.4. Shining gloriously, by reason of his Glory that he will put upon them; for then shall they be made like unto him forever, seeing him as he is; so says the Apostle, 1 John 3.12. Sometimes the Glory of Heaven is called a weight of Glory; so we read, 2 Cor. 4.17. An exceeding, excessive, eternal weight of Glory. High Expressions setting forth the Glory of Heaven and almost to an Hyperbole, but that Christ and Heaven can never be Hyperbolically expressed. Sometimes again this glorious State of Believers is called Eternal Glory, 2 Tim 2.10. That they may attain that Salvation that is in Christ, with eternal Glory. So, 1 Pet. 5.10. The God of all Grace, who hath called you to his eternal Glory. Worldly Honor and Glory is

transitory, inconstant, and vanishing: The Fashion of the World passeth away, 1 Cor. 7.31. And the Glory of Man, says St. Peter, is as the Flower of the Grass, which flourisheth for a while, but is soon withered and gone, 1 Pet. 1.24. But the heavenly Glory is permanent, and perpetual; a Flower that never withers. Saints shall receive a Crown that fadeth not away.

CHAPTER IV

Of the Resurrection of the Body, in order to the Saints Happiness in Heaven.

Of the Resurrection of the Body, in order to the Saints Happiness in Heaven. A more particular Description of the Happiness of the Bodies of the Saints in Heaven; which shall there be, (1.) Incorruptible. (2.) Spiritual. (3.) Powerful. (4.) Beautiful. Of the Happiness of the Soul in Heaven; which consists, (1.) In having its Understanding enlarged. (2.) In its being perfected in Holiness. (3.) In having its Affections brought into a perfect Regularity. Of the Eternity of the Saints Happiness in Heaven.

A Discourse of the Happiness of Heaven, is like the breaking of the Bread by our Savior, in his miraculous feeding so many Thousands with a few Loaves, and a few small Fishes, which multiplied and increased by being broken. And so doth the Happiness of Heaven by being searched into; for the more we look into it, the more we discover of its Excellency and Perfection. In this blessed Search,

much of Sweetness and Delightfulness hath been found out already; but upon farther Enquiry into what the Scripture reveals concerning it, we shall find much more than what hath hitherto been discovered.

Now that which presents itself to us, as the Matter of our Discourse in this Chapter, is the Consideration of the Subject of this Happiness in Heaven, and that is, the Bodies and Souls of the Righteous.

I begin with the First of these; and that is, to show, That the Bodies of the Righteous shall be the Subject of the Happiness of Heaven. Now, before the Body can be a partaker of this Blessedness, it must first have a Resurrection from the Grave; for till that be done, it is not capable of enjoying the Glory and Happiness of Heaven.

Now, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Body out of the Dust, notwithstanding the seeming difficulties, yea, impossibilities also, unto Sense and carnal Reason, is very clear from the Scripture; which, though it be not against Reason; yet is it in many things above Reason, as it seems to be in this particular case; and therefore though a Christian is not here wholly to lay aside his Reason; yet must he chiefly make use of his Faith in this Point; yet were it my Employment to treat of this Subject, I doubt not but it might be demonstratively proved, That the Resurrection of the Body is a great Truth, not only by Scripture, but by Reason also; though when all that is or can be said, our chief Light and Knowledge into this great Truth, must and doth come from Divine Revelation. But this is not my Work at present; being only discoursing of it, as a necessary Introduction to the Happiness that the Body shall be a partaker of hereafter in Heaven; which, that it may, it must of necessity first be raised from the dead.

Now, the Resurrection of the Body is that which is the Inlet, as it were, to all its future Happiness and Glory. The Bodies of the Saints are, as the Apostle speaks, sacred Temples, wherein the Holy Ghost dwells; and therefore God will not suffer them to lie buried always in forgetfulness. It is true, their Bodies do dissolve into dust in their Graves, but it is as true, they perish not there; God takes notice of them then, and even at that time is their Dust precious in his sight; and so it will appear at the last Day, when by his All-powerful voice, he shall call them forth out of their Graves, and raise them up thence, shining with such excellent Beauty and Glory as shall exceed the Sun in its Brightness and Glory.

It is a very difficult thing to believe that the Bodies of Men, some whereof have lain rotting in the Grave Thousands of Years, and others, whose Bodies have been eaten up of wild Beasts, or burnt and consumed to Ashes by Fire, and those Ashes blown up and down the Earth, or into the Water by the Wind; or that when so many Multitudes of Ages and Generations of Men dying one after another, and their Dust mingled one with another, should all of them rise again, and the same several Parcels of Dust come together again, to make up the same Bodies of Men as once they were before; O how impossible is it that such a thing as this is, says carnal Reason, should ever come to pass?

Were this great and wonderful Work to be effected by the combined strength and power of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven, we might despair of its accomplishment; but when we consider who is the Undertaker of this great Work, even the Great and Almighty God; this may well silence all Objections that can be made against it: For he hath undertaken it for whom nothing is impossible. And as none of us know what God is in himself; so none of us know what this

great God can do. As it is with the sowing of Seed, when Men cast it into the ground; they sow not, as the Apostle saith, that Body that shall be; and if the Seed sown did spring up by chance, it might possibly bear Wheat, or some other Grain; but says he, God giveth it a Body, as it pleaseth him, and to every Seed his own Body. And so shall it be in the Resurrection at the last Day: God raiseth up all Men's Bodies out of their Graves; but this is not all; but that every Man may have his own Body, he giveth unto every Body its own Dust. And what reason is there that any should doubt of the Truth hereof? For if a Gardener, that hath a hundred several Seeds in his hand at once, is able to distinguish between Seed and Seed: Or if a skillful Chemist is able to extract one Metal out of another; yea, to take all the four Elements out of one and the same thing; shall not the Almighty, Omnipotent God be much more able to distinguish and separate one Man's Dust from another, and give to every Man his own Dust? Why then, O why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should thus raise the Dead? Consider a little who this God is; one that is of infinite Power, and able to do whatsoever he pleaseth both in Heaven and in Earth; it is he that at first made the World out of nothing; and cannot he rally together our lifeless Dust, and scattered Bones, and make them stand up and live? surely he can. Is he able to raise up Children unto Abraham out of stones, as our Lord tells the Jews, and can he not raise up our Bodies out of the same Dust into which they were dissolved? Nay, doth he not every day do as great Wonders as this is? What is every Night but the Burial, or Grave of the Light of the Day? And what is every Morning, but the Resurrection of the Day? Again, what is the cold Winter, but the Death of the Fruits of the Earth? And what is the Spring, but the Resurrection of them again unto a new Life? And what is Death unto us, but a pulling down of these Clay Houses of our Bodies into the

Dust? And what is the Resurrection, but a raising or rebuilding of the same Houses of our Bodies out of the same Dust again? And this shall as certainly be accomplished by God, as any of the former have been. Moreover, God hath given great Encouragement to our Faith, to believe the Truth hereof, by raising many from the Dead already, both in the Old Testament, and in the New; as the Shunamite 's and the Widow of Naim 's Sons, with Tabitha, and Lazarus, who had lain four days in the Grave, together with many others, that at the Death of Christ arose out of their Graves, and went into the Holy City, and were seen of many. Now what God hath already done to some, he can and will do unto all at the last Day. For, as our Lord saith, The hour is coming wherein all that are in their Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation, John 5.28, 29. And O what great encouragement is here unto Believers, both against their own Death, and the Death of their Godly Friends and Relations? How sweet, upon this account, may the Thoughts of Death be unto Believers themselves? Therefore mayest thou, O believing Soul, cheerfully yield unto the stroke of Death; for though by it thou art carried unto the Grave, that Place of silence, where thou shalt molder away into Dust and Rottenness; yet mayest thou die in the assured Belief of this great Truth, That as certainly as now by Death thou goest down into the Grave, so certainly shalt thou ere long be raised up out of it again; and then shall thy Soul and Body have a comfortable meeting together again, never to be parted anymore, but be made happy together in an eternal Enjoyment of God in Glory.

Here is also matter of great Comfort against the Death of our godly Friends and Relations. What a blessed Support is this to a Believer, when Death comes and takes away any such from him? How

comfortably may he take his leave of them, delivering them up unto Death and the Grave, knowing assuredly that they shall rise again unto Glory and Happiness? Those that die in Christ, and sleep in Jesus, them he will certainly raise out of their Graves, and bring with him unto Judgment. Cease therefore thy immoderate Grief, drown not thyself in Tears for those whose Souls are at present triumphing in Glory, and whose Bodies shall shortly be raised up unto a participation of the same Glory and Happiness.

Whenever therefore, O believing Soul, either thou thyself shalt come to lie upon a Death-Bed, taking thy last Farewell of thy godly Friends and Relations in this World; or when any such godly Friends and Relations shall, upon their Death-Beds, take their last Farewell of thee; let this great Truth of the Resurrection of the Body teach thee how thou shouldst do it; not as one without hope, but as it becomes a Christian; and that is willingly and cheerfully; not because thou art thereby rid of a Trouble or Charge, or because by their Death thou shalt be a gainer in thy worldly Concerns; this shows a very evil, sinful frame of Spirit, and is no way becoming a Christian; but let thy willingness herein proceed from a more excellent Motive; even this comfortable consideration, that there is but a little short space of Time between thy Death and theirs, as also between all your Deaths and the Time of your Resurrections, which will quickly fade away, whilst you and they are sleeping quietly in your Graves, and then shall both you and they be raised up together thence with great Joy and Rejoicing; so saith the Prophet, Isa. 26.19. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the Dust; for then shall there be everlasting Joy upon your Heads. But I must not forget, that this is not the Subject I am treating upon, it being that which comes in here only as a necessary Introduction unto that Happiness which the Bodies of the Saints

shall partake of in Heaven, unto which I now come to treat more particularly.

Now in speaking unto this, I shall reduce all that I have to say unto these four Heads, the Incorruptibility, the Spirituality, the Power or Agility, and the Glory and Beauty of the Body.

First, The Bodies of the Saints in Heaven shall be incorruptible. Their Souls are always immortal; for when they leave their Bodies, which by Death drops from them into the Grave, yet they die not; but returning unto God, are adjudged to and instated in an everlasting state of Blessedness: But now in Heaven, the very Bodies of the Saints shall be as immortal as their Souls. In this World the best carry up and down with them weak, frail, dying Bodies, always yielding to Decays, exercised with Pains and Aches, that insensibly waste and wear them away, till at length Death by some incurable Disease lays them from the Second Death, yet have they thereby no exemption from the First Death; but they as well as others must taste thereof, because; they as well as others have sinned. It is true, the Sting of Death shall never reach them, that they are delivered from, and gain Victory over by Jesus Christ; but the stroke of Death must and will reach them. Death cannot hurt them, that's certain, because it hath no Poison in it, but Death will have Dominion over them for a time. But though Death play the Tyrant here on Earth, sparing none either for their Greatness, or their Goodness, yet hath it no admittance into Heaven: For when the Saints shall be clothed upon with their House, which is from Heaven, then shall Death and Mortality be swallowed up of Life; and the Life of the Body, as well as the Life of the Soul, shall then be everlasting. The Apostle, 1 Corinth. 15.42. speaking of the Body, tells us it is sown in Corruption, but it is raised in Incorruption: So in verse 52. in a moment, in the twinkling

of an eye, at the last Trump the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and this Mortal must put on Immortality. And O how comfortable must the Thoughts hereof needs be to the Saints, to think, that though now they have sickly, diseased; yea, dying Bodies: yet there is a time coming, when they shall have Bodies free from all manner of Aches and Pains, not subjected to Decays nor Death, but always lively and vigorous. The Resurrection will do more for the Bodies of the Saints than a College of the ablest Physicians ever could do; for it will at once perfectly cure them of all their Infirmities and Distempers; which all the Physicians here on Earth could never do: Alas, they could only give some ease and relief under some particular Distempers, and that but for a little time, but they soon returned again; or others came in their room, which proved incurable, and terminated in Death. But when the Bodies of the Saints shall be raised out of their Graves at the general Resurrection, they shall perfectly be healed of all their Distempers, and shall die no more; for then shall be brought to pass that saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory, 1 Cr. 15.54.

Secondly, In Heaven the Bodies of the Saints shall become spiritual; not that they shall be changed into spiritual Substances, and so become absolutely spiritual; for then they must cease to be Bodies; but yet they shall become spiritual, because they shall be endowed with spiritual Qualities. Now concerning this Spirituality of the Body, the Apostle speaks very clearly in 1 Cor. 15.44 it is sown, says he, a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body. Now the Bodies of the Saints in Heaven are said to be spiritual in these respects.

First, Because in Heaven they shall be in a condition that is spiritual: Their Bodies shall then stand in no more need of Meat or Drink Sleep or Apparel, the now necessary and appointed means for its

supportation: In Heaven there is no eating or drinking, no marrying or giving in Marriage; but we shall there be as the Angels of God; so saith our Lord, Matth. 22.30. If Moses in this state of Mortality, whilst he was with God in the Mount forty Days and forty nights, did neither eat Bread nor drink Water, as we read, Exod. 34 28. how much more shall the Saints be enabled to live without the use of these things when they come to Heaven, where they shall always live in the Presence of God?

Secondly, The Spirituality of the Saints Bodies in Heaven consists in that entire and absolute Subjection they shall then be in unto their Spirits. In this Life the Soul is debased, made to stoop, and become serviceable to the Flesh; and when it is at the best with the Saints, there is still a contention and strife between the Spirit and the Flesh; so that when the Spirit is willing, the Flesh is weak; nay, often refractory: But in Heaven there shall be an absolute Subjection of the Body to the Spirit. What a great Happiness would a godly Man now count it, to have a Body every way serviceable to his Soul, that whenever the Soul moves God ward and Heaven-ward in any holy Duty, the Body might willingly and readily comply with it? How delightful would this make a godly Man's Life to be? Why, in Heaven it shall be so; in that state of Glory and Happiness the Soul shall not depend upon the Body, but the Body upon the Soul; for the Body shall then become spiritual, because it shall be perfectly serviceable to the Spirit. This certainly will be a blessed time: Saints therefore should long for its approach.

Thirdly, The Bodies of the Saints in Heaven shall be spiritual, in regard they will then be more capable of, and more fitted for spiritual Uses and Services. Nothing that is of an earthy, dreggy, Nature shall then cleave to them; all carnal, sordid employments are greatly

below them; their Work is altogether heavenly and spiritual; formerly their time and strength was laid out upon Employments that were earthly, suitable unto their then earthly Bodies. But now that their Bodies are changed, and of earthly become spiritual, their Employment is changed and become spiritual also. And because there is such a change in the Employment of their Bodies, it is an evident Demonstration that there is a change made in their Bodies also. Heretofore the World was the Habitation in which their Bodies dwelt, and their Designs then were worldly also: But now that they are removed from Earth to Heaven, the Habitation of Spirits, their Bodies are refined and made spiritual, suitable unto the Habitation, to the Inhabitants, to the Employments and Enjoyments that are there; which are altogether spiritual.

Thirdly, The Bodies of the Saints in Heaven shall be full of Power and Agility: They are sown (says the Apostle) in Weakness; they are frail, sinful Bodies, and therefore they must die; yet shall they be raised in Power. Now this Power and Agility that shall be bestowed upon Glorified Bodies, is very wonderful, being that whereby they shall be able to move to and fro in Heaven, according as the Will shall command it, without difficulty or weariness; and possibly so, as to be able to keep pace even with Angels themselves in their Motion. And considering the spaciousness of Heaven, that place where God, Christ, and those multitudes of glorious Saints and Angels do inhabit, this Agility of Body may be very necessary.

Now there are two Reasons why it is so necessary that the Bodies of the Saints should be thus strong and powerful.

First, That hereby they may be able to attend the Operations of their Souls, and become fit for such Work as in Heaven they must be

employed in. Were their Bodies as weak and feeble in Heaven as they now are on Earth, they could never undergo such work and motions as they must be employed in there, but they would soon tire and faint. Scripture and Experience tells us this, that when the Soul is exercised about any high and glorious Object, the Body presently sinks and fails: So it was in the Ecstasies of the Prophet, when God did reveal himself in an extraordinary manner unto Daniel, his Body failed, he fainted, and was sick many Days, Dan. 8.27. But now in Heaven the Bodies of the Saints shall be so strong and powerful, that they shall become serviceable to their Souls in their highest and most glorious Operations. Here the People of God have Souls willing to serve the Lord, that would fain attend upon him in his Ordinances, and never be weary or drowsy; but though the Spirit be willing, yet the Flesh is Weak; their frail Bodies cannot keep pace with their Souls in Duty; thus is it continually with them here; but in Heaven it shall be otherwise; their Bodies shall then be as good Companions for their Souls as they can desire, and both together shall praise God with eternal Hallelujahs, and never be weary.

Secondly, It is necessary that the Bodies of the Saints in Heaven should be strong and powerful; because otherwise they are not able to bear that weight of Glory and Happiness that there they shall be Partakers of. We are easily persuaded to believe that a Man may be so miserable that he cannot bear it; but it is as true that Man's highest Happiness cannot be born by the strength he now hath: Extraordinary Joy will overcome and destroy as well as extraordinary Sorrow. I have heard of one whom a great King in this Nation caused to be imprisoned, and thrown into a Dungeon, where lying hourly in expectation of losing his Life, being suddenly surprised with News of a Pardon, his Joy was so great, that it overwhelmed his Spirit, and he died immediately. The Condition of our Bodies here, is a Condition

of Weakness and Frailty: And the Glory and Happiness of Heaven is by the Apostle called an excessive weight of Glory: Now it is not possible for a weak Head to bear an excessive weight of Glory. What the Saints shall there see with their bodily Eyes, is so excellent and glorious, that it would now sink and overwhelm their weak Bodies to behold it. Those ravishing Transports of Joy and Delight, which glorified Souls shall have in the Vision of God, will crack, yea, break a weak Vessel into pieces. The Bodies of the Saints therefore must be made strong to bear the Glory of that Place; otherwise, the Excellency of the Object will destroy the Faculty. When the Sun in the Firmament shines in its full strength, the Glory of it is so great, that the strongest Eye is not able to behold it, but is soon overcome by its dazzling Brightness. O how much more unable then is any mortal Eye to see God, and to behold his infinite Glory. The Scripture therefore tells us, He dwells in Light that is unapproachable, 1 Tim. 6.16. And, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. and 50. Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Now by Flesh and Blood, he doth not mean Sin and Corruption, though that is very true; but he means a Natural Body, a Body as it is in this frail State, so it cannot enter into Glory. No, the Soul must be purified, and the Body must be spiritualized, made powerful and strong before it can enter into Glory; for otherwise it is not able to behold God, and to enjoy the Glory and Happiness of Heaven. Moreover the Bodies of the Saints must endure to all Eternity in Heaven; and that without Reparation, by Meats, or Drinks, or Sleep: Doubtless therefore their Bodies at the Resurrection, entering into a Place of so great Glory and Happiness as Heaven is, shall be raised to a high and eminent degree of Power and Strength, that they may be able to bear that weight of Glory that shall then be put upon them.

Fourthly, The Bodies of the Saints in Heaven, shall be Beautiful and Glorious.

The Words of the Apostle are very clear, 1 Cor. 15.33. Speaking of the Body, and that disgrace that it is brought under when thrown into the Grave; it is sown, says he, in dishonor: This indeed is but poor comfort to a Believer, to think that his Body shall be vilified and disgraced in the Grave, where it shall turn to corruption and rottenness. But, as if the Apostle had said, Let not this trouble you, for there will be a Time when the Body shall have a blessed Resurrection from that contempt and Disgrace that it now suffered under; for though it be sown in dishonor, yet, it shall be raised in Glory, and become a far more glorious and beautiful Body than ever it was here on Earth. Some Glory and Majesty there is put upon the Bodies of Men now, above the Bodies of all other Creatures, in respect whereof, our Bodies are said to be God's Workmanship: Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me, says Job. Yea, they are said to be fearfully and wonderfully made, and to be curiously wrought by God himself; so we read, Psal. 139.14, 15. But yet that Glory which the Bodies of the Saints now have, is no Glory, compared with that Glory that their Bodies shall be clothed with in Heaven. There is a vast difference between Celestial Bodies and Terrestrial Bodies: How glorious is the Body of the Sun, compared with the Body of a Worm or a Fly? But there is a far greater difference between the Bodies of the Saints on Earth, and the same Bodies when glorified in Heaven; for then they shall become celestial and Heavenly Bodies, shining with a Glory and Beauty that shall transcend the Stars; yea, the Sun in the Firmament. The Apostle gives us the Sum of it in a few words, Phil. 3.21. he tells us our Body of Christ. They are now vile Bodies, as he calls them; made so by Sin, being Instruments thereunto; and they are Earthy, because they bear the Image of the Earthly Adam;

but they shall be made Glorious Bodies; because they shall forever bear the Image of the Heavenly Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Exod. 34.29. We read, when Moses had been in the Mount with God forty days, and came down among the Israelites again, his Face did shine so gloriously that they were not able to behold it. Now if Moses 's Body, that was but a frail mortal Body, and was shortly to lie in the Dust, did, by being with God for a little time, shine so gloriously, Oh with what Glory and Beauty shall the Bodies of the Saints shine in Heaven, when they shall become immortal, and enjoy the Presence of God with them to all eternity?

Secondly, As the Body shall be a great sharer in the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, so shall the Soul be also.

Not only the Excellency, but the Capaciousness of the Soul renders it an Object of greater Happiness and Glory than the Body. As the Soul is the more excellent part of a Saint, than the Body; so shall it have a more excellent Glory put upon it than the Body. In Gen. 48.19. When Jacob was blessing the Two Sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, Jacob tells Joseph, that Manasseh the first-born, should be a great Man, but his Brother should be greater than he; the same may be said of the Bodies and Souls of the Saints in Heaven: It is true, their Bodies shall be very beautiful and glorious; but truly their Souls shall far excel them in Glory.

In Heaven the Bodies of the Saints shall be suited to, and capacitated for that Glory and Happiness that is designed for, and to be enjoyed by them there, which now they are not: But their Souls, as they shall then take in more of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven than their Bodies; so are they now in some measure, but shall then be much more capacitated both to receive and bear the greatness of the Glory

and Happiness of Heaven, than the Body can or will be; for the Happiness of Heaven being of a spiritual and refined Nature, it is most suitable unto the spiritual part of Man, which is his Soul. And this is the Reason why we understand so little of the Happiness of the Soul in Heaven; because it is spiritual. Here we understand little what our Souls are, and therefore can understand but little what that Happiness is that they shall attain to hereafter. The Scripture calls it a Glory that shall be revealed, Rom. 8.18. The Sufferings of this present Life are not to be compared to the Glory that shall be revealed in us; that is, in the Soul. A Glory and Happiness there is that waits for Believers in the other World; but it is not yet revealed what, or how great it shall be. No, says the Apostle, It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, we shall be like him. The Beauty of the Soul will then be excellent and glorious, because the perfect Lineaments of Christ will then be drawn upon it. A weak and small measure of Grace, which is the highest attainment that any Saint reacheth to here, compared with what we shall do hereafter, and is also the Image of Christ upon the Soul of a Believer; yet even this imperfect Grace and Holiness, makes the Soul to shine gloriously here; how much more then shall Glory, that is the Perfection of Grace, and the perfecting of the Image of Christ upon the Soul, make the Soul of a believer to exceed in Glory? Not that the Saints in Heaven shall be continually receiving new additions to their Grace or Glory, and so be made more and more like unto Christ by the Vision they shall there have of him: No, this is a Saint's Work and Employment here on Earth, whilst he beholds Christ only by an eye of Faith, in the Glass of Duties and Ordinances, thus to be changed into his Image from Glory to Glory: But this Sight of Christ shall vanish away in Heaven, and the Saints shall have an immediate Vision of God and Christ, and their Souls

shall thereby be changed into an exact and perfect conformity unto the Image of Christ. It shall not then be from Glory to Glory, from one degree of Grace to another, as it is now; but Grace and Holiness in Heaven shall be always in them in its height and perfection. The Souls of Believers upon their entrance into that Holy Place become perfectly and completely glorious, having the perfection of Grace and Holiness in them, without the least remainders of Sin and Corruption, which in this World the holiest Persons are not totally freed from. But to speak a little more particularly concerning the Happiness of the Souls of Believers in Heaven, and here.

