

4. Bibliographie der Schriften

**Three Practical DISCOURSES: I. Of the Love of GOD. II. Of Charity to the Poor. II. Of the differing Degrees of Glory.
By August. Herman. Franck [!], ...**

Francke, August Hermann

London, 1716

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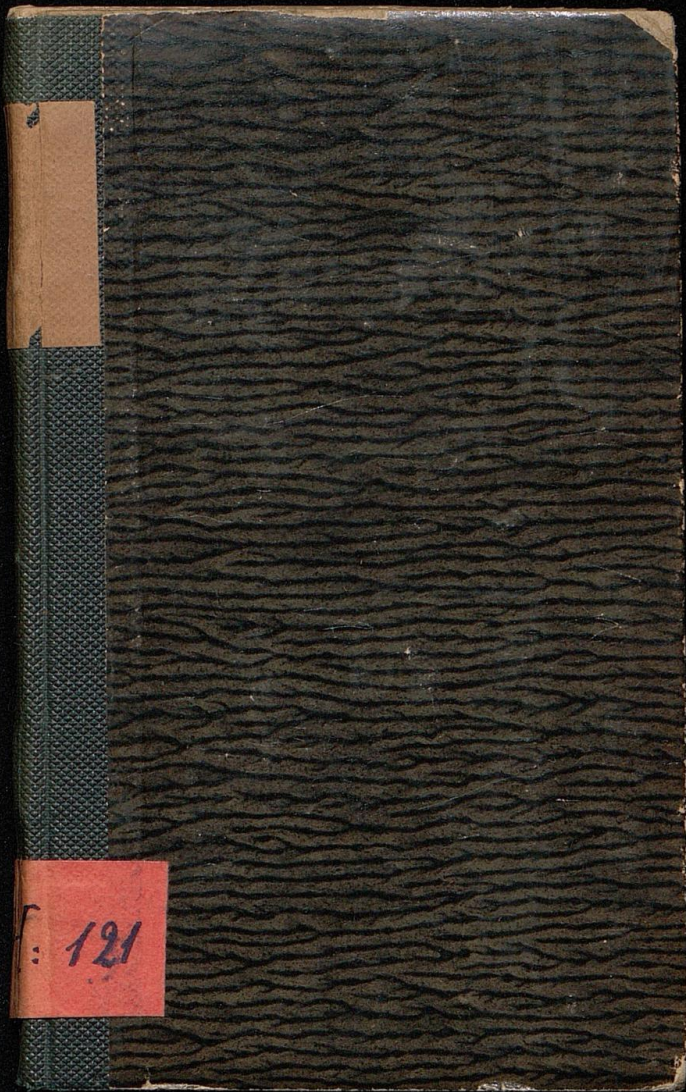
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Three Practical
DISCOURSES:

- I. Of the Love of GOD.
- II. Of Charity to the Poor.
- III. Of the differing Degrees
of Glory.

By *August. Herman. Franck*, Mi-
nister in the City of *Hall*, and
Director of the pious Founda-
tions there.

*Done into English from the
High-Dutch.*

L O N D O N:

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TO THE
English Reader.

NOTHING can be more agreeable to a sincere Christian, than to read Discourses of the Love of God. As the State of the Blessed hereafter will be for ever made up of a Life of Love, so, whosoever in Sincerity loveth God and his Neighbour, doth anticipate that Life, which to all Eternity will fill him with the choicest and most exquisite Pleasures.

As GOD himself is LOVE, so the Virtue of Love ought to be had in the highest Esteem and Veneration, as approaching next to
A 2 the

the Divine Being, and his essential Constitution. As CHRIST is the great Teacher of Love and Charity; so it ought to be learned, not only with the Understanding, but also with the Will and Affections, by those that call themselves after his Name. As Love is the very Pledge and Character of a Christian; so it ought to be seriously practised by those who wish for a safe and sure Evidence of their being adopted into the Number of true Disciples. As it is the Fulfilling of the Law; so it ought to be regarded as the very Sum and Abstract of the Word, and the Standard of Equity therein erected.

As Love is a Royal Law, and hath a Royal Author; so it carrieth with it an eminent Dignity; and whosoever deviateth from it, ought to believe, he incurreth no less Crime than that of Rebellion. As it is the first Fruit of the Spirit, so it ought to take the first Place

To the Reader.

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Place in the Heart, to influence all other Virtues that grow on the same Stock, as Fruits of the same Spirit.

May the Lord be pleased to plant in our Hearts a Spirit of Love, and thereby excite all our Powers to do his Pleasure in all Things! May he bless the following Lines to the same End, and crown all those with a Recompence of Reward hereafter, who, in the midst of a cold and degenerate Age, have continued faithful to the End, both in their Love towards God, and in Charity towards their Neighbour.

May He preserve a holy Remnant of pure and unspotted Souls, at a Time, when so many, by leaving their first Love, leave also their first Light; and thus exposing themselves to the Snares of the Tempter, and the Danger of the Times, are led away at last into strong and strange Delusions.

A 3

Phi-

Philanthropie :

O R, T H E

Love of God towards Men.

Deut. XXXIII. 3.

Yea, God loved the People.

THAT God loveth the People, or Men, *Moses* affirmeth in his Blessings, *Deut. xxxiii. 3.* And our Saviour *Jesus Christ* hath expressed it in this manner: *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, Joh. iii. 16.* This is that Love which *St. Paul* calleth by the Name of *Philanthropie*, or, the Love of God **TOWARDS MEN**, *Tit. iii. 4.*

A 4

To

To comprehend in some Degree this divine *Philanthropie*, and to make it sink the deeper into our Hearts, we might view it under several Heads and Denominations. One might consider the great *Majesty* of God, his unutterable *Glory*, his infinite *Might and Power*, his unlimited *Bliss* and *Happiness*, standing in no need of any other Help and Support, together with that perfect *Purity* and *Holiness* which resides in Him : All which Attributes, as they are constantly employ'd for the Good of Men, so they might open unto us a large Prospect of his Love and Kindness. But a few general Hints displaying this Love, and inviting us to love Him again, will suggest to us sufficient Matter for our present Design.

The marvellous Nature and Essence of this great and glorious GOD, as it exceeds the Capacity of any of his Creatures, so it affords us a constant Conviction of his infinite *Greatness* and *Glory* ; the Scriptures themselves being very full and expressive of his *Glory* and *Majesty* ; of which a large Account is set down, *Ecclus* xlii. 15. and xliii. throughout.

But

But then let us also, in the *second* Place, consider what *Man* is, especially after his shameful falling away from God, into the Service of Sin and Vanity.

Man is now become a Creature unfaithful to his Creator, revolted from GOD, groaning under the Sentence of Death, and the Curse of the Law. He is filled with Sin, both Original and Actual, and with Enmity against so great and gracious a GOD; he is incapable of all that is Good, and prone to what is Bad: and thus running himself into all manner of Evil, proveth the unhappy Contriver of his own Ruine and Misery.

When you read in the *Levitical* Law, the Ordinances GOD made concerning both the Uncleanneſs of Beasts, and the bodily Uncleanneſs of Men themselves; such as were the Leprosie, Ulcers, Scab, Issue of Blood, and the like; then be assured, that all this relateth to the depraved State of Men after the Fall, which thereby is most lively represented. Hath not *David* Reason then to ask: Lord, what is *Man*, that thou takeſt Knowledge of him? or the Son of *Man*, that

A 5 thou

10 *Love of God to Man.*

thou makest such Account of him?
Psal. cxliv. 3.

Thirdly : Let us also reflect on the great and inconceivable *Disproportion* there is between GOD, who *lovetb* Man, and the Man himself, who is the *Object beloved* of GOD.

There seemed to be a vast *Inequality* (at least in the Judgment of Men,) betwixt *Abasuerus* and *Esther* : But that would be very small, if compared with what we may find betwixt *GOD* and *Man*.

For GOD is the *All-perfect Being*; and Man, as the *Psalmist* saith, is but a *Shadow and Vanity*, Psal. xxxix. 5. and cxliv. 4.

GOD is the most *Holy*; in whose Sight even the *Heavens are not clean*, Job xv. 15. when Man, on the contrary, is impure and unholy, of a perverse and crooked Nature, a Rebel against his God, Shame and Dishonour, and by Nature no Child of GOD, but of *Wrath*, Deut. xxxii. 5. Eph. ii. 3. And who is now able to express, and sufficiently to set forth, this infinite *Disproportion*?