First, In Heaven the Understandings of the Saints shall be enlarged. Knowledge is a necessary Ingredient unto the Soul 's Happiness in Heaven; and the more enlarged the Understanding of a Saint is, the greater is his Happiness. An ignorant Soul cannot be a happy Soul, neither on Earth, nor in Heaven: Ignorant Persons are looked upon with pity and contempt; That the Soul be without knowledge, says the Wise Man, is not, nor cannot be good, Prov. 19.2. Knowledge is a great Ornament in any Man, but much more in a Christian. It is a great Commendation to have an insight into the Secrets of Nature, to be skilled in Arts and Sciences, to understand Logic, Philosophy, Metaphysics, and the like; but the Excellency of Knowledge lies not in these things, but in the knowledge of the Highest and Chief Good of all; and that is God and Christ: This the Scripture calls the Excellency of Knowledge: So says the Apostle, Philip. 3.9. I count all things but Loss and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; and John 17.2. This is Life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. This is excellent Knowledge indeed, to know God, to know the Lord Jesus Christ, to understand the wonderful Work of Man's Redemption, to be acquainted with the Mysteries of Divine Providence: This is a

knowledge wherein Angels may delightfully busy themselves in the contemplation of, and not stoop below the Excellency and Dignity of their Natures: Something of Light and Knowledge they have into these Objects now. But alas, it's little we know of God, of Christ, of the Mysteries of Redemption and Providence, to what shall be known in Heaven. Some of these blessed Objects are far above out of our sight; others are far above the reach of our Understanding, to comprehend the depth of those Mysteries of Wisdom, Grace, and Love that are contained in them. But in Heaven our Capacities shall be enlarged to take in the Knowledge of these high and glorious Objects. In Heaven God will take off the Vail from his Face, that we may see him Face to Face; and not only so, but will strengthen us that we may be able to look upon, and behold his Glory and Excellency; which otherwise would astonish and confound us. There shall we see the blessed Lord Jesus, who for our sakes was for a little while made a little lower than the Angels, crowned with Glory and Honor. All the wonderful and astonishing Mysteries of our Redemption shall be there unfolded to us; There it is that we shall see all the glorious Attributes of God, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy, Holiness, Faithfulness, and Truth; sweetly reconciled, and fully satisfied and contented in the contrivance of our Redemption by Jesus Christ. There we shall with great satisfaction understand the deep and obscure Mysteries of Religion, which here the most profound Scholars were never able fully to comprehend. There shall the most dark and difficult Passages of that divine and heavenly Book, the Scriptures, be made clear and plain to our Understanding. There it shall be given us to discern how exquisitely the several parts of Holy Writ, were by the All wise and Fore seeing Author of them, God, fitted and adapted unto the several Times, Places, Persons, and Occurrences, for which they were intended chiefly to be used. We

shall then plainly see, not only a Reconcilableness, but a Friendship, and perfect Harmony between those Sacred Texts in Holy Writ, that seemed most to ajar and be at greatest variance: Yea, there shall we discover, not only the meaning of the most dark and obscure Passages of that Sacred Book; but how fit it was that they should be so; together with the infinite Wisdom of the great God that caused them to be written so obscurely. There it is that those Riddles of Divine Providence shall be expounded, and laid open before us; which have made not only wicked Men to deny, but tempted even good Men themselves sometimes to call in question the infinite and unerring Wisdom of the great God in his Government of the World, when they behold wicked and ungodly Men to prosper, grow rich and great, having all their Hearts can wish; whilst upright and righteous ones are continually exposed to Poverty, Reproach, and Contempt. There shall we be fully convinced, that all these seeming Irregularities, are not only consistent with God's Justice and Goodness, but are the wise productions of them. And though the Belief hereof doth to wise and understanding Persons seem to be a piece of great Self-denial; yet when we come to Heaven, it will appear to be as highly rational, as now we find it to be hard and difficult. Man of himself is no fit Judge of the Providence of God at any time; but especially not in this World; because he cannot see the whole of his Providential Workings at once: His Days, as Job speaks, are but as a shadow upon Earth, and they fly away: So that he can see but little of what God is doing. But when we come to Heaven, the whole Conduct of God's Providence in the Administration of Affairs in the World, shall be laid open to our view. Then shall all the Revolutions and Occurrences of Empires, States, Families, and particular Persons; which peevish Men were wont here to find fault with, be all disclosed, and made appear to be so just and righteous; yea, so

necessary and seasonable, that those very things which here were a Temptation to us to deny God, shall in Heaven prove a powerful Engagement for us to praise God: And then shall we not so properly be satisfied with what his Providence hath brought about, as ravished with the Wisdom and Beauty that we shall behold in it. But in a more especial manner shall we be transported with Admiration and Gratitude, when the great God shall vouchsafe to discover to each particular glorified Soul in Heaven the reasonableness of all his Dispensations towards them, making visible to them, not only how necessary and righteous; but how merciful and gracious he was in bringing those very Afflictions upon them, which they usually accounted severe Dispensations; there being no Rod that ever God took into his hand to chastise them withal, that ever came sooner, fell heavier, or abode longer upon them, than the Occasion that extorted it from him did require it should: And though sometimes their Expectations were disappointed, yet was it always a happy Disappointment for them; because intended by God to secure their Title unto far better things, which now they enjoy, than any they could hope for here.

And who is there, that hath tasted the pleasurable and delightful Life that a Holy Soul leads, whose Mind is frequently taken up in the Study and Contemplation of those two excellent Themes, the Word of God, and the Providence of God; but must profess, as a Great, Noble, and Learned Person doth, both very ingeniously and piously also; that though there be something of Difficulty in a studious employment of our Thoughts, in the Contemplation of these things; yet are they also so pleasing and inviting; That (to give you his own Words) should Heaven, says he, afford me no greater Blessing than a clear accompt of the abstruse Mysteries of Divinity and Providence, I should value the having my Understanding gratified and enriched

with Truths of so noble and precious a Nature, enough to court Heaven, at the rate of renouncing for it all those unmanly Sensualities, and trifling Vanities; for which, inconsiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit that Interest their Savior so dearly bought them in it? But I must not dwell upon this part of the Soul 's Happiness in Heaven, though a most pleasing and delightful Subject.

Secondly, In Heaven the Souls of Believers shall be perfected in Holiness. Here the People of God are truly sanctified, but not thoroughly. Sanctified they are in every Part, though but in part sanctified, still there are the Relics of Sin, the Remains of the Old Man in them while they are here. The Truth of Grace they have, but not the Perfection of Grace: An absolute State of Perfection, is rather to be wished for than enjoyed in this Life. The utmost that a godly Man can attain to here, is not to commit great Sins, nor to allow himself in little Sins, when thorough daily Infirmity he doth commit them.

Now the People of God have the first Fruits of the Spirit; but yet they have the remainders of the Old Man in them. Now the Spirit of God helps them to mortify Sin, and to keep it under; but it doth not enable them perfectly to destroy it, as it shall be in Heaven. Here the Righteous are delivered from the prevalency of their Corruptions; for so is God's gracious Promise to his People, that Sin shall not have Dominion over them; and blessed be God for this: But in Heaven they shall be forever freed from the presence of Sin. There is a continual mortifying of Sin by Believers here on Earth; but in Heaven Sin shall be totally abolished: It is in a dying, languishing Condition now; but in Heaven it shall be dead, forever cease to be. Perfection of Grace and Holiness is the aim and endeavor of every godly Man; but it is not his attainment: So the Apostle tells us concerning himself,

who doubtless had as great a measure of Grace as any have attained to since, Phil. 3.12, 13. Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect: No, says he, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, for getting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press forward towards the Mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is all a godly Man can do here, in the use of Means, to strive and endeavor after Perfection of Grace, though he cannot attain it. But in Heaven no godly Man shall be defiled with any Sin, or defective of any Grace; no, nor yet wanting in any measure or degree of Grace and Holiness as now he is. The Spirits of just Men made perfect are there; that is, there is a Perfection of Grace and Holiness in Heaven, that shall beautify the Spirits of just Men when they come there. In this World, the People of God are partly carnal, and partly spiritual; partly holy, and partly sinful. But in Heaven they shall be perfectly holy and spiritual, freed from all sinful Mixtures; no Dross with their Gold; no Corruption mingling itself with their Holiness. Their Understandings shall be perfectly holy, without the least Cloud, or Mist of Ignorance or Error to darken or sully them. That Glorious Sun of Righteousness, whom they shall always behold in Heaven, shall forever scatter all Clouds and Darkness quite away. Their Thoughts shall all be holy; no blasphemous, unclean, or envious Thoughts shall ever arise in their Souls; no, nor the least Vanity or Impertinency pass through their Minds to Eternity; but all shall be holy, being brought into a perfect Obedience unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Their Memories shall there be holy, being strengthened to retain and bring forth out of their Treasuries whatever things may tend to feed, and increase their Love and Joy, and to elevate their Souls in the high Praises of God. Their Wills shall then be perfectly holy; for there shall they obtain that which they so often prayed for

on Earth; namely, that the Will of God may be done by them, as the Angels do it in Heaven. O what a delightful Harmony will there then be forever between their Wills and the Will of God! Then shall they always have a perfect compliance in them with that sweet and blessed Law that they shall then be under, without the least contrariety or opposition. Never more shall they have any motion or inclination in them to that which is evil forever.

Thirdly, Another thing wherein the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven, as to their Souls doth consist, is the Regularity of their Affections, which shall all be set right for, and continually drawn out after God by an unalterable Regularity. There the Saints shall in their Hearts and Souls constantly and perpetually cleave unto God, having always their Love and Delight in him, without any Satiety or Weariness. Here on Earth they are often starting aside to the Creature with an inordinate Love and Delight; but in Heaven there shall be an eternal fixedness of Soul, with infinite Complacency and Delight in God. Here our Affections are under great Irregularities: To instance in two briefly; and they are the Affections of Love and Joy. As to the Affection of Love; It is well known unto all what is a Christian's commanded Duty; namely, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. And this Love to God, operating by Love to our Neighbors, is so acceptable a Duty, that it is called by the Apostle the fulfilling of the Law. But alas, how do the best of God's Servants fall short in this respect; when all they attain to, is only to love God in Sincerity, and with some degree of prevalency above all other Enjoyments. But to love God, so as to desire him, so as to rejoice and delight in him above all other things, with the utmost extremity of Love and Affection, in Perpetuity and Constancy: Oh, where is the Soul that can be found, that doth sol Vain and foolish, yea, sinful Objects also,

entangle our Affections, and draw away our Hearts from God, to an over-loving and delighting in them, and to an impairing and weakening of our Love and Affections towards God. How often do we meet with such Complaints as these in the mouths of God's People? Oh, that we could love God more! Oh, that we could love Christ more! but alas we cannot: Their Faith discovers to them a wonderful Amiability in God and Christ, which draws out the Desires of their Souls after them. So saith the Apostle, to you that believe he is precious, or desirable. But yet they find they cannot love God as they ought, nor as they desire to do; for by reason of that Earthliness that is still in them, their Hearts and Affections are divided, and carried out after other Objects; so that as the Apostle complains, they cannot do the things that they would. But now in Heaven these Complaints shall cease, and all the disorders and Irregularities of the Affections shall be cured, and the Soul shall perfectly, and everlastingly love God, and contemplate the Excellencies and Perfections that are in him with unspeakable Delight and Satisfaction: For where ever there is the Acting's of these Affections, it always carrieth much Pleasure and Delight along with it; especially where the Object beloved is deserving, and the Affections are strong towards it. Now in Heaven the Object is most deserving to be beloved; for it is the ever blessed God, and the Affections of the Soul will be strongest; for there Love shall be in its Height and Perfection; and that which results from hence must be infinite Satisfaction and Delight unto the Soul, so that it cannot choose but it must love God. There holy Souls shall have continual views of the perfect Beauty of him, who is altogether lovely; yea, who is Love itself; the sight of whom will not only wonderfully draw their Hearts and Affections towards him, but fill their Souls with continual Ravishments of Love and Joy in him; so that it is impossible they should do otherwise than rejoice and delight in him.

O this Life of Love which Saints always live in Heaven! It is that which fills them with unspeakable Satisfaction and Contentment; yea, Love in Heaven is that which will be both the Work and the Reward of a Saint at once; and that in Constancy and Perpetuity.

And so for a Saint 's Joy, which is another Affection of the Soul. How irregularly doth it frequently act; we rejoice when we should mourn, and we mourn when we should rejoice; or if not so, yet we often exceed in our Joy and Delight. Commonly it is with us in our Enjoyments of the World, as it is with us in our Losses in the World: When we lose the Comforts of the World, we over- grieve, and are cast down so excessively, as if we had nothing left to take any Delight or Comfort in. And just so is it with us in our Enjoyments of the World; when God blesseth us with outward Comforts, we over-love and delight in them; so that that which God gives us to draw our Hearts nearer to himself, by the Excesses of our Joy and Delight in them, takes away our Hearts more from him; insomuch that we are more forgetful of God by our inordinate rejoicing in what he bestows upon us: A very evil and ungrateful return unto God for his Kindness to us; but yet it is that which we are very inclinable unto. Hence therefore is it that we are so often cautioned against all excessive Love of, or Delight in things here below; for Love to, and Joy and Delight in anything always go together; the Apostle therefore bids us, 1 John 3.16, 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: Not that it is absolutely unlawful to express any kind of Love to, or Delight in Worldly Things. But it is as if he had said; so hard and difficult a thing it is for Christians, in loving and delighting in worldly Enjoyments, to keep their Affections within their bounds, and to express no more of Joy and Delight in those things than is due to them; that it is almost necessary to lay a Command upon them, not

to love the World at all; such a proneness is there in the best of Christians to transgress, when any allowance is given unto these carnal Hearts and Affections of ours towards worldly Enjoyments. It is true, a Believer is not only allowed, but commanded to rejoice; yea, and to rejoice always; and none have more cause so to do than he: But it is not in the persons or things of this World, but in God; so runs the Command, 1 Thes. 5. Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say rejoice. But yet all rejoicing in outward Enjoyments is not forbidden him neither. A Christian, who is accepted of God, may, as the wise Man speaks, eat his Bread with Joy, and drink his Wine with a merry Heart, Eccles. 4.7. that is, he may rejoice, and be cheerful in the use of those Comforts and Refreshments that God bestows upon him. But yet in the greatest abundance of them, his Moderation ought to be known unto all Men, and still he must rejoice in them as if he rejoiced not; that is, use them and rejoice in them with a holy kind of Indifferency of Soul. But now here is the great failing of Christians, they exceed those bounds and limits that God allows them, letting out their Hearts and Affections inordinately towards them: But now in Heaven these delightful Affections of the Soul shall be regulated. A Saint's Joy there shall be always rightly placed, and duly bounded: God will there be the only Object of our Joy, and the right bounding of our Joys and Delights in him, will be to joy and rejoice in him without bounds and limits: Let our rejoicing in him be never so great, it cannot be so great as he deserves. Were it possible for one glorified Soul in Heaven to contain in it all the Affections of Love and Delight, that are scattered up and down in all the Saints and Angels in Heaven, and to put forth the Extremity of those Affections towards the great and blessed God, in loving and delighting in him to the utmost of its Capacity; yet when that Soul hath acted with the greatest ardency of all these Affections towards

God, still is there more of Worth and Excellency in God, than all these Affections can reach unto, and infinitely more doth he still deserve to be loved and delighted in. It is true, a gracious Soul in Heaven shall have other Objects to delight in, as Saints and Angels, and the glorious place of its Habitation, the highest Heavens: But whatever Joy or Delight the Soul expresseth in or towards any of these Objects, it is because of the Divine Excellencies and Perfections that are communicated to them, and do shine forth gloriously in them. But still God is the chiefest Object of their Joy. Here on Earth a Saint's Joy is chiefly in God, Hab. 3. I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation. Psal. 34.2. My Soul shall make her boast in the Lord; Psal. 33.1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous. And if it be thus with the People of God here, much more will it be so with them in Heaven; that which is now their Duty, shall there be their eternal Reward, always to rejoice in God; for in his presence is fullness of Joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. And oh, what a support may this be to a Soul, that by the excess of its Joy and Delight in worldly Enjoyments, hath provoked God to hide his Face from it; and being sensible of its Sin, is returning unto God, seeking after him with weeping and mourning, because of its offending him; though as yet it cannot find God graciously smiling upon it. Go on still, O Soul, seek him, and mourn after him; and remember for thy Comfort, though weeping may endure for a night, yet joy will come in the morning; there is a time coming when thy Sorrow shall be turned into Joy; yea, when thou shalt have fullness and perpetuity of Joy in Conjunction; for it shall be that in which thou shalt bathe thy Soul with infinite Pleasure and Delight, to all Eternity.

I shall now close this Chapter with a short Discourse of that, which is a necessary addition unto all that hath been said, for the completing

the Saints Happiness in Heaven; and that is the perpetuity or eternity thereof. This is a Crown unto our Crown of Glory, that it shall be eternal. It is true, God is the chief Happiness of a Saint in Heaven; but though' God be the chief; yea, the only Happiness of glorified Souls, and Heaven itself were no Happiness to a Saint without God there; yet if it be not an eternal Enjoyment of God in Heaven, a Believer's Happiness there would be as it were no Happiness to him; for the greater the Good is that is enjoyed, if mixed with continual Fears of losing it, the less Joy and Delight is there unto any in the possessing of it; because the fear of being deprived of so great a Good abates so much of the Happiness and Comfort, that otherwise would accrue unto the Soul in the enjoying of it, that it makes it to be very little comparatively to what it would be. That which otherwise would be inexpressibly delectable in the Enjoyment, by our Fears of losing it, gives little Contentment to us while we are possessed of it. Now though there be just Cause for us to fear the loss of all earthly Enjoyments; and possibly it may be necessary, that God should suffer such Fears to prevail upon us, that worldly things may have less of our Hearts and Affections, and himself the more; yet as to Heaven, and the Happiness thereof, there is no ground for any such Fears: Nay, though the Happiness of Heaven be Ten thousand times greater than what we can promise ourselves in all worldly Enjoyments; yet that which adds to the excellency of that Happiness, is this, that it is a thousand times more certain, and secure than any worldly thing can be. The Happiness of Heaven is not only a full and complete Happiness, but it is also a secure Happiness: It is a full Happiness; holy Souls, though they are never satisfied till then; yet are they then fully satisfied. In Heaven there is a Cessation of Desire. In the enjoyment of God in that glorious Place, there is more of Happiness than the Soul is able to

receive or bear. And as this Happiness is full and satisfactory, so is it also secure; it is a Happiness that cannot be lost: The Gates of the New Jerusalem, that is of Heaven, are therefore said to stand open, to show there is no fear of any Enemies Approach to take away the Happiness of a Saint there. God will never take away the Happiness of a Saint from him; the Devil nor Sin cannot take it away; neither shall Man himself either lose or throw it away. The Happiness of a Saint in Heaven, is not like the Happiness of Man in Paradise, which was in his own keeping, and so was soon lost by him; but it is in God's hands, and so it cannot be lost. As the Power of God now preserves, and keeps a Saint for the enjoyment of Heaven; therefore, says the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1.5. You are kept by the mighty Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation. So the Love; the Grace, the Mercy of God, that hath bestowed the Happiness of Heaven upon them, will forever secure the Enjoyment of it to them. And as the Happiness of Heaven cannot be lost, so it shall never decay; it is therefore called by the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1.4. An Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away: And says the same Apostle, chap. 5.4. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away; neither Moth nor Thief comes there; neither internal nor external Means of Corruption or Decay. Here on Earth the sweetest Comforts soonest fade; as the sweetest Rose soonest withers But in Heaven, there's an eternal Freshness and Greenness upon a Saint's Blessedness. When glorified Souls have sung the Song of Moses and the Lamb Millions of Millions of Years, it is a new Song still, and as pleasant and delightful as ever. And that a Saint's Happiness may be perfect and complete, it is that which shall never have an end. Heaven is not a Tenement at Will; but an Inheritance purchased for the Saints by the Blood of Christ, and settled upon them forever. We know, says the Apostle, that when this earthly

house of our Tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 Cor. 5.1. And says our Lord, My Sheep hear my Voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal Life. Rom. 6.23. The Gift of God is eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Mortality is the Disgrace of all earthly Enjoyments. To a carnal Eye indeed the things of this World appear great and glorious; but the brevity and shortness of their continuance should not only disparage, but render them contemptible to a gracious Soul. No Man can greatly delight in that which he knows will quickly be taken from him. It must needs spoil our carnal Mirth and Jollity, when we find our pleasant and delightful things dying in our hands. No Man can cast a greater Reproach and Disgrace upon anything of the greatest Excellency, than to call it a frail perishing thing. Now such are all worldly Enjoyments, they will soon be at an end; for as the Apostle speaks, they pass away; yea, they will quickly not be at all. What says the Psalmist, Psal. 39.6. Surely every Man walketh in a vain show, he disquieteth himself in vain, he heapeth up Riches, and knows not who shall enjoy them? Why, wicked Men reckon that they themselves shall enjoy them: It is true they do so; but so short and uncertain is the Life of Man, that the Psalmist doth as it were pass by him that is the gainer of them, as one not fit to be mentioned for an enjoyer of what he hath taken so much pains for; because by that time he hath with great toil and labor; and, it may be, with a great deal of sin and guilt also, obtained what he desired, his Life is at an end, and he forced to leave it unto others; but who shall enjoy it, he knows not. O this shortness of our Lives: and the uncertainty of our Enjoyment of all worldly Things, should put a check to our eager pursuits after them, for they and we must soon part again. There may be indeed some ignorant and forgetful Persons, who may have no such sad and

melancholy. Thoughts to disturb them in their carnal Pleasures and Delights; and such may for the present be outwardly merry and jovial; but what will become of this Mirth and Jollity, when they come to lie upon a Death-bed? It will be but a poor relief, that the Thoughts of having enjoyed abundance of worldly Things, will yield unto any at such a time. It's a sorry Happiness, and that which deserves not the Name of it, that consists in an ignorance or forgetfulness of an approaching Misery. But now in Heaven a Saint's Happiness is eternal. Once in Heaven, and forever there. Oh, blessed Eternity! Happy are those Souls that arrive in that state of perfect Bliss; for none are there perplexed with any sad and melancholy Thoughts; nor are the Joys of those blessed ones interrupted with any Fears of the Expiration of their Happiness. All that enter into that holy Place become Pillars in the Temple of God, where they abide forever, Rev. 3.12. Him that overcometh, will I make a Pillar in the house of my God, and he shall go out no more. Into that earthly Paradise, wherein God put our first Parents, there was a way out, but no way in again. But into the Heavenly Paradise, there is a way in, even a pleasant and delightful way unto Believers, though a thorny and bloody way unto Christ: But there is no way out again. What says Abraham to the rich Man in Hell, Luke 16.26. They that would pass from hence unto you, cannot. What a strange kind of Expression is that? Can it be thought that any would pass from Heaven, a place of inexpressible Joy and Happiness, unto Hell, a place of inexpressible Misery and Torment, if they might? Certainly, Hell is not a place so desirable, nor is Heaven a place so contemptible, that any of those happy Souls that are now in Glory, should be desirous to make an Exchange of the Bliss and Happiness of the one, for the Pain and Torment of the other. No, that is not the meaning of the place; but it is an Expression spoken only to show the impossibility of the Saints

losing the Happiness of Heaven. They may as well be thought to be covetous of exchanging the Happiness of that blessed place, for the Anguish and Torment of the Damned in Hell; as it can be supposed that they should ever be deprived of the Happiness of Heaven; for says Abraham, if it were possible to suppose this of the Saints in Heaven, that they should be willing to do this, yet says he, They cannot; that is they cannot, nor shall not to Eternity ever lose the Happiness they enjoy in Heaven: Misery itself to Eternity may as soon be desired and embraced by them, as Happiness itself can be supposed to be parted with and lost by them. For they that would come from us to you cannot. Oh happy and blessed State, who would not with the greatest diligence contend to be a partaker of it?

O my Soul, loose then thy hold of the World, and all the Enjoyments thereof. All thy Pleasures and Delights here below, are but Dreams and Fancies, compared with what the Saints shall Eternally enjoy in Heaven: Cheerfully therefore quit thy Interest in what is but appearing and uncertain, for that which hath the greatest Reality and Permanency in it. Let it not grieve thee, that thou partest with thy dearest Friends and Relations; nay let it not trouble thee, though' thou partest with thy life itself, if thy parting with these, be the way of God's appointment through which thou must pass to enter upon that State and Condition, where not only all thy Fears and Troubles shall cease and come to an end; but where they shall all be changed into an Eternity of Joy and Delight, as they shall most certainly be in Heaven.

And now O Christian Reader, let me persuade thee for some little time once a day to withdraw thyself from the World, and the business and affairs thereof, and seriously consider with thyself of this great Word, or rather State of Eternity. Doth it not highly

concern thee; nay is there anything that can be of greater moment unto thee, than to know how it shall go with thee to all Eternity? Holy Souls are sure to enjoy a state of Eternal Happiness in Heaven; this the Scripture abundantly confirms, and thou thyself dost believe to be a great Truth; but is this state of Eternal Happiness like to be thine? hast thou it made sure unto thee upon such grounds as will not deceive thee another day? That an Eternal State doth abide thee is beyond all doubting, but whether is it a State of Eternal Happiness or Eternal Misery, is the great question thou art to be resolved in.

Consider O Soul, it is thy being Eternally in either of these states, that will make thee Miserable or Happy indeed. It is not thy being among the Damned in Hell, comparatively, that will make thee miserable, but thy being Eternally under the Torments of Hell, this is that which makes thee truly miserable. And on the other hand, it is not thy being in Heaven comparatively that will make thee Happy, but it is thy being Eternally there that makes thee truly Happy. This, this is that which Accents thy Misery or thy Happiness, even the Eternity of it. Oh Eternity, Eternity, thou art the bitterest, and thou art the sweetest word in all the World; to the Damned thou art the bitterest of all words, because their Torments are to last to all Eternity. And to the Godly thou art the sweetest word in all the World, for their Joys and Happiness shall last unto all Eternity. There is nothing either in Heaven or in Hell but what speaks Eternity. There is nothing in Hell but what is Eternal. Hell itself that place of Torment is Eternal. The Sufferings and Torments of the Damned in Hell are Eternal. The Wrath and Vengeance of God that is the cause of those Torments, in Eternal. Yea all the Damned themselves, together with the Devil and his Angels, are all to be sufferers under an Eternity of Torments in Hell. O Eternity, Eternity, how miserable beyond all expression, dost thou make the condition

of the Damned to be! And as there is nothing in Hell but what is Eternal, so neither is there anything in Heaven, but what speaks Eternity. There is the Great and Blessed God, the Father of Eternity, the Sum and Height of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, to be Eternally enjoyed. It is there that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saints great and blessed Redeemer is, whose Meritorious Death and Sufferings hath Deserved and Obtained for them the Eternal Enjoyment of that Happiness which there they are partakers of. Heaven that place of Bliss and Happiness, where God manifests and displays all his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections, is Eternal. The blessed Company and Society of a Saint in Heaven, the innumerable Company of Glorified Saints and Angels shall Eternally be their fellow Inhabitants in that Holy place. Yea, both the Happiness of Heaven, and every Saint that shall participate of that Happiness, shall both continue in conjunction together Everlastingly. Here, O my Soul, is a Happiness most worthy of all thy thoughts; a Happiness so great, that it calls for and deserves all thy Time, all thy Parts; yea, all the Labor and Pains thou canst possibly lay out for the obtaining of it. O Eternity, Eternity, how pleasant, how delightful a word art thou for Holy Souls to contemplate upon; thou art not more full of dread and horror to the wicked in Hell, than thou art full of pleasure and delight unto the Saints in Heaven; thou art the Sweetness, the Consummation, the Perfection of a Saint's Happiness. God himself, who is the All of a Saint's Happiness, if he be not enjoyed forever, cannot make a Saint always Happy. Unless an Eternity of Enjoyment be added to a Saint's Happiness in Heaven, he cannot be fully and completely Happy: It is true, whilst he enjoys the Happiness of Heaven, he is in a Happy state; but if Eternity be not added to that Enjoyment, a time will come when that Happiness shall cease and have an end. Take away Eternity from a Saint's Happiness, and there

not only will, but there must come a time, when a Saint must be miserable. O Eternity, Eternity, thou art not only a Happiness added to a Saint's Happiness in Heaven, but thou art that blessed Band that unitest and tiest all the scattered parcels of a Saint's Happiness together, in one bundle for his satisfaction and security forever. O my Soul study this word Eternity well, as it is the Crowning addition unto the Saints Happiness. It is that which will revive and quicken thee; yea, it is that which will put a new life into thee, in thy greatest Agonies and Sufferings which thou canst undergo here; for they are but of short continuance: Death at farthest, will come and put an end to them all. but the Glory and Happiness that remains for thee in Heaven that is Eternal and Everlasting, and shall never, never, never know an end.

CHAPTER V

Of the Efficient Cause of the Saints Happiness in Heaven.

Of the Efficient Cause of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, namely the Free Grace of God. Of the Meritorious Cause of the Saints Happiness, namely the Death and Sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of the Final Cause of the Saints Happiness, namely, the Glory of God. Holiness the Saints great Qualification for Heaven. Wicked Men unsuitable to the Work of Heaven, and to the Reward of Heaven; both which are Holy. In Heaven there is both an Eternal Work for Saints to be Employed in, and an Eternal Reward for Saints to Enjoy.

That which is next to be discoursed of in the handling of this Subject of the Saints Happiness, according to my propounded Method, is the consideration of that Happiness in the several causes of it.

Now in speaking unto this head, I shall discourse a little upon these three particulars. The Efficient Cause of the Saints Happiness in Heaven. The Meritorious Cause of that Happiness. And lastly, the Final Cause thereof.

First, The Efficient Fundamental Cause of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, and that is the Free Grace of God. Now for this the Scripture is very full Ephes. 2.4, 5, &c. But God who is rich in Mercy; for the great love wherewith he loved us. Even when we were dead in Sins and Trespases, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace ye are saved) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus. That in the Ages to come, he might show the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God. So in Rom. 6.23. The Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord. All is from the free Grace of God. And though this Happiness of the Saints be the highest that can be bestowed upon any, yet is it that which is given freely. What says our Lord, Luke 12.32. Fear not, little Flock, it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. This is to act like a God, to give most bountifully and yet most freely. To give the highest and best Gifts, and yet to give them freely and undeservedly. Thus God gives himself, Heaven, Glory, and Eternal Life freely. All that he doth for his people, from their first Conversion on Earth, unto their Eternal Glorification in Heaven, is all from his own free Grace and Good Will. Their Conversion is of Grace, James 1.18. Of his own good will begat he us by the Word of Truth. Their

Justification is of Grace, Rom. 3.24. Being justified freely by his Grace. Their Sanctification also is of Grace, Titus 2.11, 12, 13. The Grace of God that hath appeared unto all men, teacheth us that denying all ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present evil World. Yea, their Glorification also is of Grace, Rom. 9.23. That he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, that he had afore prepared unto Glory. The work of Heaven is to Praise and Glorify God forever; and nothing will draw forth the Praises and Thanksgivings of the Saints there so much, as the consideration of the freeness and richness of his Grace and Love. When a Soul is brought to Heaven merely by the free Grace and Love of God, and sees that Happiness it there enjoys, and shall do to all Eternity, is bestowed upon it on no other account, but from the free and undeserved Grace and Mercy of God. Oh how doth this enlarge and fill such a Soul with Praises unto God, and so will do to all Eternity, because free Grace and Mercy hath done it.

Secondly, There is the Meritorious Cause of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, and that is the Death and Sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not their Works, not their Prayers, their Tears, their Fasting's, their Alms deeds, no nor their Sufferings also. To make our Good Works the Purchase of Heaven, is a great wrong to the Blood of Christ. Whoever thinks by their Doing or Suffering, to merit Heaven and Salvation, they put their Duties and Services in the place of Christ; for he, and he only hath deserved Heaven and Glory for us. It is true, Good Works are the Causeway or Path-way in which we must walk towards Heaven, but they are not the Meritorious procuring Cause of our obtaining Heaven, that is only the Blood of Christ. Our Duty is to be zealous of Good Works, but when we have abounded most in the practice of them, we must rely on the Merits and

Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, for God's acceptance of them, and for our Happiness and Glorification after them. All that we do of ourselves, shows us to be sinful Servants: and all that we do when assisted by the Grace and Spirit of God, makes us still to be but unprofitable Servants, because we have done no more than what was our Duty to do. All our Duties and Services, even the best of them, are both Defective and Defiled, Defective of the good that God commands, and Defiled with the Evil that God forbids: now that which is Defective and Defiled, cannot be Meritorious: that which deserves Eternal Wrath and Vengeance in the doing of it, cannot by the doing of it, procure everlasting Grace and Favor. There are none of our Prayers we send up unto Heaven, but stand in need of the Intercession of Christ to make them prevalent with God. None of our Tears shed for offending of God by Sin, but wants the Blood of Christ to wash them, or else they are but puddle water. None of our Sighs but must be perfumed with the Incense of Christ, or else they are no better than howling in the Ears of God. Conscience can pick a thousand holes in the best Duties that ever any of us tendered unto God, and what then doth God see in them, who is a thousand times greater than our Consciences, and knows all things. Heaven and Glory accompany Grace and Holiness, not by virtue of any inherent Worth and Excellency in them to deserve so great a Happiness; but by virtue of a Promise that God hath made that those that do persevere in Grace and Holiness, shall inherit Eternal Life and Glory. God was a free Promiser, and he might have chose whether he would have made his People a Promise of Heaven and Happiness; and if he had not Freely and Graciously done it, it was not all their Duties, nor all their Sufferings, no nor all their Graces, that could have deserved or procured that Happiness for them. But since God hath so Freely and Graciously been pleased to make a Promise to his People of

Heaven and Glory, he is now become a Debtor to his own Promise, and he will be True and Faithful in keeping of his Word. And thus we are to understand those Scriptures that speak of the Justice and Righteousness of God, as that in 1 John 1.19. If we confess our sins, he is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins. So God is not unrighteous to forget your Labor of Love. So 2 Thes. 1.6. It is a Righteous thing with God, to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you; but to you who are troubled, rest. So 2 Tim. 4 6. Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give unto me at that day. In all these places, Justice and Righteousness is not to be taken for Commutative Righteousness; but for the Righteousness of God's Promise and Fidelity: and God is said to be a Righteous God in these places, because he will keep his Word, and make good his Promises made unto his People. And to note it by the way, what abundant matter of Joy and rejoicing doth this afford unto those who have true Grace; though but in a small degree, yet if it be in Truth, here is great comfort unto such Souls, because Grace doth not as a Natural Cause produce Glory; but by the Covenant and Promise of God; and so the weakest Grace may plead this as well as the strongest; and the lowest Believer may say, I have as good and as faithful a Promise for Heaven and Happiness, as the strongest. He that gives a Cup of cold water to a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, and because he belongs to Christ, he shall not lose his Reward, no not the Reward of Heaven and Glory. But yet still all a Believers merit, with respect to the Love and Favor of God here, and the Eternal enjoyment of him in Heaven, is in Jesus Christ; his Death and Sufferings is that which obtains all for him. Rom. 5.1, 2. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God. So in 1 Pet. 1.4, 5. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. And the Blessed Apostle St. Paul, who doubtless, (after his Conversion) was as Holy a man as ever lived, yet all his Glorifying and Rejoicing, all his Faith and Confidence, was only in Christ; I desire to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him Crucified. Cor. and in Phil. 3.3, 9. I count all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I suffer the loss of all things; and count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness of God by Faith. This was all St. Paul gloried in, that upon which he built his Hopes and Expectations of Heaven and Happiness; not upon any good works he had done, but upon what Christ had done and suffered for him, though he had whereof to Glory, as himself saith, yet he looked upon all as nothing, and desired only to be found in Christ. And whatever Conceit or Opinion sinners may have of themselves, and of the Merit of their Duties and Services, in their Health and Prosperity, when Death and Judgment according to their Apprehensions, seems to be many years distant from them; or whatever men may say in the heat of a Dispute concerning the Merit of their good Works; yet certainly, they will be of another mind, when Death lays hold of them with its cold hands, and when an awakened Conscience is hurrying them on to make their appearance before the Tribunal of the great God, the Righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth. There are few if any that are so bold and presumptuous as to boast of their Merits upon a Death-bed. No, Death and Judgment convince and alter men's minds, making them speak quite another Language than what they

did formerly. It is not then, Lord deal with me according to my Deserts, but Lord deal with me according to thy Mercy. Blot out mine Offences O Lord, not according to the Merit of a dying sinner, but according to the Merit of a dying Savior. This, this is the Language of a sinner upon a Death bed. Then a Bellarmine will confute himself and cry out, Oh it is safest trusting to the Merit of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, The final Cause of the Saint's Happiness is the Honor and Glory of God. We read Luk. 2.13, 14. when our Lord Jesus came into the World on this very Errand, that he might obtain eternal Redemption and Salvation for Sinners; the Angels those extraordinary Ambassadors of Heaven, proclaim the Tidings thereof to the Shepherds; saying, Glory to God in the Highest, on Earth Peace, and good Will towards Man. Not only is Man commanded to do all things for the Glory of God, but God himself doth all he doth with respect to his own Glory. As for Man, God made him for himself; and it is highly rational, that as the enjoyment of God is Man's highest Happiness, so his Glory should be his chief end; and unless this be a chief Ingredient into all our Duties and Services, they are neither acceptable to God, nor comfortable to us. The Scripture commands this as our great Duty, that we make the Glory of God our supreme End in all our Actions, Matth. 5.16. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your Good Works; for what end, that they may glorify your Father that is in Heaven. So, 1 Cor. 10.31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the Glory of God. Yea, in Heaven where the Saints shall be fully and completely happy; yet shall it be their eternal Exercise, to ascribe Blessing, Honor, Glory, and Praise unto him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore, Rev. 5.13. And not only is Man commanded to do all that he doth to the Glory of God, but God himself doth all he doth with respect to his own Glory. The Work of Creation, the Works

of Providence, the Work of Redemption; they are all transacted here in Time, and perfected in Eternity, that God thereby may be glorified.

Our next Enquiry shall be concerning the great Qualification of the Saints for Heaven, and that is Holiness.

Now by Holiness, I mean not any one single Grace wrought in the Heart of a Believer; but the universal Operation or Conjunction of all the Graces of the Spirit of God, wrought in the Soul of a Saint. Holiness is a real, inward, thorough Change wrought in the whole Man by the powerful Operation of the Spirit of God, whereby not only the Heart is purged from the Love of all Sin, and the Life from the Dominion and Practice thereof; but it is that also whereby the whole Man is carried out in Ways of Duty and Obedience, in the daily Exercise of Grace, till it be brought to eternal Glory in Heaven.

Now that Holiness is the great Qualification of a Saint for Heaven, the Scripture abundantly manifests, Psal. 15.1. Lord, who shall dwell in thy Tabernacle? Who shall ascend into thy Holy Hill? The next Words tell us, He that walketh uprightly, and worketh Righteousness, and that speaketh the Truth in His Heart. Matth. 5.6. Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God. Heb 12.14. Follow Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord. Heaven is so holy a Place, that no unclean thing shall in any wise enter therein. Acts 26.18. To open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. Sanctification and Holiness is the great Qualification of all those that shall partake of the Happiness of Heaven. Not that Holiness is the meritorious Cause of that Happiness; no, that is nothing but the Blood of Christ; Holiness is only that which qualifies,

and makes a Believer fit to partake of the Happiness of Heaven. And this is the meaning of the Apostle, Col. 1.12. Giving Thanks to God and the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. There is an absolute necessary connection between Holiness and Heaven; Holiness is Heaven, and Heaven is Holiness. Holiness is Heaven begun, and Heaven is Holiness consummated; they are but one and the same thing, though greatly differing in degrees: Holiness in a Saint here, is mixed with Sin and Corruption, and so is imperfect in this Life. But now in Heaven, Holiness shall be without Imperfection; there is nothing to oppose, or hinder the Holiness of a Saint: Holiness is there come to its full Growth and highest Perfection; for there is Holiness, and nothing but Holiness. Now Grace and Holiness in a Saint here, being the same with that Glory that is the expected Consummation of a Saint's Happiness hereafter; it shows the great necessity that there is, that all that desire to be happy hereafter, should endeavor to be holy here.

Now how Holiness qualifies for Heaven, and why it is so necessary to the obtaining of Heaven, will appear in two Particulars: One is, because Holiness and Heaven are one and the same thing: And the other is, because of the great unsuitableness between Heaven and an unholy Soul.

First, There is an agreeableness, yea, a sameness between Holiness and Heaven. The Glory of Heaven lies not in this; that a Saint shall there outshine the brightness of the Sun; that there he shall not be exposed to Heat, to Cold, to Nakedness or Want; that there he shall be free from Diseases, Sickness, and Death itself; that he shall not stand in need of Meat, Drink and Clothing; no, nor that he shall always be in the hearing of melodious Songs, and Hallelujahs of

Saints and Angels. These Things indeed are in Heaven, and a part of the Happiness thereof, as everything that the heart of Man can desire or imagine, that is truly excellent doth make up the Happiness of that blessed State. But that which chiefly constitutes. Heaven, is Holiness; there is a holy God, there is a holy Place, there is holy Company and Society; yea, everything that is holy, and nothing but what is holy. There it is that holy Souls shall be forever united to a holy God, by a continual fervor of holy Love; there it is that they shall always holily depend upon God, by holy and heavenly Acts of Faith and Hope. There it is that they shall eternally obey God with a holy Joy and Delight; and all this with the same holy Love, Faith, Hope and Joy, which they did put forth towards God here upon Earth; only in Heaven, these Graces shall be advanced and exalted above all those Imperfections and Frailties that in this Life did attend them. This now is the Glory of Heaven; and indeed what greater Glory can there be, than this; Holiness being the Glory of God himself: Thus Moses stiles God in his triumphant Song, Exod. 15.11. Where he tells us, though he be a God that is fearful in Praises, and infinite in Power; yet that wherein he is most glorious, is his Holiness: Who is a God like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the God's? Who is like unto thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises doing Wonders? And what is the Glory of the Saints in Heaven, but only a Reflection of the Glory of God cast upon them? Now as God is in an especial manner glorious in his Holiness, so are they glorious in their Holiness. And what then will become of all the hopes of wicked and profane Sinners, whose Hearts are full of Hatred and Malice, not only against those that are holy, but against Holiness itself; witness their impious and profane scoffing at Holiness; their persecuting all those that make a stricter Profession of it than themselves? What a strange kind of Heaven do these Men hope for? and how miserably do they

deceive themselves? for if Grace and Glory, if Holiness and Heaven be one and the same thing, as they are; then certainly all the hopes of such wretched Sinners, are built upon a rotten Foundation: For how can they that hate and persecute a little Holiness in a Saint on Earth, where it is mingled with much Sin and Corruption, take delight in Heaven, where there are greater measures and degrees of Grace and Holiness, than all the Saints that ever lived here upon Earth did, or could attain to in this World; yea, where there is nothing else but Grace and Holiness? In vain, O Sinner, dost thou wish or hope for a Heaven, where there is nothing but Ease and Pleasure; a Place where thou mayest be above all thy Cares and Fears; where thou mayest enjoy a constant Freedom from all thy Pains and Distresses, that now afflict and torment thee; such a Heaven as this is impossible; God never made any such, nor canst thou in reason expect it; but contrariwise know thou must to thy Terror and Amazement, that the great God hath joined sin and the curse so close together, that Heaven itself would be no Sanctuary to secure thee, either from the stinging Horrors of an Evil, and now too late awakened and accusing Conscience; nor from the ghastly and tormenting Fears of Wrath and Hell, if sin and guilt should enter with thee into that Holy Place.

Secondly, Holiness is a necessary Qualification for Heaven, because without it there is no suitableness between us and Heaven. All true Pleasure and Delight is caused from the suitableness that there is between the Object and the Power or Faculty in man that receives it. It is therefore a pleasant thing for the Eyes to behold the Light, and so is it also for the Ears to hear melodious sounds, because these Objects are suited unto those Senses, which otherwise would not be delightful to them; as we see in those that are Blind and Deaf; the one takes no Pleasure in the Light, nor the other in Music. And so it is with us in reference unto Heaven, there is nothing there would be

Pleasant and Delightful to us, did not God beforehand prepare and suit our Souls by his Grace unto that Glory, that shall there be revealed to us. Hence we find the Apostle, Col. 1.12. Giving thanks unto God, who by a work of Sanctification had made them meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. To illustrate this a little further, there is a twofold unsuitableness between every wicked man and Heaven; he is unsuitable to the work of Heaven, and he is unsuitable to the Reward of Heaven, both which are Holy.

First, Every wicked man is unsuitable to the work of Heaven. What shall be the work of Holy Souls in Heaven, but to admire and adore; to Bless and Praise, and with Pleasure and Delight to Love and Serve God forever: This is that joyful work wherein Saints and Angels shall spend an Eternity in. And canst thou, O Profane Sinner, who hast all thy life time accustomed thyself to wallow in sin and uncleanness, impose such a cheat upon thy Soul, as to think thou shalt be able to crowd into the number of that Holy and Blessed Company in Heaven, and there join with them, in those Holy and Blessed Works, that will be the Delight of those Holy ones to all Eternity? If Sanctification and Holiness be the only Qualification that manifests any do belong to that Holy Place, What shall we then say unto all wicked and profane sinners, who not only take no Delight in the practice of Holiness; but unto whom the thoughts of it are grievous and burthensome: who are so far from keeping up in their minds constant Meditations of Holy things, accompanied with strong and lively affections towards them; that they know no Task or Burthen so heavy upon them, nor so afflictive to them, nor that they undertake so unwillingly, as the Duties of Holiness and Obedience? Oh what a trouble to them is it sometimes to be drawn, though but to the external performance of Holy Duties? witness their so seldom engaging in them, with their so slight and careless management of

them. If I should now inquire what is the reason of all this; why truly, that which lies at the bottom of all, is, an unholy Heart, an unsanctified Nature: and what would such as these do in Heaven? would not that Holy place be a Hell rather than a Heaven to them? a place of Torment rather than a place of Happiness, it being that place where Saints and Angels spend an Eternity in the most Holy fixed Contemplations, and most ardent Love of God? And surely they that cannot bear the weak and imperfect Holiness of the People of God here without railing at it, as a piece of unnecessary and peevish preciseness, will never be able to bear that perfect spotless Holiness that is in Heaven. In this World, wicked men at once both vex and laugh at the Purity and Holiness of the Saints: inwardly they vex and fret at it, though outwardly in their Speeches and Countenances, they laugh and deride it. Yea, and to some it is, (though it be a Devilish) Contentment to them, that they can reproach the Defects of the Godly. Should such as these enter Heaven, while they are such, Heaven would be a place of exact Torture and Torment to them, because there they would find nothing of that Sin and Wickedness which is agreeable to their corrupt Hearts and Natures, but contrarily, all that Purity and Holiness, which they hate; yea, and nothing but perfect Purity and Holiness, which hath no defects for them to abuse. O the woeful and deplorable, but withal certain and unavoidable Misery of all unregenerate, unsanctified persons; for though' Heaven be a place of inconceivable Bliss and Happiness, yet Heaven itself cannot make such as they are happy. Tell me, O all ye wicked and profane wretches, who think no time misspent or lost, but what is thrown away in Holy Duties, that grudge at every word spoken in Prayer, that think much of every sand in the Glass that runs at a Sermon, and unto whom every Summons to the public Service of God is as unacceptable as their Passing Bell; that cry, when

will the Sabbath be gone, and the Ordinances be over? What would you do in Heaven, or what can such unholy hearts as yours do there, where a Sabbath shall not be barely as long as a day, or a week, or a year, but as long as Eternity itself? where there shall be nothing but a continual performance of Holy Duties and Services, without so much as one spare minute, or a vain thought, or an idle word forever? where whatsoever you shall hear, see or converse with, shall be all Holy. And let me add this, by how much the more perfect the Holiness of Heaven is, than what the Holiness of the Saints here on Earth was; by so much the more irksome and intolerable will it be to the wicked: for if their sore Eyes cannot endure the light of a Star, how will they be able to bear the dazzling brightness of the Sun?

Secondly, Wicked men are not only unsuitable to the Work of Heaven, but they are unsuitable to the Reward of Heaven. The Work of Heaven is Holy and Spiritual, and so is the Reward of Heaven a Holy and Spiritual Reward; and it lies chiefly in two things, both of them unsuitable to a wicked and carnal heart: one is a clear and constant Vision of the Great and Blessed God; and the other is an inconceivable entireness of Communion and Fellowship with him. Now of all things in the World, these are the things, which as unholy Persons are unacquainted with; so of all things in the World, they cannot endure, to speak of each of these briefly.

First, For the Reward of Heaven, that consists in a clear constant Vision of the Great God, this a Sinner cannot bear. Nothing is more terrible to a guilty Sinner, than the sight of a Righteous and Holy God. The Scripture acquaints us, that many of God's own People have had dreadful apprehensions of God upon some, though but restrained discoveries that he hath been pleased to make of himself unto them. Thus Job in Job 42.5, 6. I have heard of thee by the

hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye sees thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in Dust and Ashes. So the Prophet Isaiah cries out, Woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. And when our Savior put forth his Divine Power in the working of a Miracle, the Glory of it was so terrible, that Holy Peter cries out Luke 6. Depart from me O Lord, for I am a sinful man. What was it now that made these Holy Men so full of fear and trembling upon these discoveries of God? Why, it was only from a likeness that was in them unto Wicked men, from those remainders of Sin and Corruption that still abide in them, whereby they too much resemble ungodly men, which Grace in this life cannot perfectly destroy. Adam in Innocency had not, nor have the Saints in Heaven any such dreadful apprehensions of God. No, Adam then did, and the Saints in Heaven shall forever enjoy the smiles of God's face beaming forth upon them. If now the faint and weak discoveries of God, that he hath made of himself unto Holy Men, be so astonishing; O what a confounding sight will it be unto Sinners, to have all the Glorious Attributes of God break forth in a full flash of Lightning, not only upon the Faces, but into the Consciences of Sinners, and when particularly among the rest of them, they shall behold that dreadful Attribute, his provoked Justice, not only sworn but armed with Power, and bent for their Destruction. Is this such a Sight of God, (and wicked men shall behold no other) as will make Heaven desirable unto Sinners? surely it is not. O that such would think of it before it be too late!

Secondly, Another part of the Reward of Heaven stands in that inconceivable entireness of Communion and Fellowship with God, which the Saints there enjoy. This is their great Happiness both on Earth and in Heaven; Holy David therefore tells us, He had none in Heaven but God, and that there was none on Earth that he desired in

comparison of him. And the Apostle speaking of himself and other Believers, saith, Their Fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And O how sweet and delightful are those intercourses, that pass between God and Holy Souls in the Duties of his Worship and Service! O what blessed exchanges of Love for Love! what returns of Obedience and Praise for Grace and Mercy received, which is the sweetness of every Duty, and that which powerfully draws and engages Holy Souls to the daily performance of them! And in Heaven in self, the fullness and perfection of the Saints Happiness is, that there they shall be forever with the Lord. Now these Spiritual and Heavenly Enjoyments wicked men are not only unsuitable to, but they are things which they also hate, they were ever strangers to them here on Earth, and how then shall they be fit for them in Heaven. Certainly for wicked men to be tied up to such Spiritualities as these, will make Heaven itself but an uncomfortable place to them.

But though wicked Men are neither fitted for the Work nor suited to the Reward of Heaven; yet is there both a Work and a Reward in Heaven, that remains to be performed and enjoyed by the People of God. That Heaven is a Place of Rest, Ease, and Refreshment, is the common and received Notion that all Men have of it; but that is not all that the Happiness of Heaven is made up of: For it is not only a place of Rest; but it is also a place of Working. It is true, the Work there is not toilsome and laborious, but sweet and pleasant, and that makes the Saints delightfully spend an Eternity therein. In Heaven therefore the Saints are to perform an eternal Work, as they are there to enjoy an eternal Reward; both go to the making up the Happiness of Heaven.

First, In Heaven there is an eternal Work for the Saints to be employed in. Much hath been said concerning that Happiness, which the Saints shall enjoy in Heaven, and more is there of Sweetness and Excellency in it, than Words can express: But yet we are not so to conceive of the Happiness thereof as some ignorant Persons do grossly imagine and wish to themselves, as if Heaven were a Place where the blessed Inhabitants thereof were altogether unactive and unemployed, enjoying only their Ease and Rest; and so, void of Cares and Fears, passed away an Eternity. This may be the low and brutish Apprehensions that profane Sinners may have concerning Heaven; but they are such as are no way becoming the Glory and Dignity, the Honor and Happiness of that holy Place; for that Rest the People of God shall enjoy in Heaven, is an operative, working Rest, or it is Rest and Exercise at once; for though in Heaven the Saints do rest from their labors, yet they do not rest from their working. Now if any ask what that Work is, in which the Saints shall be employed in Heaven. I answer, they shall always be blessing and praising of God there, according to that in Rev. 5.13. Blessing, Honor and Glory unto him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for evermore. Continually are those blessed ones beholding, admiring and adoring of God, and burning in Love to each other, and mutually rejoicing all in God, and in one another. This now is that eternal Work that a Saint shall be forever employed about, in his everlasting Rest: a Work so full of Pleasure and Delight, that it cannot be intermitted or forborne by the Saints to Eternity.

Secondly, In Heaven there is an eternal Reward that shall be bestowed upon the Saints. A Reward so great, and so glorious, as is beyond the Thoughts and Imaginations, much more beyond the Words and Expressions of poor mortal Creatures to discover. When all hath been said of it that can be, still is there something of Glory

and Excellency, of Sweetness and Delight in this glorious Reward, that exceeds all Expressions and Apprehensions: Rack and torture the whole Creation; extract the Quintessence of all the Glory, Beauty, Excellency, and Goodness that is in all the Creatures in the World; and let it be the Enjoyment of one Man for his Happiness; yet all this is but a shadowy representation of that Glory and Happiness that the Saints shall enjoy hereafter. Let the Desires, Thoughts, and Imaginations of Angels and Men; be bent upon imagining and contriving what it is they could desire, that would make the condition of any one happy in the Fruition of it; the heavenly Reward there, shall be a participating of that Happiness, or that which is infinitely better and beyond it. The Desires of Men's Souls may run out after great things; which if they can attain, they question not but the Enjoyment of them will make them happy. But Men's Imaginations can go much farther, even to the coveting after that in their Thoughts, that they cannot tell how almost to desire: But let the Desires and Imaginations of Men's Souls be enlarged and widened never so greatly and insatiably after a Happiness that may satisfy and content them; yet still they come infinitely short, both in Desire and in Imagination, of what shall be the heavenly Reward. And if Desires, if Thoughts, if Imaginations cannot reach the Greatness of this Reward: Surely all Words, though uttered with the greatest Eloquence, to represent the Greatness: and Excellency thereof, must fall infinitely short of it. So many good things are contained in this Reward, that they exceed Number: So great things, that they exceed Desire; and so precious, that they exceed Estimation. Nay, this Reward of the Saints is so great and glorious, that it exceeds both the Faith and Hope of a Christian. The People of God believe, and trust in God for great things; and God loves to have the Hopes and Expectations of his People greatened and enlarged towards himself.

Of Abraham it is said, that against Hope, he believed in Hope, or above Hope. But in this great and glorious Reward of the Saints in Heaven, we cannot believe above Hope; that is, we cannot believe above the great things that are hoped for. Whatever we believe and hope for in Heaven; that which the Saints shall enjoy there, will be above it and beyond it. It is true, at present we know not what these great things are; but when we come to Heaven, we shall certainly find that they exceed both our Faith and our Hope. And to add no more, the Greatness and Glory of this Reward, is that which exceeds all those Expressions, which the Spirit of God, in Scripture, is pleased to set forth the Greatness and Glory of it to us by. Great Things are there spoken concerning this Happiness of the Saints: But there is still abundantly more to be revealed and enjoyed, than what that Holy Book hath discovered to us; so great shall be the Reward of the Saints in Heaven, that it exceeds Words, exceeds Thoughts, exceeds Faith, exceeds Hope: It is too great for Words to express, too great for Thoughts to conceive, too great for Faith to believe, too great for Hope to expect: For though Faith believes the Truth, and Hope expects the Certainty of the things promised; yet Faith doth not believe, nor doth Hope expect the Greatness and Fulness of what shall be hereafter enjoyed by the Saints: For saith the Evangelical Prophet, from whom the Apostle makes use of the same Words, Isa. 64.4. and 1 Cor. 2.9. Since the beginning of the World, Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear; neither hath the Eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for them that love him, and wait for him. So great shall this Happiness of the Saints in Heaven be, that it can never be known but by Enjoyment. There shall be nothing to Eternity, that shall be afflictive or troublesome; but an aggregation, or meeting together of everything that is pleasing and delightful, with the continuance of them forever. That is a sweet

Scripture, and gives us the fullest Description of that State of Blessedness, in so few Words, Rev. 21.17. He that overcometh, shall inherit all things, and God will be his God. And what can be said more to make any one happy? For in this Scripture, we have both the certainty of a Saint's Reward, and the Fulness of it; the certainty of his Reward, in these Words, He shall inherit, I will be his God: The fullness of it, in these Words He shall inherit all things, and God will be his God; and who can tell what God is, or what it is to have this God to be our God; and truly no more are we able to tell what it is to have the Heaven of God to be ours; and as God himself, so the Heaven in which God dwells; both which shall be the Reward of the Saints hereafter, by reason of their infinite Greatness and Glory, are better known to us by what they are not, than by what they are; and we may best conceive of that Recompence of Reward that the Saints shall partake of in Heaven, when we are told there is nothing there that may affright or afflict us, nothing that may grieve, molest, or trouble us; but an everlasting Enjoyment of the highest and sweetest Delight, and Satisfaction, that the now, but much more then, vast and capacious Soul of Man can receive, desire, or imagine.

Art thou now. O Soul, oppressed with the grievous and intolerable burden of thy Sins, those daily, though also unavoidable Infirmities, by which thou dishonorest God, grievest his Spirit, woundest thy own Conscience; under which thou criest out, as a Man distracted: O wretched Man that I am, where, and by whom shall I find Deliverance: Why, assure thyself, the Old Man shall never more molest thee in Heaven; there is no Entrance for this Body of Sin and Death into Life: All the motions and stirrings of Sin shall forever cease in that eternal Rest. Art thou now overwhelmed with Grief and Sorrow; and doth the smart of one Affliction no sooner wear off, but the bitterness of another comes in the room of it; and is there thus

daily a Succession of them one after another, for the Trial and Exercise of thy Patience: So that thou mayest say, thou art continually a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; as thy Lord and Master was before thee? Why, in Heaven God shall wipe away all Tears from thy Eyes, and Sorrow and Sighing shall forever fly away. Art thou now continually harassed with Temptations? Will not the Evil One let thee rest Day nor Night, but is perpetually haunting thee with horrid and blasphemous Thoughts, as black as Hell itself can invent? In Heaven thou shalt not only be out of the reach of his fiery Darts, but shalt have an ever living Fountain within thy Soul, that shall be eternally springing up in such spiritual Contemplations and heavenly Raptures, beyond whatever thou wert acquainted with in thy State of Mortality, even when thou wert in the most spiritual and heavenly Frame. Art thou here under Clouds and Desertions? And doest thou walk up and down mournfully and disconsolately for want of the Light of God's Countenance, and the manifestations of his Love and Favor towards thee? Doth God seem to hide his Face from thee in Anger and Displeasure, so that thou roarest and criest out by reason of the Disquietness of thy Soul? Why, in Heaven all those Clouds shall vanish away, and thou shalt have such clear and full Discoveries of God's Love and Favor, and the Light of his Countenance shall beat so fully and everlastingly upon thee, that it is impossible thou shouldst be under the least Fears or Doubting's thereof forever: For thou shalt then no more see him through a Glass darkly, but Face to Face, without any interruption or obscurity to all Eternity. This now is something of that great and glorious Reward, that shall be bestowed upon the Saints in Heaven; but the fullness and perfection of it cannot be known but by Enjoyment.

CHAPTER VI

An Essay Towards the Resolution of Some Questions.

An Essay towards the Resolution of some Questions; as (1.) Whether the Saints shall know one another in Heaven. (2.) Whether there are different Degrees of Glory in Heaven. (3.) How the Saints are said to be equal with, and like unto the Angels in Heaven. (4) In what respects Heaven is called a Reward or Recompence. Some Useful and Necessary Inferences from the Consideration of that Happiness the Saints shall enjoy in Heaven, deduced in order unto Practice, as, (1.) Hopes of Heaven should make the World contemptible unto Believers. (2.) None that expect Heaven hereafter, should be offended at anything they meet with in their way thither. (3) Expectations of Heaven should make Christians live as those that are Heirs of so great a Happiness. (4.) Frequent Thoughts and Meditations of Heaven, should possess the Minds of those that Hope to partake of the Happiness of Heaven. (5.) The greatness of the Happiness of Heaven should put Christians upon examining themselves what Right and Title they have thereunto. (6.) Hopes and Expectations of Heaven hereafter, should reconcile to Believers the Thoughts of their own Death: and moderate their Sorrows for the Death of their Godly Friends and Relations. (7.) Hopes of Heaven should put Christians upon unwearied Diligence that is attended with such a Reward. (8.) The consideration of so great a Happiness as Heaven is, should cause in all Believers a Holy longing of Soul after the Enjoyment of it. The Conclusion.

That which remains to be Discoursed of before we come to the Conclusion of this delightful Subject, is to endeavor to give some light into, though not full Solution of, some Questions, the Answering whereof will tend much to the further illustration of the greatness of the Saints happiness in Heaven. And here,

First, Some may be inquisitive, whether the Saints shall know one another in Heaven or not?

To this I Answer, it is highly probable that the Saints shall know one another in Heaven. Were Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, Peter, John, with all the rest of the Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs of God in all Ages, of whom we have either read in Scripture, or heard of in History, who have been Eminent in Grace and Holiness, some for their Humility, some for their Meekness, some for Faith, some for Patience, some for Self-denial, some for Zeal, some for Contempt of the World, and the like: were all these Blessed Saints of God living together at one time and in one place here on Earth, as they now are in Heaven; would not every Godly man be greatly desirous if it were possible, to see them and to live with them, especially if there were none but such among them, that they might be particularly and distinctly acquainted with them, and would not this Knowledge tend much to their Delight and Satisfaction? surely it would. And is it Irrational to suppose, that when all the Saints that have lived from the beginning of the World unto the end of it, shall all meet together in Heaven, that they might be desirous of a particular Knowledge of one another then? Or was it so Delightful, and therefore so desirable a thing, to be acquainted with the Saints of God, particularly when they lived here on Earth, when they were men of like Passions and Infirmities, as we now are? And will it not be a much more desirable

thing to have a particular acquaintance with them in Heaven, when all their Sins and Imperfections shall be done away, and they have nothing in them but the fullness and perfection of that Grace and Holiness, the Initials and Beginnings whereof, makes the Knowledge and Society of them so desirable here on Earth? Now certainly if this be a thing desirable in Heaven, as I humbly conceive it is a thing very probable; why, then it will follow, that Satisfaction and Contentment herein shall not be wanting in Heaven, for in Heaven there shall be no desire in Holy Souls, that are Holy and Regular, (and in Heaven there shall be none but such) that shall be unanswered or unsatisfied.

But further the Scripture seems inclining this way, that the Saints in Heaven shall know one another; and that not only those who lived together here on Earth, but all those whoever did, or shall live upon God's Earth, may be known to one another in Heaven: When God had created Adam he threw him into a deep sleep, and of one of his Ribs which he then took out of him, he formed Eve and brings her unto Adam, who as soon as he saw her, presently knew her and what manner of Creature she was, and therefore says of her, she is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; and how came Adam by this Knowledge? why, it was by being filled with the Holy Ghost, by which he understood in an extraordinary manner who she was. Why, now after the same manner, say some, shall the Saints be renewed by Christ in Heaven, and thereby come to know their Godly Friends and Relations; yea, and all the Saints of God in Heaven, much more perfectly than Adam did know Eve. So in Luke 16. which some take to be a History, others only a Parable: if it be a History, it is plainly said there of Abraham, that he knew Lazarus, and of Lazarus that he knew Abraham, and yet they lived near two thousand years distance in time one from the other, so that they could not know one another

on Earth, and yet are they said to know one another in Heaven. If it be only a Parable, yet by it Abraham the Father of the Faithful, is represented as one that had Knowledge, both of the person and happy condition in which Lazarus was: by which some say is represented the Knowledge Saints shall have of one another in Heave. We read also Matt. 17.4. that when the three Disciples were with Christ at his Transfiguration, there appeared unto him Moses and Elias, whom the Apostles knew, for they say unto him, Let us build here three Tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias: and yet it is very apparent that the Apostles never saw Moses, nor Elias in the Flesh.

Again, If the Saints shall not know one another in Heaven, why is it made by our Lord a part of the Saints Happiness hereafter, that they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven? Matt. 11. Memory in Heaven shall not be abolished but perfected; neither shall our Knowledge there be impaired, much less extinguished, but greatly enlarged and increased.

In Heaven Saints enjoy every good thing, and partake of every good gift that may add to their Joy and Felicity; will now the meeting with and knowing of our former near Acquaintance, and dear Relations, together with all the Glorious Inhabitants of that Heavenly Place, tend to the increasing of that Joy and Delight that shall there fill and ravish the Souls of the Blessed; surely it will; Society being nothing so Comfortable, without intimacy of Familiarity and Acquaintance. It being thus now, it is very probable there shall be a Knowledge in the Saints of one another hereafter.

Certainly now from all that hath been said, and more that might be added, we may conclude it highly probable, that the Saints in Heaven

shall have a distinct Knowledge of one another's Persons, since nothing requisite unto the Happiness of that Blissful place shall or can be wanting to the Inhabitants thereof.

To conclude this head, though a Saint's chief desire to be in Heaven, should be, and always is, that he may see God, and that he may be with the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore with his Soul he cries out as the Psalmist, He hath none in Heaven but God; and with the Apostle, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all: yet this may add a little to the quickening of his desires Heaven-ward, the consideration of his being admitted into the blessed Society of all the Saints and People of God from the beginning of the World unto the end of it; even those who were once the excellent ones of the Earth; and now next unto God and Christ, are the most Excellent and Delightful Company in Heaven, who shall there be particularly and distinctly known, beloved and delighted in by him to all Eternity.

Secondly, Another Question is this, Whether there shall be different Degrees of Glory in Heaven or not? Now in Answer unto this Question, I find Holy and Learned Men have different apprehensions, some positively affirming it, others strongly denying it; and both pleading Scripture to maintain their Assertions. Those that affirm there shall be different Degrees of Glory in Heaven, urge such Scriptures as these in the defense of it. Daniel 12.3. where it is said, Some shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and others as the Stars forever and ever. So Matth. 25.28, 29. We read that he that received five Talents and made a good improvement of them, received a greater Reward than he that received but two, though he improved them also. So, Corinth. 15.41. The Apostle tells us, That one Star differeth from another Star in Glory, and adds

withal, that, So it shall be in the Resurrection of the Dead. So in Matt. 5.11, 12. our Savior bids those that were persecuted wrongfully for his Names sake, to Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great should be their Reward in Heaven. Those now that are against different Degrees of Glory, they urge such Scriptures as these in the defense of their Opinion, Matt. 13.43. where our Lord speaking indefinitely of the Righteous, tells us, That they shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, without mentioning any different Degrees of Glory that some shall partake of more than others. So in Luke 20.36. Our Lord speaking concerning the happy State of the Godly after the Resurrection, tells us, that they shall die no more, but shall be equal unto the Angels, and how can they in that State of Bliss, be equal to the Angels, and yet unequal among themselves. So again in that place Matt. 20. where the Laborers in the Vineyard are all said to receive a like Reward, though for different Work and Labor; for so we read, at evening when the Lord of the Vineyard came to reckon with his Servants, he gave them everyone a Penny, making those that came in at the last hour, equal with those that had born the heat and burden of the day: rendering this as a Reason for what he had done, that he was free and might do what he would with his own.

These now are some of those Scriptures that are made use of for and against this assertion of the Saints having different Degrees of Glory in Heaven. Which is the Truth I shall not affirm. I am inclinable to believe, that there shall be different Degrees of Glory in Heaven: But withal let me add, though' it is possible that some may have greater Degrees of Glory than others, yet all shall partake of the same Happiness; nay, all shall have as much of Glory and Happiness as they can contain; though one Vessel may hold more than another, yet all shall be as full as they can hold; nay further, which is yet more, all

the Saints in Glory shall enjoy the Happiness of Heaven, in the same perpetuity one as well as another, for Eternity shall be the measure of all their Happiness. But whether there shall be different Degrees of Glory in Heaven hereafter or not, yet may the People of God at present. make this double improvement of it.

First, If there shall be different Degrees of Glory in Heaven, then the consideration hereof, should excite Christians to labor after the highest Degree of Grace that is attainable in this life; because this is the way to increase their Glory in Heaven. And surely to be ambitiously covetous after the highest place in Heaven, is very commendable in any. Who would not be desirous to have his Seat in that Heavenly Jerusalem, next to Cherubim's and Seraphim's, shall Isaiah; nay, if it were possible to possess that very place in Heaven that the Beloved Disciple St. John held here upon Earth, when he lay in the Bosom Embraces of our Lord Jesus Christ? If our growth and increase in Grace shall certainly be the increase of our Glory and Happiness hereafter, who is there then that would be so ill a Husband to himself, as not to stir up and put forth the Grace of God that is in him, which will prove so greatly advantageous to him in the life to come? If to be found in the daily exercise of Grace, a Christian is thereby doing that which will adorn and enrich that Crown of Glory that shall hereafter be set upon his own head; who then would be so slothful and negligent as not to promote and heighten what in him lay, his own Happiness and Glory?

Secondly, If there shall be no different Degrees of Glory in Heaven, but all the Saints shall there be of the same Pitch and Stature; Oh then what matter of Joy and Consolation may it be unto thee O weak Believer to consider, that though now thy Grace be poor and weak, thy Fears and Doubts be many, thy Corruptions restless and

importunate, thy Temptations strong and potent, and almost irresistible; though thou seest thyself out-done by many in the ways of Holiness, whom thou greatly admirest, and wouldst with all thy Soul imitate and follow; yea, overtake and equal in their pace to Heaven, but thou canst not: yet know for thy Comfort, that at the last Day, the same Sentence of Absolution that is pronounced upon others, shall acquit and Absolve thee also. The same Heaven that shall be opened unto others for their Eternal Blessedness, shall be opened to receive thee into that Blessed State with them. Yea the same Crown of Glory that is set upon their heads, shall forever Crown thy head also. So that there shall be no difference between thee and all the Holy Patriarchs, Prophets, and Saints of God in all Ages of the World, but thou shalt shine in Glory as a Star of the same Magnitude, and with the same Brightness forever.

Thirdly, Some upon the reading of those words of our Savior, Luke 20.36. Where he tells us, that at the Resurrection of the Saints, which he there calls, the Children of God, and the Children of the Resurrection, shall be equal unto the Angels; may be desirous to know how, or in what respects shall the Godly then be like unto, or equal with the Angels.

To this I Answer, they shall be like the Angels in these following particulars.

First, Saints in Heaven shall enjoy the same Glory and Happiness which Angels do. The Great and Blessed God who is the Delight and Happiness of Angels, shall be the Delight and Happiness of the Saints also: in one and the same place shall they both partake of one and the same Blessedness, and that is in Heaven, and in the same Work and Employment shall they both spend an Eternity together,

namely in Blessing and Praising, in Magnifying and Adoring the infinitely Great and Blessed God. See for this, Revel. 7.9, 11, 12. where the Saints are said, to stand before the Throne of God, crying with a loud voice, Salvation unto God and to the Lamb. And the Angels also standing round about the Throne of God crying Amen, Blessing, Honor, Glory, and Power be unto God forever and ever, Amen.

Secondly, The Saints in Heaven shall be like unto the Angels in their Fitness to serve God, and in their Readiness, Cheerfulness, and Unweariedness in so doing. This is one of the great requests our Lord hath taught us to offer up unto Heaven in our Prayers, That the Will of God may be done by us on Earth, as it is done in Heaven, that is as the Angels do it in Heaven, who do it Readily, Cheerfully, Universally, and Constantly: And thus shall the Saints serve God and do his Will when they come to Heaven. Here the People of God often complain, that their Spirits are held down by the Flesh, so that though they have a willing mind, yet how to perform that which is good as they would, they find not: the Spirit indeed in them is willing, but the Flesh is weak: Oh how do they therefore mourn under the impediments of Nature, with which they are loaded and oppressed! And if at any time they do attain to a more than ordinary height and frame of Spirit, that their Souls are a little lifted up in the ways of God, yet is it with great difficulty that they arrive thereunto, and with much more difficulty that they preserve and keep themselves in it. But in Heaven the Saints shall be freed from all Infirmities of the Flesh, and shall Glorify God as the Angels do with Readiness and Activity, with Constancy and Unweariedness, and with all perfections of Soul and Body, that may render their Services acceptable to God, and delightful to themselves.

Thirdly, The Saints in Heaven shall be like unto the Angels in their way of living: What that is our Lord himself tells us, Luke 20.36. Where speaking of the State of the People of God after the Resurrection, he says, They neither Marry nor are given in Marriage, neither can they die anymore. By which expressions our Savior gives us to understand, what kind of Life the Saints shall live in Heaven, a life like unto that of the Angels, who have no manner of Converse with, live not on the use of or in dependence upon any Creature-Comforts or Enjoyments; but solely and entirely live upon God, maintaining constant Converse with Him, everlastingly beholding his Glory, and with infinite Joy and Delight, solace themselves forever in him. And thus shall Glorified Saints also live forever in Heaven, their Bodies shall no more stand in need, or make use of any Earthly supplies, as Food, Physic, Raiment, nor shall their Souls express anymore Desires to, or Longings after any Created things; but as the Angels they shall be forever possessed of God, being filled with that fullness that is in him. All the Powers and Faculties of their Souls shall then be Refined and Spiritualized, and with unspeakable Joy and Delight, shall they Please and Solace themselves in the Contemplation and Participation of the Infinite and Supreme Good. And thus it appears, that the Saints in that Happiness which they enjoy in Heaven, shall be like unto the Angels.

Fourthly. Another thing to be inquired into, is, In what respect Heaven is called a Reward or Recompence?

To this I Answer, It is true, the Scripture doth in many places hold forth Heaven to us as a Reward or Recompence, that shall be bestowed upon the People of God after they have done and suffered the Will of God here; but, First, not by way of Merit: Heaven and Eternal Life shall be given unto those who now are diligent and

laborious in the Work and Service of God; but yet that labor and diligence in the Work and Service of God, doth not deserve Heaven and Eternal Glory, nor shall they as such be bestowed. God indeed will not be served by any without a Reward, neither shall those that do sincerely, zealously, and perseveringly Serve and Glorify him, miss of the Reward of Eternal Life, but yet it is not therefore bestowed upon them, because by those Services they deserve it at the hands of God. Even natural Conscience in Man, would blush and be ashamed to think of demanding Heaven as a Reward for any work done by him. To make Works Meritorious of Reward from another, there are four things requisite. They must be first, a Mans own Works, done by himself. Secondly, Such as are not due from him by whom they are performed. Thirdly, They must be such as are beneficial. And Lastly, Such Works as bear a proportion to the Reward bestowed upon the doing of them. Now in all these Respects, the Duties and Services that the People of God perform unto him, are wanting, and therefore cannot be meritorious of an eternal Reward.

First, Works that are meritorious, must be our own; that is, such Works as are performed by ourselves, and with our own strength and ability. What we are enabled to do by the Assistance of another, by that we cannot properly be said to merit anything from him by whom we are so assisted. Now all the good Works that any of the Saints perform unto God, and are followed by him with the Reward of eternal Life, they are such as are not performed in their own strength, but by those assistances which God by his Spirit is graciously pleased to vouchsafe to enable them thereunto. All our Sufficiency the Scripture attributes unto God: Without me, says Christ to his Disciples, you can do nothing, John. 15.5. And it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good Pleasure, Phil. 13. And 2 Cor. 5.3. We are not sufficient as of ourselves to think

anything, but all our Sufficiency is of God. Now if in all that we do, we are enabled by God unto the performance of it, we cannot by so doing (and we cannot do anything that is good any other ways) merit the eternal Recompence of Reward.

Secondly, Works that are meritorious, must be such as are not due from him by whom they are performed unto him from whom he expects to merit. All Works or Actions that are not above Duty, are always below Merit. What says our Lord, Luk. 17.10. Say when you have done all those things that are commanded you, We are but unprofitable Servants, and we have done but that which was our Duty to do. He that owes a Debt to another Man, by making payment of that Debt, dischargeth indeed his Obligation to that Man; but he doth not thereby put an Obligation upon that Man unto whom he pays what he owed, because it was no more than what was his due. The Case is the same between God and us, all that we do; nay all that we can possibly do, is all due unto God; and therefore by giving him any Work of Obedience, we cannot oblige God to bestow upon us eternal Recompences. Nay further, in all we do, we come infinitely short of what is our Duty to give unto God; and how then can we by doing what we ought to do; nay, by coming infinitely short of what we ought to do, deserve that Heaven should be bestowed upon us? Now that all that we can do is due unto God, the Scripture is very plain and clear; for he is the Fountain of all our Lives and Beings: In him, says the Apostle, we live, we move, and have our Beings. Now we being God's, not only by Creation, as we are his Creatures, receiving our very Lives and Being from him; but being his also by Redemption, receiving from him our spiritual Life and Strength for all that we either are or can do: Whatever we do therefore cannot be meritorious or deserving from him; much more not meritorious of Heaven and Happiness.

Thirdly, Works that are meritorious, must be such as are beneficial unto him to whom they are performed. All Actions that do not bring in some Advantage unto him to whom they are performed, cannot be meritorious. Now upon this Account, it is impossible that any Creature should merit at the hands of God; for as Job speaks, Job 23.2, 3. No Man can be profitable unto God, neither is it gain unto him that any Man's Ways are perfect Our Righteousness, as the Psalmist speaks, extendeth not unto him, Psal. 16.3. By all our Services God receives nothing. He is not worshipped, as the Apostle speaks, by any of his Creatures, as if he needed anything, Acts 17.25. The Sun in the Firmament receives nothing by our looking upon it, nor the Fountain by the thirsty Passengers drinking of it. We indeed receive benefit by both; for by looking on the Sun, we receive Light and Warmth; and by drinking of the Fountain, we are cooled and refreshed; but neither of them receive any Advantage by us. And so it is in the present Case; our Benefit and Advantage in serving of God is great, much Peace, much Joy, much Strength comes thereby, Scripture and the Experience of Saints abundantly confirm it. Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them, Psal. 119.165. God always is, and will be a Rewarder of them that diligently seek and serve him, Heb. 11.6. But none of our Services are advantageous unto God. He is infinitely above all the Praises and Services of Men or Angels. Who hath given unto God, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? The Apostle speaks it by way of challenge unto all the Creatures, from the highest Angel in Heaven, to the meanest Creature on Earth, Rom. 11.25. The Notion of a God and Creatures, cuts off all Obligation that can be thought of by any Service that Creatures can tender unto him. God is infinite in Happiness by and from himself, and therefore stands not in need of our Services, nor can we merit anything of him, much more not

eternal Life; because we cannot do anything that may profit or advantage him.

Fourthly, Works that are meritorious must bear some proportion to the Reward or Recompence that is bestowed upon the doing of them. Now in this respect also, nothing that the people of God do in this World, can be Meritorious of Heaven and Eternal Happiness; because there is no comparison between the best of their Services, and the Happiness-of Heaven, which God bestows upon them after the performance of them. I reckon, says the Apostle, Rom. 8.18. That the Sufferings of this present Life, and truly the Sufferings of a Christian as they are his most painful and laborious Works, so are they the most deserving Works, or part of a Christian's Life; and yet says the Apostle, I reckon that the Sufferings of this present Life, are not worthy to be compared to the Glory that shall be revealed: And if the Apostle had put in all the Duties and Services, yea and all the Graces of the People of God into the Account, his Reckoning had been true: for all of them put together, are not worthy to be compared to, nor Meritorious of, the Glory that shall be Revealed. Remarkable is that Expression of the Apostle, Rom. 6.23. The wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life. Sin merits and deserves Death, but Eternal Life is the Gift of God; yea, such a Gift as excludes all pretense of Merit, for says the Apostle, it is the Free Gift of God, and not only so, but it is the Free Gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. By Voluntary Constitution and Designation of God, Eternal Life is the Reward of Holiness; Death is the Reward of Sin as it merits and deserves it; but Eternal Life is the Reward of Holiness, merely by the bountiful Liberality of God. Hence we read in the 21. Verse of the Epistle of Jude, that the People of God are said, to look for the Mercy of God unto Eternal Life. Heaven and Glory shall be dispensed to the Saints at the last day by the Mercy of God. It was

free Grace and Mercy that implanted Grace in the Hearts of the People of God at the first; and it shall be Free Grace that shall put the Crown of Glory upon their heads at the last. Without the Mercy of God there is no expectation of the least Degree of Happiness in Heaven. Hence therefore we read that the Apostle St Paul 2 Tim. 1.17, 18. when under restraints and straits, and Onesiphorus finding him out and relieving him, to testify his Gratitude for his Kindness, he prays for Onesiphorus, that he may find mercy with God at the last day. And surely this Prayer of the Apostle was not in vain, but will be answered to the Honor and Advantage of Onesiphorus another day. That which I quote this Scripture for, is those words in the Prayer of the Apostle for Onesiphorus, that God would grant he might find Mercy of the Lord in that day. Some would have thought this Prayer of the Apostle had been more proper for Onesiphorus, if he had been some notorious Malefactor, or Persecutor of the People of God, as himself once was, some common Drunkard or Unclean Person; if then he had Prayed that he might have found Mercy of the Lord at the last day, this had been a Prayer suitable both to his Sin and Misery. But the Apostle knew very well, that even a good man, a Diligent Worker, a Liberal Benefactor to the Servants of God, as Onesiphorus was, stands in need of Mercy from God, as well as others: And that it is the Free-Grace and Mercy of God, and not the Duties, the Prayers, the Alms of any, that must save them: and therefore says the Apostle, The Lord grant unto Onesiphorus that he may find Mercy of the Lord at that day. Mercy must save the Holiest man to all Eternity, as well as Convert the greatest Sinner. There is considerable in Heaven, not only the Glory of it in opposition to our Misery, but the Mercy of God in bestowing of it, in opposition to our unworthiness; and without the Mercy of God there is no Expectation

of Heaven; and evermore where Mercy is, there is an Exclusion of all Merit.

Now from all these Considerations put together, it is clear that God's bestowing of Eternal Life and Glory upon the Saints in Heaven, is not the rewarding of their Good Works by way of Merit and Desert.

Secondly, Heaven and Eternal Life is called a Reward, because it is given to the People of God as a Sequel, or Consequence upon, or rather after their performance of the Works of Holy Obedience. And this is plain and evident, because Good Works are the antecedent dispositions and preparations wrought in us for the fitting and qualifying of us to partake of the Reward of Eternal Life and Glory; for it is inconsistent with the Holiness and Justice of God to give Heaven unto any that are not Holy. Should God take an unholy Creature, and Reward him at the last day with Eternal Life, this would pollute Heaven itself. But God hath provided another place for such, a Hell, where they shall forever receive the Reward and Wages of their Works in Eternal Pain and Misery. In the distribution of Rewards among Men, usually respect is had, either to some past Merit, or to some present previous Qualifications in those on whom such Rewards are bestowed: The former of these cannot be applied unto God, because there can be no such thing as Merit or Desert in the Creature, that can oblige the Great God to bestow the Heavenly Reward upon any. But yet in the latter sense, there are always previous qualifications of Grace and Holiness in all those on whom God bestows the Reward of the Heavenly Inheritance. Hence therefore the Apostle tells us, Heb. 12.14. That without Holiness no man shall see the Lord. Grace and Holiness in a Saint, is his preparation, or qualification for Heaven; and all that are so qualified, need not fear but the Reward of Heaven shall be bestowed upon

them: for Heaven is prepared for such, and it shall certainly be given to those for whom it is prepared. And indeed, Glory in Heaven is the same with Grace here upon Earth, and as Grace here is the Reward of Grace, that is to whom soever God hath given some Grace, upon the improving of that Grace, he gives more: So Glory hereafter shall be the Reward of a longer and continued perseverance and improvement of Grace here. For Grace and Glory are one and the same thing, and differ only in degree; the Scripture therefore gives it the same Name, changed, (2 Corinth. 3.18.) from Glory unto Glory, that is from one degree of Grace unto another. And as there is the same nature in a spark, as there is in the Body of the fire, in a drop of water, as in the Ocean; so there is the same Nature in Holiness, that is in Happiness. Now indeed is the Infancy of Grace, and then is the Mature Age. Now the Twilight, then the Noontide Glory of it. But still Grace and Glory differ only in degree. And therefore it is suitable to the Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness of God, to reward Good and Holy Works with Glory, because they are the Dispositions and Preparations for it.

Now before I put a period to my Discourse concerning this sweet and delightful Subject of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, I shall from what hath been said, draw some useful and necessary inferences, in order unto Practice, and so conclude. And,

First, If there be such a State of Happiness to be enjoyed hereafter, How are they then to be blamed, that let out their Hearts and Affections inordinately towards any Worldly Enjoyments? O how many low, base Spirited persons are there to be found, who seek no greater, nor higher good, than to enjoy the Comforts and Delights that the World affords them! could they but attain so many hundreds or thousands, could they compass such an Earthly Possession or

Enjoyment, O this would be enough to make them Happy; the things of the World is all the Portion they crave for themselves. But surely such Noble Affections as God hath endowed Man withal, should not be so lavishly laid out upon such vile and contemptible things as all Worldly Enjoyments are. An Earthly Conversation is very unsuitable to a Spiritual and Heavenly Hope and Expectation. Hast thou O Christian, laid up thy Treasure above, what then do thy Heart and Affections so much here below? Is thy Life hid with Christ in God, whence then is it that thy Converse is so much with Creature Enjoyments, as if thy Life and Happiness lay in them and not in God? If thou lookest for a State of Bliss only in Heaven, what is the reason then, that thy Conversation is no more there? dost thou believe and count upon it as thy Blessedness, that thou shalt one day with the pure in Heart, forever see and enjoy God in Heaven, how comes it to pass then, that thy Desires and Inclinations go out so eagerly after the Perishing Enjoyments of this World now? For shame O Christian, let thy Hopes of Heaven moderate thy Affections towards the World You that look for so much from God in another World, may very well be content, if he cuts you short here, giving you but a little of this.

Nothing is more unbecoming a Heavenly Hope, than an Earthly Heart.

It was an Observation that I once heard from a Holy Man of God now in Heaven, whereof I have since read other where, that though there are many Spots and Blemishes charged upon the Saints and Servants of God, in Scripture, as instances of human frailty, yet there is not one Godly man to be found in all the Book of God, the Story of whose Life is blotted with the sin of Covetousness. If this be a Truth as some affirm, may it not well be matter of great astonishment unto us in

these days of the Gospel, wherein Knowledge doth so much abound, that this should be called the Professors Sin? so that profane men have nothing to lay more commonly unto the charge of those that are strict in the ways of God, than this, That they are a company of Covetous persons, and that none are more eager in their pursuits after the World than those that make the greatest shows and pretenses for Heaven: for shame, O Christian, wipe off this Reproach from Religion; let not wicked men by beholding thy scandalous practices herein, blacken the Names of those that are really Godly with such reproachful Aspersions, as if to be Covetous, were a necessary consequent unto the Profession of Religion. Make it appear that thy hopes of Heaven can enable thee to live above the World; yea, to contemn and despise all its Enjoyments. Surely thou mayest well be content with a little here, who expectest so much hereafter. If the Hopes and Expectations of what is laid up for a Believer in Heaven, doth not take off his Heart and Affections from inordinate pursuits of the things of this World, nothing will.

Secondly, Hath God provided a Heaven for Believers hereafter? Surely then they have no cause to be offended at anything they meet withal in their way to it. Hath the faithful God, for whom it is impossible to lie, promised to bestow Heaven and eternal Happiness upon a Believer; though not for, yet in the way of Duty and holy Obedience? this should certainly take him off from being scandalized at the Cross. No Christian, but should walk cheerfully in that way in which he is sure he shall find Heaven at the end, though he meet with Afflictions and Troubles in his passage to it. The Cross should never cause a Believer to stumble in, much less to turn out of that way that leads to Heaven. No Man should think much to do, or suffer anything to partake of so great a Happiness, as the Enjoyment of Heaven speaks. That Man knows little what Heaven means, that can

think or speak hardly of any way of God that leads to it. It is a great Discouragement unto many when they are looking Heaven-ward, that they meet with so many Troubles and Afflictions in the Way; especially if they be great, and of long continuance; but knowest thou not, O Christian, that thou oughtest not to be troubled at any Afflictions that befall thee in thy Way to Heaven, knowing that thereunto thou art appointed, as the Apostle speaks, I Thes. 3.3. And though thou canst not conclude that Heaven belongs to thee because thou art afflicted; for in an evil Way thou mayest justly expect to meet with Sufferings: Yet this thou mayest assure thyself of, that if thou leave the Ways of God and holy Obedience, because of Sufferings, thou art for the present turned out of the Way that leads to Heaven; and if God hath any Love for thy Soul, and intends to bestow Heaven and Happiness upon thee, he will reduce thee back, though by some Affliction, and probably by some smart and severe one too. But why, O Christian, should Afflictions and Sufferings discourage thee? Will not Heaven make amends for all thou endurest here? What says the blessed Apostle St. Paul, who doubtless underwent as many Sufferings as any we read of in Scripture? And yet, says he, Rom. 8.18. I reckon (and his reckoning was according to Truth) that the Sufferings of this present Life, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed. And in 2 Cor. 4.17. Our light Afflictions that are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. Here are great and glorious Expressions, that may well raise the Spirits of Christians above all Discouragements, let their Afflictions and Sufferings be what they will: For here are Afflictions; and to balance it, here is Glory put in Opposition to it; here are light Afflictions, and here is a Weight of Glory; here is light Afflictions for a moment, and here is an eternal Weight of Glory; yea, here is more; for here is a far more

exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory. It is very observable, when the Apostle speaks of Afflictions the People of God may meet with in the World, he soon gets over them; they are Afflictions, says he, but they are but light Afflictions, and but of short continuance; for they last but for a moment: But when he comes to speak of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, which he sets in Opposition to them, he heaps up one Expression upon another, as if he labored under the want of Words, to set forth the greatness of that Happiness he was about to mention; and therefore, says he, there shall be a far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory. Words they are of such great Importance and Signification, that our English Tongue will not reach the Elegancy and Fulness of them. O who would not then with Moses choose to suffer Affliction with the People of God, rather than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, who, with him by an Eye of Faith beholds the eternal Recompence of Reward?

Thirdly, Hast thou, O Christian, a Right and Title to this heavenly Inheritance, live then as one that is an Heir to, and Expectant of so great a Happiness? Let thy practice, O Christian, be suitable to thy Profession, thy Conversation on Earth unto thy Hopes of Heaven. There is a comely Behavior required of Christians, which if they are not careful to observe in their Acting's before Men, they betray their high and holy Calling, and the greatness of their Hopes and Expectations unto scorn, and contempt. Art thou, O Christian, an Heir of Heaven? Live as such a one. The Scripture is frequent in pressing of this Exhortation: Sometimes Christians are called upon to live as it becometh Saints, Ephes. 2.3. To have their Conversations as it becomes the Gospel of Christ, Phil. 1.21. To walk as it becomes those that profess Godliness with good Works, 1 Tim. 2.10. And sometimes, which is very high indeed, To walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his Kingdom and Glory, 1 Thes. 2.11, 12.

Expressions fully comprehensive, both of a Christian's Privilege, and also of his Duty in the sense of that Privilege; and the Apostle in joining these two together, seems to intimate to us, that no other Words could express the Duty of a Christian to the height, but what expresseth the height and perfection of his Blessedness. Now the height of a Christian's Blessedness, is to enjoy God, and to enjoy him there, where his Enjoyment shall be most full and most lasting, and that is in Heaven; which the Apostle here calls his Kingdom and Glory, Now upon the Hopes of a Christian's Enjoyment of this great Blessedness the Apostle calls him to the performance of as great a Duty; and that is, to walk worthy of God, who hath called him to his Kingdom and Glory. And to how great and glorious things Christians are hereby called to the performance of, few understand; and fewer live in the practice of. And here I cannot but take occasion to show my detestation of that great Sin, which is too frequent in this Age of abominable Licentiousness, I mean the Sin, of condemning shall I say; nay, of scoffing and deriding at that which is called Strictness and Preciseness in the Ways of God; as if any could be too circumspect in avoiding of Sin, too strict in the discharge of his Duty, too careful in his Endeavors to serve and please God; or could have too much of Grace and Holiness, in which a Christian is bound to grow and increase all his Days; as if a Man could be too like unto God in that which is his highest Excellency and Glory, I mean his Holiness; for he is called a God glorious in Holiness.

In Heaven there is the greatest exactness that can be; for there is Holiness, and nothing but Holiness; yea, there is nothing but Holiness in the utmost Perfection of it. And how canst thou then, O profane Sinner, who now scoffest at Holiness in the People of God, expect to be admitted into that holy Place hereafter? Heavenly Hopes

and Expectations require a heavenly Conversation, which thou art perfectly void of, whilst thou art a Derider at Holiness in others.

Those therefore whose Hopes and Expectations are set upon Heaven, must manifest it by a Conversation and Deportment suitable thereunto: Now this in the general may imply Two Things, Holiness of Conversation, and Cheerfulness of Conversation.

First, It implies a Holy Conversation, the Apostle 2 Pet. 3.11. Speaking unto those who lived in expectation of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven; What manner of Persons (says he) ought you to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness? A Holiness even unto Wonder and Admiration, should shine forth and adorn the Conversations of those who expect: such a blessed Day as this is. Christians Hopes are to be like unto Angels in Glory and Happiness; and therefore they should now as far as is possible, live like Angels in the Flesh in the practice of Holiness. In 2. Cor. 7.1. says the Apostle, having these Promises; what Promises? why he tells us in the foregoing Chapter, Promises of being the Sons and Daughters of God by Adoption and Regeneration, and so come to have a Right and Title to the Heavenly Inheritance in Glory: having, such Promises as these, it becomes us to carry ourselves, as those that look for such great things, by cleansing ourselves from all Pollution of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God. And most clear is that in 1 John 3.3. where the Apostle having a little before set forth the greatness of God's Love to himself and others, an instance whereof he gives us in these words, That they should be called the Sons of God, which though it be a great Privilege, yet is there more to come still; something that is great and extraordinary we are looking for, & though we know not what we shall be, for it doth not yet appear, yet this we do know, That when he shall appear we shall be like him, for

we shall see him as he is. Now follows the Apostle's Inference from all this, which should be the Practice of every Christian that hath the same hope that he had, of being like unto Christ, and of seeing God as he is, which is only in Heaven. Why, he that hath this Hope in him, Purifieth himself as God is Pure. Dost thou, O Christian, look for Heaven and Glory hereafter? say now unto sin and Satan, and all Temptations unto that which is Evil, I will have nothing to do with you anymore, all whose designs are to render me unfit for that Blessed and Holy State, I am continually waiting in expectation of.

Secondly, As Purity and Holiness of Life, are a deportment suitable unto a Christian's Heavenly Expectation; So also is, a Holy Cheerfulness and Joy. A Christian's Hope of Heaven should be matter of the greatest Joy and Delight to him that can be: And indeed all true Joy and Delight is the Privilege and Portion only of a Godly Man. It is his Privilege to Enjoy it above others, and it is his Portion that he enjoys it above others. Sinners have no peace, either with God, or with themselves; and how then is it possible that they should be Joyful? What Joy and Delight they seem to have, is only in outward appearance, for in the midst of their mad laughter, (and the Joy of the Wicked is no more) their hearts are sorrowful, Prov. 14.13. In Isaiah 57.20. We read the Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is always filth and pollution in the Consciences of wicked men, which makes them travail with pain all their days, Job 15.21. And hence God tells us, That there is no Peace unto the Wicked. Isaiah. 57.21. A wicked man's ways and courses will yield him no Peace, because they are sinful, and sin never was a ground of Peace, because they are sinful, and sin never was a ground of Peace unto any, but of trouble unto all, sometime or other. And where there is no Peace, how can there be any true Joy? Alas a wicked man's fears of Hell and Wrath to come,

which his unrepented of sin deserve and call for, mar all that Joy and Delight, that otherwise he might take in the Hopes or Heaven. But now a Godly man, one that walks in the Integrity of his Heart, he is one whose Peace is made with God through Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, and therefore he may, yea he ought to rejoice in hopes of the Glory of God. And if the men of the World whose Portion is in this Life, and whose Names are written in the Earth, can rejoice in their Riches and outward Greatness; how much more may a Christian rejoice, whose Name is written in the Book of Life, who hath God for his Portion, and Heaven for his Inheritance? Lift up therefore thine head and heart O Christian, Earthy Bread with cheerfulness, and drink thy Wine, yea thy Water, if thou hast no better, with a merry Heart; Enjoy thy outward Comforts with Delight; take a Holy Pleasure and Joy, not only when thou art walking in the ways of Holiness and Obedience, but also when thou art suffering under troubles and afflictions from the World; Refresh thy Soul, Recreate thy Spirits, and let thy Heart solace itself with great Joy; yea, with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory, in the hopes thou hast of Heaven and Happiness. And indeed a Christian cannot do God more or better Service, nor bring more Credit to Religion, than by expressing a Holy Cheerfulness and Joy of Soul, in every State and Condition that befalls him. What Jonadab said unto Amnon, Why art thou lean from day today, seeing thou art the King's Son? The same may be said upon a much better account, unto every Holy and Gracious Soul; Why art thou so troubled? Why walkest thou so dumpishly and dejectedly in the ways of God from day today, art not thou the King of Heaven's Son? Shall not Heaven be thine Inheritance; nay, shall not the God of Heaven be thy Portion forever? Let me reason the case with thee a little, O disconsolate Soul, as Holy David, when he was under some disquietment of mind, doth with his

Soul, with a little variation of his words, in Psalm 42.11. Why art thou cast down O my Soul, why art thou disquieted within me, Hope thou in God, for I shall yet Praise him, who is the Health of my Countenance and my God? So say I unto every Gracious Soul; why art thou cast down? what is the reason of thy disquietness and trouble? Is not thy hope in God? Dost thou not expect to Bless and Praise him forever in Heaven? And hast thou received such everlasting Consolation and good hope through Grace as this, to have God to be thy God? O manifest it unto others in the cheerfulness of thy Countenance, and in the Joy of thy Soul, even now before thou comest to the Enjoyment of him in Heaven. A bare possibility of Heaven, and the Enjoyment of God there, is enough to take away the sting of every Affliction; but the having such sure and certain grounds to build our hopes of Heaven and Happiness upon, as the Scripture holds forth unto us, this should take away even the sense and feeling of Afflictions; at least so far forth as that they should be no way disturbing of that Peace and Joy that a Christians hopes of Heaven doth afford him whilst he is walking in the way thither. Should but such a message be carried to the Damned, as might give them any hope, (though never so little) of Happiness and Salvation, it were enough, to make even Hell itself a lightsome place, and cause those miserable Souls to rejoice in the midst of their present exquisite Torments. O what shame and blushing then should fill the Faces of poor drooping Saints, that a few thin Clouds of some short Afflictions coming over their heads, should wrap and swallow them up in darkness, and so overwhelm their Spirits with sorrow, that the hopes of Heaven, whither they expect shortly to be brought, should not be able to dissipate and scatter, yea to turn their troubles and sorrows into ravishments of Joy and Comfort.

Fourthly, Is there such a State of Glory and Happiness to be enjoyed by the People of God hereafter? Let thy Thoughts and Meditations then, O Christian, be daily employed in Contemplating upon it. Heaven in reference unto Man, was made for these two ends, Contemplation and Enjoyment. Now the Enjoyment of Heaven is a Happiness too great for man, in this state of Mortality; it is therefore reserved as the peculiar Happiness of a Saint when he comes to die: But to Contemplate of Heaven, is man's Duty and Privilege while he lives; and truly a sweeter and more delightful work Christians cannot exercise their Meditations about, nor a more profitable and advantageous Subject can they let out their Thoughts upon; for this is to live a life altogether made up of Pleasure and Advantage. Now it being undoubtedly thus, we may very well wonder Christians should no more acquaint themselves with this Heavenly Life. Whoever thou art therefore that shalt peruse what is here written, if thou professest thyself a Christian, I charge thee, as thou hopest for any part in this Glorious Inheritance, that thou take thy Heart aside from the World, and call it to an account, for that great estrangedness that is in it unto God, and a Heavenly Life, and for time to come, leave off thy pursuits of Vanity, and bend thy Soul with all seriousness to the Study of what thy Eternal State and Condition shall be; busily employ thy Thoughts about the Happiness of a Life to come, inure thyself to a Life of Divine and Heavenly Contemplation, and let not the thoughts of Heaven be seldom, slight, and cursory, but accustom thyself to them, let them be fixed and abiding in thee; dwell in thy Thoughts upon such Contemplations; let thy Soul recreate itself with these Heavenly Delights. And whenever thou findest thy Heart begin to flag and draw back, or thy Thoughts to take liberty to fly out and ramble towards other things, speedily call them back, and keep them close to this pleasurable Employment; let them not wander from

their work; indulge not thyself in Slothfulness; be quick and smart upon thy Soul for the least neglect that may be; and for thy encouragement herein, know, that when once thou hast conquered the Difficulties, and overcome the Obstructions that would hinder thee from experiencing so sweet and comfortable a Life, and got the Mastery over thy Thoughts and Affections, by an accustomed Obedience and Conformity unto the Practice of this Heavenly Duty; thou wilt then find abundance of Sweetness and Delight therein, and thy experience will confirm this to be a Truth of great Verity, that the Life of Christianity, is a Life of Joy, that therein is to be found such abundant strong Consolations, as will lift up thy Soul even into the very Suburbs of Heaven itself; so that thou wilt seem to be as it were in a new World, through the sense and feeling of those Joys, which the Apostle tells us, are unspeakable and full of Glory.

Now although the bare proposing of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven unto the Thoughts and Meditations of a Christian, should be Argument strong enough to put him upon the practice of a Duty that is accompanied with so much Pleasure and Delight: for certainly a more sweet delightful and desirable Life a Christian cannot live, for this way of living is to bring down Heaven unto us before we are taken up thither; it is to begin to live that life on Earth, that we shall forever live in Heaven, and how then can there be any need of Arguments to press Christians to live such a life as this is? Yet because, sad experience tells us, how hardly the best Christians are drawn to a daily practice of this Heavenly Duty, I shall lay down some Arguments to excite and quicken them hereunto; as,

First, A Soul that, lives in the believing views and contemplations of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, makes use of one of the strongest Cordials to support itself under Troubles and Afflictions,

that can be. This will sustain a Christian 's Spirit under Sufferings, make them more easy to be born; this keeps the Soul from murmuring and repining under the Hand of God, makes it patient under all its Tribulations; yea, these believing views of Heaven and Glory will uphold and strengthen a Christian's Resolutions for God, and holy Obedience, and keep him from forsaking Christ and Religion for fear of Trouble and Persecution.

Alas, will such a Soul say, what, if the Way be rough and unpleasant unto the Flesh; yea, what if it should be thorough Mud and Blood, yet Heaven is at the end, and that will make more than a thousandfold amends for all the Sufferings that I can endure in the Way. O sweet Pains and Torments! O blessed Woes and Distresses! O rich Poverty and Reproaches! O happy Restraint and Imprisonment! but much more happy Death, however it comes, that is accompanied with the joyful foretastes of a future Happiness in Heaven, as no Bolts nor Bars, no Restraints or Distresses can shut out, or exclude the Joys and Consolations of Heaven from coming into the Soul. Our Flesh, that is, these frail Bodies of ours, may be confined within Walls of Stone, or Bars of Iron; but the Faith, the Hope, the Thoughts and Meditations of a Christian cannot; still the Soul hath liberty in its flight towards Heaven, from whence it fetches strong Consolations for its Support and Joy, notwithstanding all the Severities that lie upon the outward Man. Christ, Faith, and the Joys and Delights of Heaven are all spiritual; and therefore it is not in the Power of any Prisons, nor what the most malicious Persecutors can do, to hinder a Soul that is a Spirit from sweet Intercourse and Commerce with them, in John 20.19. when the Persecutions of the Jews were so hot against the Disciples that they were forced to meet privately, and to shut the doors upon themselves for fear of the Jews; yet even then Jesus came, and stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto

you. And when those two blessed Servants of God, Paul and Silas were kept close Prisoners, (to speak in the Language of our Times,) after their Bodies had been abused by Scourging, being locked up in the Inner Prison, and their Feet made fast in the Stocks; yet notwithstanding, when they were suffering thus as to their Bodies, they had a Heaven in their Souls, and their Work and Employment was the same with what the Saints are taken up in Heaven, even to sing Praises unto God; and so they did; for so we read, Acts 16.24, 25. At Midnight they prayed, and sang Praises unto God. They had more Joy in undergoing their Sufferings, than their Enemies had in inflicting them: Yea, so great were the Consolations of Heaven in their Souls, that their Enemies were more desirous to free them from their Sufferings, than they were desirous to come out of them; for when they sent their Officers to fetch them out of Prison, they refused to go out, and made their very Persecutors themselves to beg and entreat them to come out. Oh, what wonderful strong Joys and Consolations had ravished their Souls, that made them so unwilling to come out of Prison, not to be punished, but to be set at liberty!

How come those Worthies of whom we read in Heb. 11. to endure such sore Trials as are there recorded of them, being exposed to the Violence of the Flames, having Trials of cruel Mocking's and Scourging's, being stoned, sawn asunder, destitute, afflicted and tormented? And yet notwithstanding all, would not accept of Deliverance: Whence was it that they came to suffer so courageously? Why, the Reason is given us in Verse 35. it was, That they might obtain a better Resurrection. They saw not only to an end of their Sufferings, but they looked also unto the Glory that was to be revealed; and this made them so bold and courageous. It is no wonder that Afflictions and Sufferings should be painful and grievous unto that Man who cannot see to the end of them. And

whatever Death is unto others, it must needs be the King of Terrors unto him, who cannot behold Immortality and Eternal Life beyond it. He that cannot look upon Heaven as belonging unto him at the end of his Sufferings, as well as behold the Sufferings that himself endures, loses that Joy and Consolation that should be his support under Sufferings. Where there is no Expectation of the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness by them who are exercised with Afflictions, there Afflictions cannot be joyous but grievous. This is the peculiar Excellency and Advantage of the Grace of Faith, and therein it is like unto God himself, who is the Author of it, that it can at one and the same time behold the End and the Means together; and if a Christian did always act in this way and manner under Afflictions; and were the Eye of his Faith so brightned, that he could as clearly see his Right and Title unto Heaven, as he doth feel his present Sufferings, what a Life of Peace and Joy might he live notwithstanding all those Afflictions that lie upon him!

Doubtless when our Lord Jesus suffered on the Cross, there were many standing by, and gazing at his Sufferings, who, when they saw him dying there, and after that laid in the Grave, did shake their Heads at him, looking upon him as one that was lost and gone, never more to be heard of, condemning him as a foolish and indiscreet Person, to throw away his Life in that Way and Manner as he did; because they were ignorant what he was doing, and what was to follow upon his Sufferings. But surely they who now behold him dying, buried, rising, ascended, glorified. and interceding at God's Right Hand, as Believers do, they see great Cause to admire, as the infinite Wisdom of God in contriving, so the infinite Grace and Love of Jesus Christ in this Way and Manner of accomplishing the Redemption and Salvation of Sinners. Were but Heaven, and the fitting Christians for that glorious Inheritance, apprehended by them

as the end that God designs in all his dealings with them, none of them would seem grievous and afflictive to them. He that hath learned this way to Heaven, that is, he, whose Soul hath gained Acquaintance with the Glory and Happiness that is above by frequent and daily Contemplations thereon, hath a rich Cordial to revive and cheer his Spirits in every Affliction. There are none of us know what Trials we may yet meet withal before we are called hence; and if God should exempt us from Public and Private Calamities and Distresses while we live; yet all of us know there is a time a coming when we must be sick and die, and then we shall find that nothing but what we can draw down from Heaven into our Hearts, will be Consolation strong enough to support our then departing Souls. If therefore, O Christian, thou wouldst either live peaceably, or die comfortably, inure thyself daily unto a Life of Divine and Heavenly Contemplation.

Secondly, Consider A Heart taken up much with Heaven, will make a Christian lively and fervent in Duty. It is the Heavenly Christian that is the lively and zealous Christian. Where there is a strangeness in any Soul unto Heaven, there will be a dullness and heaviness in Duty. Frequent thoughtfulness of Heaven, unto which Duties have a tendency, make a Christian lively and vigorous in the performance of them: And the stronger the Consolations are, that flow into a Christian from his daily Contemplations of Heaven and Glory, the more lively and vigorous will that Christian evermore be in the performance of Duty. A full and clear Apprehension of Heaven, and of our Right and Title thereunto, how doth it lift up the Soul in Duty, and make it run with the greatest activity and cheerfulness that can be in the Ways of God? It is strange to see what the Hopes of Gain and Advantage in the World will carry Men unto; how will they compass Sea and Land, break their Rest in the Night, hazard their

Health in the Day, rise early, go to Bed late? And shall the empty perishing things of this World animate and put Life and Vigor into these Men's Designs, so that they shall stick at no difficulties or dangers for the attaining of them? And shall not the fore-thoughts of Heaven, and the Contemplations of the Glory and Happiness that is there to be eternally enjoyed, put Life and Vigor, Zeal and Activity, into the Soul of a Christian in all his Duties? Surely it will, and that in so great a measure as shall enable him to mount up with Wings like Eagles, to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint in the Ways of God, the Joys and Consolations of Heaven, and of the God of Heaven being his continual Strength and Support. The Reason of all that slothfulness and deadness that is to be found in Christians, in the performance of their Duties, is because they are such Strangers unto Heaven, have so little knowledge of it, dwell so little in their Thoughts and Contemplations upon that Glory and Happiness that there is to be enjoyed. How fervent will that Man be in Prayer, how attentive in Hearing, how zealous in opposing Sin, how watchful against Temptation, how careful to lay hold of all opportunities of doing Good, who considers, that all this is done in order unto Heaven and Happiness? Take a Christian, one whose Life is spent much in Heaven, one that hath (as the Apostle saith of himself and others) his Conversation in Heaven; how easily may he be differenced from other Men? he that hath a Spirit of discerning will quickly observe something of that which his Soul is taken with in Heaven, to appear in his Duties and Conversation, that will distinguish him from the careless and negligent Christian; yea, take the same Man, when he hath been conversing with Heaven, and solacing his Soul with Divine and Heavenly Contemplations; and how doth he excel, not others only, but himself also? O what a difference is there between what he is then, and what he is in his common and ordinary Conversation?

for doubtless it may be averred of such a Soul 's return from its contemplating views of that blissful State, that there are such Heavenly Impressions made upon it, as cause it to ascend in frequent Thoughts and Ejaculations towards Heaven, in the midst of its Earthly Employments; and to intermingle that which is Heavenly with its Earthly Speeches and Discourses among others. Whereas a Christian that is careless and negligent of himself, gives way to Earthliness and Vanity, abates and lessens the exercising of his Soul in the Contemplations of Heaven and Heavenly Things; he soon becomes as weak, as vain, and sometimes as profane also as another Man, who is altogether estranged unto this Life of Heavenly Contemplation. The way therefore for Christians to shake off their deadness and dullness in Duty, and to be rid of their slothfulness and heaviness in the Ways of God, is to betake themselves to Heaven, where Christ who is their Life and Strength is, and from whence alone all their quickening and enlivening influences do come. Frequently therefore, O Christian, have recourse unto Heaven; dwell much there in thy Thoughts and Contemplations; this will inflame thy Soul with Love to God, this will make thee pray with Zeal and Fervor, hear with earnestness and attention, and perform all the Duties God requires of thee with activity and liveliness.

Thirdly, A Heart set upon Heaven will make a Christian live the most joyful and comfortable Life in the World. A Heavenly Mind will be a joyful Mind. A Saint on Earth hath the same ground of Joy that a Saint in Heaven hath; he derives his Joy and Peace from the Apprehensions he hath of God's being his God and Father in Jesus Christ, and from the sense and enjoyment of his Love and Favor manifested to his Soul: And so doth a Saint in Heaven; only he hath a clearer knowledge and discovery, as also a larger and fuller enjoyment thereof, at present, than a Saint on Earth hath; but what

he wants in Enjoyment he hath in the Promise; and the Promises to a Saint on Earth, are as certain and as true, as the performance of them to a Saint in Heaven; for God is never worse, but usually better than his Word to his People here; but to be sure they always find it so when they come to Heaven. Now they that are Rich in Promises, (as all the People of God are,) and can act Faith upon them, may very well live a Life of Peace and Joy; for whatever they have not in possession, they have in reversion: And when a Believer's Faith and Hope is entertained above with the delightful Views and Contemplations of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, which he shall ere long be in the possession of, what should make him walk uncomfortably and sadly here below? In Heaven all is Peace and Joy, and most of Peace and Joy here below resides with those that live most in Heaven while they are here on Earth; an instance of this we have in the Holy Apostle; none ever lived a more Heavenly Life on this side Heaven than Blessed St. Paul did, and none also ever lived a more Peaceable and Joyful Life than he did: How full of Joy doth he express himself upon all Occasions, I Joy and Rejoice with you all, says he, Philip. 2.17. I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding Joyful in all our Tribulations, 2 Cor. 7.4. So in Rom. 5.1, 2. Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and Rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God: And not only so, but we Glory in Tribulation. And Verse 11. We also Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the Atonement. So in 2 Tim. 4.8. I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give unto me at that Day. Now he that could say all this, must needs be full of Joy and Comfort; and being thus filled with Joy and Peace in believing, though he knew that Bonds and Imprisonments did abide

him in every place; yet could he say, that none of these things moved him, neither counted he his Life dear unto him, so he might finish his Course with Joy, as himself speaks, Acts 20.23, 24. And this Joy of the Lord being his strength; how earnestly and passionately doth he expostulate and chide with those Friends of his, that would have dissuaded him from Suffering? Acts 21.13. What mean ye to weep and break mine Heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for the Name of the Lord Jesus at Jerusalem. From whence now came all this Courage and Boldness? from whence did he receive and draw all this Joy and Consolation? why it came from thence where his Hope, his Heart, his Life, and Conversation was, and that is from Heaven; for so himself tells us, Philip. 3.20. Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. O this Hope of Eternal Life laid up for the Saints in Heaven, as the Scripture calls it! This laying hold of the blessed Hope set before us, as it is called, Heb. 6.18, 19. This, this was that which the Apostle had, as an Anchor to his Soul, sure and steadfast, being that which entereth into that within the Vail, that is into Heaven. This made him not only to be content in every State and Condition, but to rejoice in the worst that did befall him; witness that strange Triumphant Speech of his, 2 Cor. 12.3. I take pleasure, says he, in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses. Now this peaceable joyful Life that this Blessed Apostle lived, was not a Privilege granted only unto him, by way of special Grace and Favor, because he was so eminent an Apostle and Servant of God; but it is a Privilege that is extended more commonly also unto other Believers, it being that of which the Kingdom consists, as the Apostle himself tells us, Rom. 14.17. The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. And therefore, as a Duty incumbent upon Christians, he urgeth the practice of it in

several Scriptures. So we read Philip. 3.1. Finally my Brethren rejoice in the Lord; and in 1 Thess. 5.10. Rejoice evermore. Phil. 4.4. Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say rejoice. Now the way for Christians to attain unto a Life of Peace and Joy, is to be much conversant above, to live a Heavenly Life, to exercise his Thoughts and Contemplations daily upon Heaven, and that State of Bliss and Happiness that is to be eternally enjoyed there. Heaven is a place full of Peace and Joy; yea, a place where there is nothing else; and the more of Heaven comes down into any Soul in this Life, or the more any Soul ascends up into Heaven in Divine Contemplations, the more comfortable and joyful Life doth that Soul lead, while it is here upon Earth.

Fifthly, Is there such a State of Bliss and Happiness to be enjoyed by the People of God hereafter, let everyone then examine themselves what Right and Title they have thereunto, whether they are such as are qualified for the enjoyment of that blessed State.

First, Examine thyself whether ever thou didst experience a work of Sanctification and Holiness wrought upon thy Soul; if not whatever thy pretenses for Heaven may be, they are false and groundless, and will end in Horror and Vexation of Soul. The Command of God is, that we should be Holy in all manner of Conversation, that we should be Holy as God is Holy: and the great Pattern and Exemplar of our Holiness, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as the Apostle tells us, was Holy, Harmless, undefiled, separated from Sin, and from all pollution and defilement both from Sin and Sinners; Here now is both a Christian's Rule, and a Christian's Example: Now though a Christian cannot reach the exactness and perfection of either; for he cannot be so Holy as the Rule requires, neither can he be so Holy as the Pattern which his Lord hath set him; this is only attainable in

Heaven, where the People of God shall be as Holy as God will desire, and as they can desire. But though a Christian cannot be perfectly Holy, yet he may be truly Holy, and so he must be in some measure and proportion, before he can be admitted into Heaven, that place of perfect Purity and Holiness; for unto such only is Heaven promised, and by such only shall it be enjoyed who are Holy. Holiness, it is the Saints beaten Road unto Heaven, it is the good old way through which the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Holy Men of God in all Ages of the World, have travelled in unto Glory. No Grace, no Glory, no Holiness here, no Happiness hereafter. As many as are Sanctified, so many are Justified; and as many as are Justified shall be also Glorified, and no more. Therefore says the Apostle, Heb. 12.14. Follow after Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Holiness, it is the Comeliness and Ornament; yea, the Beauty and Glory of a Christian; it is God's Beauty and Comeliness stamped upon the Soul; for a Christian is Beautiful and Comely, through God's Comeliness put upon him, as the Prophet speaks, Ezek. 16.14. Thou wert Comely through my Comeliness that I put upon thee. And though the Great God hath many various Titles and Attributes, by which he hath been pleased to make discoveries of himself unto his People; yet that wherein he chiefly Glories, is his Holiness: hence therefore it is that though the Power of God be called his Arm, and the Wisdom of God his Eye, and the Love of God his Heart, yet is it the Holiness of God only that is his Face, his Beauty, his Glory: And as the Face of a Man is the Beauty of a Man, so is Holiness the Beauty of God himself; upon this account therefore we read more than once of the Beauty of Holiness, and of God's being Glorious in Holiness, Expressions which serve greatly to Illustrate to us, the Excellency of Holiness, and may very well enamor the Creature to be in Love with

it; for that which is the Glory of the infinitely wise God, namely his Holiness, cannot but be the highest Excellency and Glory of Man.

As Sin is the greatest Reproach and Disgrace, the greatest Degradation and Debasement of the Glory and Excellency of Man; so Holiness is the highest Advancement and Exaltation, the highest Dignity and Promotion the Human Nature is capable of for it is participation of the Supreme Excellency of the Divine Nature itself, and that indeed in which as we ought to be like God, so is it that in which we can only be said truly and properly to imitate him; and therefore we never meet with any Command in Scripture requiring us to be as Great, as Wise, or as Powerful as God is; but to be Holy as God is Holy, to be Perfect as our Heavenly Father is Perfect, and to Purify ourselves as God is Pure, these we do; yea, all the Commands, Threatening's and Promises, both of the Law, and of the Gospel, have a tendency unto this, to engage us unto Purity of Heart, and unto Holiness of Life.

Wouldst thou therefore know O Christian, whether thy Right and Title unto Heaven be true, examine thyself what Influence and Operation the Word of God, the Ordinances of God, the Providences of God, have had upon thy Heart and Life, to Sanctify and make thee Holy in both, and know for certain, if they have had such an effect upon thee, this is as sure an Evidence of Heaven, as any thou canst have, and that which cannot deceive thee, for it is an earnest thereof given into thy Soul before hand; it is Heaven begun in thee on Earth: for Holiness and Happiness, Grace and Glory are but one and the same thing, differing only in their Measures and Degrees; and wherever there is a work of Grace begun in any Soul, God will carry it on unto perfection in Heaven. But now on the contrary, if thou art one that wallowest in the Pollution and Defilement of Sin, know O

Sinner, while thou continest in thy uncleanness and filthiness, thou hast no Right and Title unto Heaven; neither as continuing such, shalt thou ever have admission into it, for into that Holy place no unclean thing shall ever enter.

Again, Secondly, Wouldst thou know whether thou canst justly lay any claim unto Heaven, Examine what thy Thoughts and Apprehensions of Heaven are. When thou hast read or heard a Discourse concerning Heaven, and the Glory and Happiness that there is to be enjoyed; What kind of thoughts hast thou then of that State and Place: seemeth it unto thee to be a place only of freedom from Pain and Sickness, from Trouble and Sorrow, a place of Ease and Rest, where thou shalt enjoy thy fill of what is Pleasurable and Delightful to thee, and all this in an infinite duration that shall never know an end? Now though in Heaven there is the enjoyment of all these things; for there is no Sickness nor Diseases, no Pains nor Sorrows, but a perfect freedom from all that is Evil, and an eternal Enjoyment of what is Pleasant and Delightful; yet these things are the least and meanest part of the Happiness of Heaven. It is true, were there nothing more, nothing greater, nor better to be enjoyed than what these things amount unto, an Eternity of Health without Sickness, of Pleasure without Pain, of Delights without Sorrow, were a very great Happiness: But when all these things are compared with the infinitely Great and Blessed God, with the Enjoyment of his Love, and Presence, the seeing of his Face, perfection of Grace and Holiness, freedom from Sin, a Heart, Mind, Will and Affections in all the Desires and Inclinations of them bent towards God; and all of them not only Delighted in, but abundantly Satisfied and filled with the Communications of the Divine Goodness: They are then but a small and inconsiderable part of Heaven's Happiness, and not

worthy to be compared with what a Gracious Soul both desires and shall enjoy for its Happiness.

Wherefore, O Christian, if thou wouldest know whether thou canst upon good grounds put in thy Claim unto Heaven, call thyself to an account what thy Thoughts and Apprehensions of Heaven are; if thou art doubtful in thy mind, whether there be such a place and State of Happiness or no, or at best the highest Notions and Apprehensions thou hast of that Glorious place and State, is, that there thou shalt live at thy ease, enjoy nothing but Carnal and Sensual Objects and Delights: But findest no Spiritual Joy and Delight in thy Soul, in the believing Thoughts and Apprehensions of thy Enjoyment of God and Christ, and the Hopes and Expectations that thy Soul shall there not only be free from all Sin and Pollution, but be made a partaker of the fullness and perfection of all Grace and Holiness, where thy Employment shall always be in Holy and Spiritual Delights and Exercises unto all Eternity: If thou hast no believing Hopes and Expectations of such a Heaven as this is, certainly thou hast no Right and Title unto that Inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for Believers.

Nothing so plainly demonstrates what men are, whither they are going, and unto whom they belong, as the daily course of their Lives and Conversation. The Apostle therefore in Galat. 5.19, 20. reckoning up the Works of the Flesh, which are manifest, As Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Drunkenness, Murder, and such like, of the which, says he, I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. And in 1 Corinth. 6.9, 10. he speaks the same thing again, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be

not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Idolaters, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And on the contrary, He that doth Righteousness is of God, says the Apostle, 1 John 2.29. And blessed is he that doth Righteousness at all times, says the Psalmist, Psal. 106.3. For the Grace of God that hath appeared in the Gospel, having taught them to deny all ungodliness and Worldly Lust, and to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World. Tit. 2.12, 13. Looking for the Blessed Hope and the Glorious appearance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These are they and only they who according to Scripture. Warrant, can lay any claim unto Heaven: And these may, for they that are made free from Sin, and are become the Servants of God, they have their Fruit unto Holiness, and their end shall be Everlasting Life. Rom. 6.23.

Wouldst thou therefore know, O Christian, without deluding thy own Soul, whether thou art one that hast a Right and Title unto Heaven, call thyself to an account what thy Works and Actions are. The matter is not so difficult to be resolved; it may be as thou imaginest. What says the Apostle, Gal. 6.7, 8. He that soweth unto the Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption. And he that soweth unto the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting. And the same Apostle tells us, Rom. 8.13. If we live after the Flesh, we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the Body, we shall live. What now is thy way and course? what is thy general carriage and practice? is it earthly and vain? is it sensual and wicked, according to the course of the World, and after the manner of the men of the World? If vain and sinful Society be thy delightful Companions, if wicked and ungodly ways be thy daily practice, thou art not of a Heavenly Extraction, nor canst thou upon Scripture grounds have any expectations of the Heavenly Glory, for unto such only doth it

belong, who by their lives and actions, declare their opposition of, and contrariety unto the ways and courses of the men of this World. Shew me thy Faith by thy Works, says the Apostle, James 2 18. Thou art one that professest to believe a Heaven and a State of blessedness to be enjoyed there, and hopest thou art one that shalt be a partaker thereof hereafter, show me now thy Faith herein by thy Works; and assure thyself of this, That all thy Faith in, and all thy Hopes of Heaven and Glory, will fill thee with nothing but shame and disappointment hereafter, unless they evidence themselves by Works and Actions suitable thereunto; for as the Apostle says, James 2.26. As the body without the Spirit is dead, so all Faith in, and Hope of Heaven without Works and Actions corresponding thereunto, is dead also, and will leave the Soul short of Heaven and Happiness.

Sixthly, Is there such a State of Bliss and Happiness, provided for and assured unto Believers in Heaven hereafter, let then the consideration hereof, Reconcile to them the thoughts of their own Death; and moderate their sorrows for the Death of their Godly Friends and Relations.

First, Let the consideration of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, Reconcile to a Believer the thoughts of his own Death. It is no strange thing that Heathens, who have only the Light of Nature to be their Instructor, should not be able to overcome the Fears of Death, though indeed some of them have not only expressed great Courage in contempt of, but great confidence in, and desire after Death; though notwithstanding all their boasting, we may well imagine that they speak greater things than they lived up unto, much more than they died under; for it is said of one of the chief of them, that Eloquent Orator Cicero, that a little before his Death he did ingeniously confess, That those Remedies he had prepared against

this Enemy Death, proved he knew not how, too weak and feeble to support and strengthen him in its near approach unto him. And indeed it is no wonder that thus it should be with them, because they were greatly in the dark, as to the reality of a future State of Happiness, and much more at a loss how to find the right way to attain the enjoyment thereof. Nor is it any strange thing to see a wicked Man under the light of the Gospel to be afraid of Death, and to lead a Life accompanied with Fears and Terrors under the thoughts of it; no, the wonder rather is, that such a one can have any ease and quietness, any freedom from horrors and perplexities of Mind, that he is not a Magormissabib, continually every moment of his Life encompassed about with fears and terrors: And indeed, did he rightly understand himself, and his dangerous state and condition, it would be thus always with him, and the greatness of his Fears and Horrors would make him go mourning all his Days. But though Heathens and profane Sinners may and have cause to be afraid of Death, yet it becomes not any of the People of God, who have a well-grounded Hope of Heaven to be affrighted at it, there being no way for them to attain unto that State of Blessedness, but by Dying. I have read concerning the Turks, (who are not only Strangers but Enemies to the Christian Religion,) that they say they do not think Heaven to be a place of that Bliss and Happiness, as Christians do profess to believe it is; because they see so many, that call themselves by the Name of Christian, so backward and unwilling to go to it. O what a disgrace is this unto Christianity; and how should it concern Christians, to labor with great industry, to overcome all inordinate fears of Death, that they may wipe off this reproach that is cast upon the most excellent Religion in the World, and that which only can enable any to Die comfortably and joyfully upon the Hopes of a future State of Happiness.

All a Believer's fears of Death arise from his Ignorance of what Death is in itself, and of what it will be unto him; and this makes him walk so uncomfortably under the thoughts of it: And yet the worst that Death is, and the worst it can do unto him, is only to make a Separation between those two old loving Acquaintance, his Soul and Body; whereby the viler part, the Body, consumes and rots in the Grave, being fed upon by Worms, till it turns to Dust and Ashes for some little time; after which it shall arise again a glorious, refined, purified Body, from all its dross and corruption, and made like unto the Glorious Body of Jesus Christ, to be again united unto that Soul, which during the time of its silent sleeping in the dust, was rejoicing with Saints and Angels; yea, with God and Christ in a state of infinite and inconceivable Happiness; unto which the Body, after its re union with the Soul, shall ascend with it to partake of the same Blessedness in Heaven to all Eternity. Surely, such a Soul, instead of being timorous and fearful, should rather say with the Apostle, I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all, Phil. 1.21.

Secondly, The Consideration of so great a Happiness provided in Heaven for Believers, should moderate their Sorrows for the Death of their Godly Friends and Relations. It is true, when such are taken away by Death, the loss is great unto those that survive them; and therefore the God of Bowels and Mercy allows us to mourn, when by his Providence he makes such breaches among us: Abraham mourned for Sarah his Wife; Joseph wept for his Father Jacob; the Israelites made great lamentations for the loss of Moses; and both Mary and her Sister Martha mourned for their Brother Lazarus, and our Lord doth not reprove them, but sympathizeth with them in their loss, and testifies it by his weeping also. But though we are allowed to mourn at the Death of our Godly Friends and Relations, yet are we to set bounds to our mourning; for we are not to sorrow as those that

have no Hope, nor are we so to grieve and afflict ourselves as to refuse to be comforted. Friends use to rejoice in the advancement of one another in the World, though it be in the enjoyment of that which is but Temporary, and therein they show their Love to one another: And will not, should not you much more rejoice, when your Friends and Acquaintance are by Death preferred to the enjoyment of a Happiness, that is Spiritual and Eternal? Shall a Natural and contracted Relation, either by Blood, Cohabitation, or Friendship, engage to greater Love and Affection, than a Spiritual and Supernatural Relation by Grace and Adoption shall do? Believers are all nearly and intimately related to one another, they are all Members of one and the same Body, they have all one and the same Father, they have all one and the same Redeemer, they have all one and the same Sanctifier and Comforter, they have all one Faith, one Hope, and shall all one day enjoy one and the same Heaven, though they go thither in different ways and at different times. Grieve not, mourn not then, O Believer, that thy Friends and Relations are gone to Heaven a little before thee. Time was, it may be, when you and they did take sweet Counsel together, and walked to the House and Ordinances of God in company, and very sweet and delightful was your Society one with another; but now Death hath made a Separation between you, so that the sweetness of that Friendship is at an end, and they are not, as to your enjoyment of them; and this makes you passionately cry out, Oh my loss! my loss! my Friends and Relations are dead and gone, and what shall I now do! But where, O Believing Soul, is thy love to thy dead Friends and Relations? Is it at an end, and all buried in the Grave with them? Be patient for a while, and Death will quickly open thee a passage into that place of Bliss where they now are, and in the meantime show thy Love to them by thy rejoicing in their present real, though unseen Blessedness; and if

you cannot do this, your Love to yourself is great, but your Love to your Friends is but little. None of our Relations that die in the Lord are lost, they are only gone to Heaven a little before others, whither the rest of all the Faithful shall ere long be called also: And while any Believers are left here behind in the World, they have a God to live upon, that will never leave them nor forsake them; the enjoyment of whose presence, and the manifestations of whose Love and Favor, will abundantly more than recompense for the absence and loss of all our Friends. We read in 1 Sam. 1.8. that Hannah was greatly afflicted because of her barrenness, insomuch that she refused to eat; what course doth Elkanah her Husband take to comfort her? O why, says he, art thou troubled, and why doest thou not eat, Am not I better to thee than ten Sons. Truly it may be much more said unto any Believer, from whom God hath taken any dear and pious Relations, why are you cast down? why do you grieve and mourn? is not God better than many; yea, than all your Friends and Relations put together, and he lives still though your Friends and Relations be dead. And truly this is that God expects at a Believer's hands, that when he hath taken from him the comfort of near and dear Friends and Relations, he should bear up himself cheerfully with this Consideration, That having God to be his God doth infinitely more than countervail for the loss of all. Stay up thyself therefore, O desponding Christian; yea, solace thy Soul under all thy losses with this Consideration, that God is thy God: And say therefore, with Holy David, The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my Salvation be exalted.

Seventhly, Is there such a place of Bliss and Happiness provided for and assured unto Believers, let the consideration hereof put them upon unwearied Diligence and Constancy in the Work and Service of God, that is attended with so great a Reward. The Scripture abounds

with Exhortations and Commands to press this Duty upon Christians, Josh. 22.5. Take diligent heed to do all the Commandments of the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul: And in Phil. 3.11, 12, 13, 14. the Apostle gives us his own Example and Practice, I have not already attained, says he, nor am I already perfect; but I follow after, if I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I reach forth unto those things that are before, pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, if by any means I may attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead; that is, unto that State of Blessedness, that the Saints shall arrive unto at the Resurrection from the Dead: And the same Apostle in 1 Cor. 15.58. having discoursed concerning the Resurrection of Christ, and thereupon proved the Resurrection of the Dead, and the great Happiness of the Saints thereupon; he concludes his Discourse with this Exhortation, Wherefore my beloved Brethren be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, for as much as you know your labor is not in vain in the Lord: Whatever any do or suffer for God, they shall be no losers by it in the end: Heaven will abundantly recompense a Christian for all the Labor and Pains, yea for all the cost and charge he can be at in his way thither. When our Lord had wrought a great Miracle, in feeding so many thousand with a few Barley Loaves and two small Fishes, he bids his Disciples, Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost, Joh. 8.12. There is nothing that a Believer doth for God now that shall be lost, his Tears are all bottled, his Sighs are all numbered, his Prayers are all filed in Heaven, and a day of reckoning will come, when all shall be brought forth and recompensed, not with a thousand fold, as in this Life with Persecution, but with eternal Gains that shall never

have an end. It is not only an unsuitable thing, but highly disingenuous for any to be ungenerous and pinching in the Service of God, to give him as little as they can of Duty and Obedience, who expect so Magnificent and Glorious a State of Happiness from him hereafter. What a shameful thing is it, and how unbecoming a Christian, to think any measure of Duty enough for God, who looks for a promised as well as a purchased Reward from him that shall be without measure? Why shouldst thou set bounds to thy Work, when God hath set none to thy Wages? how unreasonable a thing is it that any measure of Duty, though never so short and scanty, should be thought enough by thee; when the Happiness thou hopest for, and God hath promised, is without all measure? Surely, a Christian should be always abounding in the Work of the Lord, who will always make him Happy; Alas, how little, how inconsiderable is our always of Working, to God's always of Rewarding? Suppose we were always abounding in the Work and Service of God, in which God knows we are greatly wanting, yet all our Obedience, extended unto the utmost, can reach no longer than to the end of a short Life; but God's Reward and our Happiness thereby runs parallel with an endless Eternity: Why then should a little time spent in the serving and honoring of God here, seem too much and too long, when an Eternity spent in the enjoyment of God will never be too much. Were there nothing of a Reward to be expected hereafter, yet a Godly Man would love and serve God; for the New Nature not only inclines him to it, but makes him delight in the doing of it. It is true, the great God, the Supreme Sovereign Lord of all his Creatures, might have made a Law, if he had pleased, to bind Man to Obedience without the encouragement of a promised Reward; but he hath not thought good to deal with Man in so strict a way and manner; but in a way of condescending Grace and Mercy; and so out of his immense Bounty and Goodness hath been

pleased to sweeten and facilitate Man's Obedience, with a promise of no meaner importance, than the enjoyment of the Eternal Inheritance with himself in Glory. O how much should this affect our Hearts? and how strongly should it oblige us to abound in the Work and Service of such a Lord and Master? Were it possible for the Saints in Heaven to communicate the Experiences and Enjoyments, which they now are partaking of in Glory, What a Confirmation and Encouragement would this be thought, to spirit and quicken us in the ways of Duty and Obedience? Why the Word of God, that holds forth the promised Reward, is as true, shall I say; nay, much more true than such a Communication can be; for in that our Senses may be deceived and we imposed upon; but by the Word of God we cannot; for that is Truth itself, and cannot lie: Wherefore the Word of God holding forth the promised Reward of Heaven, should be the greatest encouragement in the World to put Christians upon the utmost diligence imaginable in the Work and Service of God.

And the Truth of it is, as we can never begin too soon, so we can never hold out too long in the ways of Duty and Obedience. None ever repented when they came to Die, that they had spent too much of their time in the Service of God; Who ever read or heard of any that did thus repent? very many upon a Death-bed have bitterly lamented that they have done no more for God, that they have idled and wasted away so much of their precious time upon impertinent Vanities and Trifles; and that what they have done for God hath been so poor, so mean, so defective and so defiled: These things have been a great grief and trouble unto many; yea, the best of God's Servants, who have been most eminent for Grace, whose usefulness in their Generation others have admired, have yet themselves complained of their barrenness and unprofitableness, and mourned for their deficiency and falling short of what they should have done. Thus that

eminently laborious Servant of Jesus Christ, Bishop Usher, cries out against himself upon his Death bed, begging Pardon for his Sins of omission, and yet his constant Labors and Diligence, both in Preaching and Writing, was greatly and justly applauded by all. And if anyone should think this a strange assertion, that the People of God should at a dying hour be thus sensible of their great deficiencies; I humbly conceive this may be rendered as a Reason thereof, because the Saints and Servants of God at such a time, standing upon the brink of Eternity, and being ready to launch forth into that vast Ocean, have then enlarged and widened apprehensions, both of the infinite Majesty and Holiness of God, and of the unspeakable greatness of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven; and this makes not only their Persons, but the best of their Services appear inconsiderable in their own Eyes; but causes in them an Holy blushing and shame, that all their time they have done so little for that God who hath laid up so much for them; that they have glorified him so little here on Earth, unto whom they are now a going to enjoy a state of Eternal Glory and Happiness in Heaven.

Eighthly and Lastly, Is there such a place of Bliss and Happiness provided for and assured unto Believers hereafter, as Heaven is; Let the consideration hereof cause in them a Holy longing of Soul after the enjoyment of it. If there be enough in any Object, or in any Place, to draw forth the Love and Desires, the Panting's and Breathings of any Soul after them; certainly that Object is God, and that Place is Heaven, where God is fully and eternally to be enjoyed, and in the enjoyment of whom there is not only nothing but what is lovely and desirable, but where there is everything that is lovely and desirable also. We read frequently of the Expressions of many Holy Men, that set forth the greatness of their Love and Affection towards God; but there is none, that we meet with in Sacred Writ, whose Soul did more

delightfully vent itself in pathetic expressions of this Nature, than Holy David. The Book of Psalms abounds with them, Psal. 42.1, 2. As the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul is athirst for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God. Psal. 84.1, 2. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts, my Soul longeth; yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God. A day in thy Courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness. Psal. 63.1, 2, 3. O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land where no water is, that I may see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary. Now all these expressions of this Holy Man, are but the streaming's forth of the Love and Affection of his Soul, at several times and upon several occasions after the enjoyment of God in his House and Ordinances which he was then deprived of: And if the mediate presence of God and the communications of his Grace and Love to a Soul in Holy Duties be so much to be desired; because therein it enjoys God, and hath thereby the manifestations of his Love and Favor sealed and confirmed to it: Is not then the immediate presence of God in Heaven much more to be desired, where the Soul shall stand in no need of any Duties or Ordinances to confirm the Love of God unto it; because there shall be no Sin in it to provoke God to hide his Face from it, or to interrupt the Peace and Joy of the Soul's delighting itself in him to Eternity?

To be in such a frame, as to be able to say, though I experience not those ravishing Joys in the Hopes of Heaven, that some Servants of God attain unto, though I am a Stranger unto those vehement longings and holy panting's of Soul after God and Heaven, that some

are acquainted with, whereby they are ardently desirous of a dissolution; yet to be able to say, I bless God I am very well content to submit to his Will, the thoughts of Death are not terrible and amazing to me, but I am willing to yield myself up unto the good pleasure of God, when he sees good to call me hence. This indeed is something of the temper of a good Christian, and that which God takes well at the hands of any, if it be done upon good grounds: But this is not all that God expects, nor is it all that the Christian Religion teaches and requires; the certain and sure Principles of Christianity, founded on the Divine Oracles, will enable a Believer to go further; for it discovers an unbodied State of Happiness to be enjoyed by Holy Souls in another World, after which there should be such strong Workings and earnest Groanings, as should carry forth the Soul in Holy Longings and Desires after the participation thereof: And this now is not a frame of Soul to be found in a Believer upon a Death bed only; but it is that which should be the joyful Companion of his Life in the time of his Health and Strength; and the Reason is this, because God and Heaven have the same loveliness and desirableness in them at one time that they have at another, in Health that they have in Sickness, in Life as they have in Death; and therefore they call for and deserve the same height of Love and Affection, and the same strength of Joy and Delight to be exercised towards them, when a Believer hath the greatest enlargements of outward Prosperity, as when he is under the greatest confinement of Adversity or Sickness. Live therefore, O Believer, with a Holy Longing and Desire of Soul, springing up in thee continually after Heaven, be earnestly desirous after thy departure hence that thou mayest be with God: This was that Blessed Frame Holy Souls of old lived in; so the Apostle speaks of himself and others in that excellent Scripture, 2 Cor. 5.2, 4, 8. We, says he, that are in this Tabernacle, do groan earnestly that we may

be clothed upon with our House, that is from Heaven. And we groan being burdened that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life. And yet again says he, We are always confident, or we do always with confidence expect and desire to be absent from the Body; But why so? Oh there is good Reason for it, because says he, Whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent, or we are kept at too great a distance from the Lord. To be content to Die is a good temper of Soul, and that which is rarely found in any wicked man, to be sure not upon good grounds; but truly when I consider how much farther a Christian might go, and what he is yet short of that might tend to the Glory of God, the Credit of the Christian Religion, and the Peace and Comfort of his own Soul; methinks his present attainment compared with what is his Duty to Labor after, is no extraordinary great thing: For consider a little what a strange kind of expression is it, and how harshly doth it sound, to say concerning a Believer, that he is content to be Happy: As to Worldly enjoyments, it is not usual to say of any Man, that he is Content to have them; who says concerning Silver and Gold, that a Man is Content to be enriched with them? No, the common expression in this case is, not that Men are Content to be Rich, but that they are Covetous after Riches. And so for Honor and outward Greatness, we say not that Men are Willing to be Honored and Advanced above their Neighbors, but they are Ambitious in seeking after Promotion. And why then should it be said of a Christian only, that he is Content to be Happy, Content to be with God in Heaven? Now if Worldly Men's desires work thus strongly after Earthly and Temporal Enjoyments which cannot make them Happy when attained; surely the desires of a Christian should work as strongly after Heavenly and Eternal Enjoyments, which when attained, can and will make them truly and really Happy. And here I will add one thing, let the whole Creation be ransacked, let

Earth and Heaven be searched, there is nothing, no Person, no Object to be found in either that can make up a Satisfactory Bliss and Happiness for an Immortal Soul, but what is Supremely, Superlatively, Perfectively and Eternally good, and that is the Blessed God himself; the Enjoyment of whom in Heaven can only make the Soul perfectly and completely Happy.

Were I to persuade wicked men, I will not say long for Death, but only to be willing to Die, my task were not only difficult, but impossible; for who can by any Arguments prevail upon a Rational Creature, willingly to run himself into Miseries and Torments, though but of a short continuance, much more to rush upon those Miseries and Torments that shall be everlasting, into which every wicked man, when he comes to Die, shall fall? And this Sinners know not only from Scripture Revelation, but from the Terrors and Accusations of their own Consciences before hand. Unto such therefore all persuasions of this nature are vain and to no purpose, such stand in need of the most powerful Exhortations, backed with the strongest Arguments that can be, to stir them up to a speedy preparation for their approaching Dissolution, lest thereby they fall into a State of Misery that is unalterable forever.

But when I am speaking to the People of God, unto whom Death will be of such infinite Gain and Advantage, methinks my Work should be easy, though my Exhortation runs much higher, for unto such I am not now speaking, by way of persuasion unto a fitness for Death, because I take it for granted that this Work in the main of it is already done with them; nor yet am I stirring up in such a bare willingness to Die, but I would press them unto something further still, and that is, that they would entertain the thoughts of Death in their Meditations with Holy Longings and Desires of Soul after it;

and certainly there is no need of any other Arguments to urge this Duty upon such, than barely to tell them that Heaven stands open ready to receive them: and all the hurt Death will do unto such, is to give them admission into such a State of Bliss and Happiness, as shall extend itself unto the Satisfaction of all their Desires unto the utmost, both as to the Nature and Quality of them, and also as to the duration and continuance of them. The Happiness of Heaven being so great, that it requires the Capacities of the Soul should be enlarged to take in the fullness thereof, it being impossible the Soul of Man should now receive or bear up under the oppressing weight of so great a Happiness as is there to be enjoyed. Rest not thyself therefore satisfied, O believing Soul, with a bare Contentment of mind, that when thou diest, thou shalt certainly go to Heaven; but let thy frequent Thoughts hereof fill thee with Holy Longings and Panting's of Soul after that blessed State.

The Miseries of this Life, and the uncomfortableness of a Christian's manner of living while he is here, in respect of Sin, Sorrow, Doubts, Fears, Ignorance, and Temptations, which are in a great measure the daily and afflictive Companions of his life, are Arguments strong enough to make such a one willing to Die; but in Conjunction with these a Believer hath a Prospect of the Glory and Happiness of Heaven in the Eye of his Faith, unto which he knows Death will carry him, this should fill the desires of his Soul with Holy Longings after the Enjoyment of it. Open therefore O believing Soul, the Eye of thy Faith, and look upward and see if thou canst not espy a Glory and Happiness in the highest Heavens, that is worthy of the most earnest Breathings and Desires of thy Soul after it. Canst thou in the whole Universe, find out better Society in conversing with whom thou canst enjoy such Soul-satisfying pleasure; yea, such ravishing Joys and Delights as are there to be found? There are Holy Angels that never

sinned, whose Nature as well as whose Happiness in this State of Mortality, is beyond the reach of thy understanding to fathom. There are Glorified Saints, advanced to that perfection of Grace and Holiness, that they shall never sin more. There is the Blessed and never to be sufficiently admired Savior and Redeemer of Sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ, who as he once in our Natures, shed his Blood here on Earth, to purchase Heaven for Believers, so is he now residing in the same Nature, there preparing places for them, ready to receive them into the Embraces of his Love and Favor. Yea, in that Glorious place there is that which should much more excite the Desires of Believers after it, for there is the infinitely Great and Glorious God, whose Excellencies and Perfections are such, that as none can understand, none can make known; so none can bear the discoveries of them. Such dazzling Excellencies of Glory and Beauty are there in the Face of God, that Angels themselves are not able to behold them; and yet so lovely and desirable an Object is he, that Angels cannot refrain from looking on him: and certainly if the Great and Holy God should display but a little of himself in his Glory and Beauty unto the Soul of a Believer, should he open though but a little of the infinite Treasures of his goodness unto the view of the Soul, O with what Ravishments of Joy would that Soul press into the presence of God, and with what a Holy kind of impatience would it throw itself into his Arms! what need would there be of setting bounds to the Mount to keep such a Soul from breaking through unto the Lord! The Happiness of Heaven is so great, that had not God mercifully concealed from us the infinite Excellencies and Glory thereof in a great measure, our Desires would be so vehemently bent upon it, that we should be under such an impatience of Spirit after the enjoyment of it, as would render us unfit for any Employment that God calls us to in this World. Some therefore upon this account

have taken notice of the infinite Wisdom of God, in engaging the Soul in so near and dear a Union with the Body, that it might have such a care for, and Love towards it as might tend to its preservation, and not be desirous of quitting its habitation with it; yea, some of the Heathens themselves have observed the Wisdom of God in concealing the Happiness of Separate Souls, that Men might be contented to live out that time God hath allotted to them in this World. Alas, the most and the best of us see and know but little of these things, and what we do see is but through a Glass darkly, and that is the reason our Affections go not out more earnestly after them; did we know and understand more of Heaven and the Glory and Happiness thereof, we should with a Holy impatency of Desire, long after it: for is it not in Heaven that we shall never sin more, never offend God more, never wound our Consciences more, never do anything that shall either break our Peace, disturb our Joy, or endanger our Salvation? Is it not there that we shall be forever out of the reach of Satan 's Temptations, with which a Believer is so assaulted and harassed here, as renders his Life not only uncomfortable, but even burthensome to himself? Is it not there that our frail Bodies, which now are subject to Pains and Diseases, because defiled with Sin, shall be forever loosed from all Weaknesses and Infirmities, being made like unto the Glorious Body of Jesus Christ, perfectly freed from Mortality and Corruption, and from all Sin and Defilement? Is it not there that all the People of God shall be of one Heart and of one Mind, that being taken away both from within and from without, which was the cause of all their Divisions and Contentions here on Earth; and instead thereof, there shall be a sweet union of Hearts and Affections, all of them abundantly delighting and satisfying themselves in one God, as the Object of

their Happiness, without the least jarring or discord among them to all Eternity?

While the People of God are in this Vail of Tears, they labor under much Blindness and Ignorance about the Mysteries of Salvation as revealed in the Gospel; but in Heaven these Mysteries shall all be fully and perfectly made known to us. In this Life we take in our Knowledge of God, of Heaven, and of the Gospel, by which we are savingly enlightened in either, by little and little, as a Man that desires to know what is contained in a Book before it is exposed to public view, reads it Sheet by Sheet from the Press, and so understands a little and a little of it by Degrees: And truly so do Christians concerning the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, now they hear a Sermon, and by that they gain a little light; and in some short time they hear another Sermon, and by that they increase their light a little more; and thus their Stock of Divine Knowledge increaseth a little and a little at time by the help of means and opportunities that they enjoy: But now in Heaven all is done without travail or trouble, for though it is true, Glorified Saints there cease not from working, yet is it as true that they cease from labor. Here our Passions are strong and prevalent; by reason whereof our minds are blinded, and we easily mistake Error for Truth, and Truth for Error; but hereafter all these Clouds shall be blown away, and we shall see things nakedly and truly as they are in themselves. Here the weakness and smallness of many men's Natural Parts keeps them in the dark, and renders them incapable of apprehending some Truths of God, which others of greater abilities, can search into with pleasure and delight; But then as the Apostle, speaking concerning the day of Judgment, tells us, They that are alive then, shall not prevent those that are asleep: So in Heaven, they that are strong shall not prevent those that are weak, but the Scholar shall there know as

much as his Master, and the People understand as much as their Minister. In this World Contentions and Quarrelling's among Holy and Learned Men, leave the Weak and Ignorant at great uncertainties, what to Judge concerning many Gospel Truths: But in Heaven there shall be a perfect Reconciliation and Agreement among them all: yea, while we are here, it often falls out, that in our most diligent searching after Truth, we meet with many hindrances and disturbances; sometimes the necessary Affairs of this World cause us to lay aside our Enquiries; at other times many Distempers that attend our infirm Bodies, divert and hinder us in our most serious Inquisitions. But in Heaven, our Bodies will be above all these things; we shall there no more be liable to, nor annoyed with any Weaknesses and Infirmities. In that Glorious place we shall not need to provide either Raiment for the back, or Food for the belly. O what a Happiness have Believers by dying, who are thereby at once eased of all the aches of their Bodies, and of all the conflicts of their Souls: how comfortably may they look Death in the Face, who is the only Physician that cures them of all their Distempers at once: O when that blessed hour comes, how joyfully may they lift up their heads, for as soon as they are passed through that dark and gloomy Valley, they shall be brought into a place of inconceivable Bliss and Happiness, where they shall behold him whom their Souls so much loved and longed to see, even their Blessed Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, not at a distance or afar off, as they were wont to do by an Eye of Faith, through the Glass of an Ordinance or Promise; but with a Glorified Eye draw near to him and look upon his blessed Person, the Glorious sight of whom they shall never more lose, to all Eternity. When a Believer shall not, as here he hath, now and then some little glimpses of his Face, and some small tastes of his Love in a little Sacramental Bread and Wine, but he shall lay his Mouth to the

Fountain head, and from his Bosom drink full and large draughts of those Rivers of the Waters of Life that proceed out of the Throne of God, and of the Lamb for evermore. He shall then no more have any descriptions of Heaven, by fear say, as he was wont to have it described to him here by the sorry Rhetoric of a Mortal Man, either by Preaching or Writing of that which he himself had little Love to, and less Knowledge and Acquaintance with; but shall himself walk up and down and view the Streets of that Glorious City: And O with what Wonder and Astonishment will a Believer bless himself there, when he reflects back upon those poor and low thoughts that himself and the best of Preachers also had thereof when on Earth he did Meditate, and they did Preach or Write upon that Subject. One moment's sight of that Glory will give the Soul a thousand times better Information and Satisfaction what Heaven is, than all the Discourses that it ever heard, or all the Books it ever read here on Earth were ever able to do.

And canst thou, O Believer, hear all this concerning Heaven, and thy Faith tell thee that all this is true, and add also that Heaven is ten thousand times more and better than what all the Men in the World can imagine concerning it, and yet not feel some springing's up of Holy Joy and Delight in thee, followed with earnest longings of Soul after the Enjoyment of it; O whence doth this dullness and backwardness proceed? this is not a temper of Soul suitable unto the Hopes of so great a Happiness as Heaven will be? Why dost thou not O Believing Soul, cry out with Holy Longings and Desires, How long O Lord most Holy and True, shall it be before thou bringest me into the Possession of this most Blissful State; Every moment whilst thou art kept at a distance from it, should seem to thee a Day, and every Day a Month, and every Month as a Year; yea, as an Age until that blessed time doth come. But O how little of this Holy Longing of Soul

after Christ and Heaven, is there to be found among Christians now? Most of those that call themselves by that Name, resting upon Hopes and Probabilities of their interest in that State of Blessedness, never seeking to attain unto the Riches of the full Assurance of Hope accompanied with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. But sure I am such a frame of Spirit hath not always been enough to satisfy some Christians in their pursuits after Heaven. Oh with what Ravishments of Joy and Delight have I both heard and read some Holy Souls expressing their longing Desires after Christ and Heaven.

There was a certain Noble Person, whom I well knew, from under whose own hand writing, I Copied out this following Relation concerning herself. Being employed in Holy Meditation, (which was both her daily Practice, as also her daily Delight and Solace) and Contemplating of the Joys of Heaven, and how to secure her Interest in that State of Blessedness, she did with great Desire of Soul, as her own words are, strive to take the Kingdom above with a Holy Violence, and to Storm Heaven by importunate Prayer; and God was pleased, as she adds, (Blessing his Name) to carry her up as it were unto Mount Nebo, and from thence to give her a Prospect of the Heavenly Canaan, by the sight whereof as one in an Ecstasy of Joy, she cried out, Lord I would not live here always; for I am now convinced, it is better for me to die than to live: It is therefore, O Lord, the great Desire of my Soul, that as Elias was, so I might instantly be taken up into Heaven, without returning anymore, to bid them farewell of my own House, or ever seeing the Faces of any Mortal Relations more here on Earth. Prayer and Meditation had, as her Expression is, Associated her Spirit to such Company, that I rather thought, says she, I had a Body too much with me, than found a want of it. After which shedding plentiful Tears of Joy, and the offering up of many Sighs and Groans, accompanied with earnest

Desires and Longings after Heaven, with fervent Prayers to be a partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; she returned from her Devotions Blessing and Praising of God, who had so refreshed and comforted her Soul with Divine and Heavenly Consolations.

There was also a very Eminently Godly Person, some of whose Relations are yet living, who lying upon his Death-bed, there came one to Visit him, who told him, he hoped it would please God to restore him to his Health again; says the good Man to him, Do you think to please me with such a Discourse as this? know O Friend, you are much mistaken in me, if you apprehend the thoughts of Life and Health are pleasing to me. Alas! the World hath quite lost its Excellency; in my Judgment, it is but a poor contemptible thing in all its Glory, compared with the Glory of the invisible World, which I now live in the sight of: it would be a far more Pleasant and Delightful thing to me, if you could tell me for certain, that I am no Man for this World long, and that before tomorrow, I should be in Eternity; for I do so long to be with Christ, that I could be content to be cut in pieces and put to the most exquisite Torments, might I but die and be with Christ. Death through Grace is nothing to me, it hath lost its terribleness, and therefore may do its worst, I fear it not, I can as easily Die as shut my Eyes, or turn my head and Sleep; yea, I long to Die that I may be with Christ; come therefore, O Lord Jesus, come quickly; why, O why are thy Chariot Wheels so long a coming?

O says another, How cold is thy kindness, O Death, in being so slow and backward to come and loose a poor tired Prisoner from his Bonds? I live a dwindling Life, with much Pain and much Love-Sickness for my sweet Lord Jesus. O what would I give to have a Bed made for my wearied Soul in my Dear Lord's Bosom. I cannot express what pains and delightsome Torments there are in his Love.

O Fairest among the Children of Men; yea, thou who art Fairer than all the Children of Men, why stayest thou so long? The Fire of Love burneth so hot in my heart towards Jesus Christ, that neither Hell nor Earth can cast water enough to quench or extinguish it. O Time, Time, how dost thou torment the Souls of those that would be swallowed up in Christ's Love, because thou movest so slowly. O how am I pained with the Love of Christ, he hath left an Arrow in my Heart, which hath wounded me, that I am swallowed up with desires after him, so that I am to be pitied for want of real possession of him; my greatest pain is the want of Christ, not of his Joys and Comforts, but of a nearer Union and Communion with him. O Heavens, move fast, O Time, run, run, and hasten the Marriage Day, for Love is tormented with delay. Hope and Love woven through one another, make Christ's absence a Spiritual Torment. It is a pain to my Soul to wait for him, but Hope that maketh not ashamed, but ends in Enjoyment, swalloweth up the pain. O Lord, when wilt thou fold the Heavens together like an old Cloak, and Shovel Time and Days out of the way, and make ready in haste the Bride for her Husband. What do we here but sin and suffer? O when shall the Night be gone, and the Shadows fly away, and the Morning of that long Day without Clouds or Night, dawn? The Spirit and the Bride say come: O when shall the Lamb's Wife be ready, and the Bridegroom say, I come also? Even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

I do not mention these things, as if I thought these Holy Panting's and Longings of Soul, after God and Heaven, were the stated frame which is commonly attained by all Christians; much less do I not think that none are truly Godly, but such as attain to this frame of Spirit; for I believe there are a great Number of Holy Souls that daily go to Heaven without them. But yet is it a State that hath been attained by some, and may be attained still by others. And truly such

a Heaven upon Earth, as is hereby enjoyed by such Holy Souls, should be motive sufficient to excite and provoke Christians to a diligent pursuit hereof, the Effect whereof is Joy unspeakable and Glorious.

To conclude this whole Discourse, I have been long in treating concerning the Glorious State of the Saints Happiness in Heaven, and much larger than at first I intended; but the excellency and deliciousness of the matter herein contained, hath drawn out my Meditations to so great a length, and the truth of it is, in contemplating upon so delightful a Subject, it is very hard and difficult, when the Heart and Affections are engaged with pleasure and delight, suddenly to recall them off again. But I need not attempt to make any Apology for the length of my Discourse, concerning this Subject, for certainly to those unto whom an Eternity of enjoyment of this State of Blessedness will never seem too long; the spending of some few hours; nay, of many Days or Months, either in writing upon, or in reading of what can be written thereon, cannot seem tedious or irksome. To pass by therefore anything of that Nature, I shall conclude all with a few Words.

I have, Christian Reader, in discoursing upon this Subject, followed those who by Maps describe to us Places and Countries, not only that they themselves never saw, but which are also unknown unto others, because not inhabited: Now these Countries and Places, though they may be pleasurable and delightful Habitations, and the Accommodations and Commodities with which they abound, exceed what we enjoy in some other Places; yet being unknown there cannot be any exact Descriptions given of them. Truly this is the State of the Heavenly Country in a great measure, to which Believers are now travelling, and unto which they expect to be brought when Death

hath done its last work upon them: It is true, it is not an uninhabited Place, but yet it is a Place, a Region or Country of Spirits, whose Natures and Beings, as also whose way of living we are unacquainted withal, the Language they speak is Foreign and strange to us, and such as we cannot understand in this State of Mortality. And though there are many Holy Souls, that leaving their impure and vile Bodies, return to corruption and rottenness for a time in the Grave, do daily ascend unto this Heavenly Country, yet are there none among the innumerable multitudes of those Heavenly Inhabitants, that ever returned to take up their dwelling here on Earth again, to give us an exact account of that most glorious and blissful place. It is true, the Blessed Apostle St. Paul was herein privileged above all Men that ever lived, being taken up into Heaven, by extraordinary favor, for a time, and vouchsafed some little more knowledge of that Heavenly Place, than what we poor Mortals know, by what he there heard and saw; which when he returned to Earth again, himself tells us the Happiness thereof was so great, that Words could not express it: for, says he, I heard unspeakable Words, even such, as are not possible for a Man to utter. And if one that had been in Heaven could not express what the Happiness of Heaven is; how then can any one do it that always lived here upon Earth. If St. Paul, that was by Divine Grace and Favor admitted among those Heavenly Inhabitants, could not describe to us what Heaven is, well may we be at a loss in giving a description thereof, who were never there. When we attempt to say all we can concerning Heaven, alas, it is but like the lispings and stammering of a Child, that is not arrived to its perfect Speech; and therefore all that we can say of it, is but in a broken and imperfect way and manner.

While we are in this World, we shall always be Children in understanding what Heaven means; and therefore whatever we

speaking concerning the Happiness thereof must be proportionable thereunto. As no Man hath seen God himself, so no Man hath seen the Heaven of God, the Habitation of his Holiness and Glory: Our Lord tells us, so expressly concerning both, John 1.18. No Man hath seen God at any time. And in Joh. 3.13. No Man hath ascended up into Heaven. Our knowledge of both is chiefly by Divine Revelation. It is true, much of God is and may be known, by the Works of Creation and Providence; but the true saving knowledge of God is only made known to us by Divine Revelation. And in the same way and manner comes in our knowledge of Heaven also, that is by what the Scripture makes known to us thereof. Now according to what those divinely inspired Oracles discover to us what Heaven is, hath the preceding Discourse concerning that Blessed State and Place, both its Foundation and Building: What influence it will have upon the Hearts and Lives of those that shall be the Readers thereof, I know not; but assure thyself whoever thou art, into whose hands it shall fall, that all these Words have not been heaped up together, to entertain thee with a relation of some strange and fabulous story; nor are the many particular instances of Happiness, which are so largely treated of in the foregoing Discourse, things which may have a probability of credit among sober and serious Persons; but they are things of the greatest certainty and of the most undoubted reality that possible can be, whether they be believed or not.

It is true, Heaven and the Glory and Happiness there to be enjoyed, which are the subject matter of this Discourse, are things that are invisible and out of sight; but they are so only to an Eye of Sense; for to an Eye of Faith they are the greatest realities in all the World. The heavenly Glory indeed is that which is Spiritual, but it is not therefore that which is not Real; but because it is Spiritual, therefore is it the more Real; yea, and being Spiritual, and so the more Real,

therefore also should it be received and entertained by Christians, not only with the greatest seriousness and earnestness, but also with the strongest Faith, and firmest affiance that possible can be. I must therefore take the boldness to tell thee, whoever thou art that shalt read these lines, that the concernment that lies before thee, in the present case, is not slight, small, nor inconsiderable; but a matter of the greatest weight and moment that can possibly be proposed to thy consideration. It is true, as thou art a Man, and as thou art a Christian also, there are many particular Works and Actions, which thou art called to the performance of; but yet the making sure of Heaven and a Blessed Immortality, is and ought to be the chief of thy Works and Employments, and that to which all thy other acting's should have a tendency, and in the attaining of which they should all issue and terminate.

If a Man have many things to do in the World, common Prudence will put him upon doing of that first, which is of greatest moment and concernment to him; especially if he hath but a little time to do it in, and the neglect thereof will be his utter ruin: Whoever heard of a Man in his Wits, that preferred the enjoyment of a little pleasure and pastime, before the ensuring of an Estate of a thousand pound a year to him and his, which might and could be done in that short space of time and in no other? Whoever preferred the curing of a slight cut in his Finger, before the healing of some dangerous Wound received in his Head or Heart, which if not taken in time would prove his Death? Or was it ever known that a Man, who had the use of his Reason and Understanding, and had forfeited his Life to his Prince by some Treasonable Act, for which he was condemned to Die, and had his Life proffered him, if on such a Day he would come and submit himself to his Sovereign, and ask his Pardon; and instead of so doing, he should rather choose to spend that Day among his sinful and

riotous Companions, in Drinking and Gaming, and so lose the opportunity of saving of his Life? Such Acts of Folly as these are, committed by any Men, would make them unpitied and unlamented, under the extremity of Miseries and Sorrows that should befall them thereupon: But the generality of Men in these cases are more wise and considerative, than thus to ruin and undo themselves. O then let it not lie any longer as a reproach upon Christians, that the Men of the World are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light: Why shouldst not thou, O Christian, be as careful and prudent in thy Spiritual Concerns as the Men of the World are in their Temporal Concerns? Is not Heaven of as much worth and value as Earth? Is not thy Right and Title to an Eternal Inheritance above, of as great moment to thee, as a Title to an Earthly Inheritance here below, is unto them? Is not the Love and Favor of God as much to be prized and endeavored after, as the Favor of an Earthly Prince? Is not the Salvation and Happiness of thy Soul in Heaven, to all Eternity, of as great importance, as the saving of a short Temporal Life of the Body, which with the improvement of the utmost care and diligence that can be used, cannot long be kept from falling into corruption and rottenness? What then canst thou render as a Reason of thy carelessness and negligence herein: Surely thy Folly is as much greater than theirs, as Heaven is better than Earth, and the enjoyment of God to Eternity, is better than the enjoyment of the World for a short moment of time. The Blessedness and Happiness therefore propounded to thy consideration, being of the greatest concernment that ever was or can be proposed unto any; the despising, yea, the slighting and neglecting of an offer of such rich Grace and Bounty, is that which shall be punished with infinitely far greater misery and torment, than ever yet was inflicted upon any; yea, or upon all Mankind in the World put together. Were it possible

to make up a Misery and Torment of all the Rage and Malice, that ever Men or Devils since the Creation invented or executed upon any; yea, and add to it the sum, the quintessence and extremity of all those Pains and Diseases both of Body and Mind, that the Justice of the Holy and Righteous God, hath justly and righteously inflicted upon any; yea, upon the whole Race of Mankind from the beginning of the World unto this Day, and let all this be laid upon one Man, and he strengthened and enabled to live under all those Pains and Torments, in the extremity of them, for a thousand years: Who would not say this Man were a miserable Man indeed? Why truly, such; nay, ten thousand times far greater shall be the Eternal, never-ending Misery and Torment of that Man, who finally persists in his contempt and slighting of Heaven and Eternal Happiness; and so do all those whose pains and care is not with diligence and industry laid out in securing to themselves an interest in the Heavenly Inheritance: For certainly the utmost extremity of Desires and Endeavors, is due unto, and ought to be laid out in the pursuit of an extremity of Bliss and Happiness; and such is Heaven and the Blessedness there to be enjoyed, it being that which will fill and satisfy the Desires and Cravings of the Soul, unto the utmost, to all Eternity.

I have no more to say to thee, O Christian Reader, than this, if neither the greatest extremity of misery that can be endured; yea, the enduring of all Miseries and Torments heaped up together, not for Thousands or Millions of years, but to an endless duration never to expire, will not move thee to look after Heaven; nor yet the Happiness and Blessedness; yea, the Eternity of an inexpressible and inconceivable Happiness and Blessedness, that there is and shall be forever enjoyed by the Saints in Glory, and may be also enjoyed by thee, if thou art wise and prudent, if thou art diligent and careful in

improving thy time and opportunities. If I say thine own Interest, thine own Misery or Happiness, will not move nor work upon thee to bestir thyself to make sure of Heaven and Eternal Life, I know not what will, neither do I know what to say more unto thee. However I shall turn my Advice and Counsel to thee, into Prayer unto God for thee, whoever thou art that shalt read this Discourse, that God would graciously be pleased to open thine Eyes, and show thee convincingly and powerfully, by a Work of his own Spirit, on thy Heart, thy great Misery if thou persist in thy neglect of Heaven, and thy great Happiness and Blessedness if thou embrace and close with the offers thereof before it be too late: Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, unto all those that shall read this Discourse, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who by his Death and Sufferings hath purchased this Heaven and this Happiness; and is thereby become the Author of Eternal Salvation, to all those that believe in him and obey him. Amen,

FINIS.

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