Fourthly : Consider that there is nothing at all in Man, that deserves, or
may

may procure that Love which the Lord so freely bestows on him. We our selves, says the Apostle, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures; living in Malice and Envy, hateful, (or, altogether abominable,) and hating one another. And being in this woful Condition, it was then, he says, that the divine *Philanthropie*, or Love of God towards Men, appeared, Tit. iii. ver. 3. compared with ver. 4. and Deut. ix. 4, 5, 6.

Fifthly: Do but observe particularly, that there is not only nothing lovely to be met with in Man, the Object of God's Love; but on the contrary, that he is full of every thing which may render him odious to the Lord, and bring upon him his just Hatred and Indignation. And that none should think himself free from so foul and universal a Stain, or value himself upon any Prerogative whatsoever, the Apostle represents both Jews and Heathens in most black and detestable Colours, and declares them both guilty of most vile and abominable Crimes; as plainly appears from the three first Chapters of his Epistle

12 *Love of God to Man.*

Epistle to the *Romans*: To which may be added, what is said, *Psal.* v. and *Ezek.* xvi. to give us a just Sense of the Fall of Man, and of the horrid Corruption of his Nature. And even whilst he is in this deplorable State, the Love of God begins its work, and calls upon Man to return and be saved.

Sixthly: Consider therefore, again and again, that the divine Lover is moved to love, not by any Worth or Dignity he perceiveth in him whom he loveth; but entirely and purely by the Motive of his own inconceivable Love and Compassion. This he hath declared himself, *Jer.* xxxi. 20. *My Bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have Mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* See also *Rom.* v. 5, 6, 7.

Seventhly: Consider that this tender Love, which hath its Original in the incomprehensible and eternal Compassion of God, penetrateth the very Abyss of Misery, into which Man is sunk, in order to deliver him out of it, according to that of *Hezekiah*: *Thou hast in Love to my Soul delivered it from the Pit of Corruption,* *Isai.* xxxviii. 17. Consider also, that the
End

End GOD hath proposed to Himself in his Love, is no other, than to make Man like Himself again, who, by his Fall, hath lost the Image of GOD; and then, after having rescued him from the Gulf of Perdition, and of all Evils attending him here, conduct him at last to the most sublime and glorious Perfection.

Eighthly: Remember that the divine Love readily bestoweth the *Greatest* of all good Things for the Saving of Man, and for procuring to him unspeakable Bliss and Happiness: This is no less than the only and beloved *Son* of GOD, sent into the World to save and redeem it. And who can doubt, but that it is chiefly with regard to this ineffable Love, the Lord himself is called *Love* in Scripture? It was the *tender Mercy* of God, whereby the *Day-Spring* from on high hath visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, Luk. i. 78, 79. Joh. iii. 16. 1 Joh. iv. 9, 10.

Ninthly: Consider that this Love employeth all the Riches of the Goodness of GOD, of his Forbearance and Long-Suffering; and this for no other

ther Reason, but that by all possible Means He may attain the *End* which He hath proposed concerning Man.

Tenthly: Conclude therefore from thence, that this Love is an eternal Love, an unsearchable, and for ever an inexhaustible Love, altogether sublime and magnificent, most Pure, most Holy, most Perfect, and most Divine. For *GOD Himself is Charity: or Love*, 1 Joh. iv. 16.

Eleventhly, Observe that this Divine Love doth not require of Man any Merit by Works at all, but only a profound Acknowledgment of his extreme Want and Unworthiness, attended with unfeigned Grief and Repentance for his former wicked and profligate Life, whereby he hath deprived himself so long of the Enjoyment of this pure and heavenly Love. The Consequence whereof will be, that, after he hath once regained a Sense of so invaluable a Love, he will then, with the greater Care and Concern, watch over it, lest by Unbelief, or Disobedience, he lose again the only Comfort of his Life. He will *Suffer*, that it may act in him freely, and without Opposition. He will

will be ready to receive it, whenever it offers it self, to quicken his deadish Heart, to enflame his cold Heart, to melt his icy Heart, to cleanse more and more his profane and worldly Heart, to diffuse it self in and about it, to display therein its wonderful *Glory* and *Beauty*, and to deliver it at last from all its *Sin* and *Misery*.

Truly, the Love and Goodness of GOD will infallibly effect all these marvellous Things, provided a Man do not hinder its sweet and agreeable Operations, by Unbelief and Self-will; but give himself up to it, as a sick and wounded Person to a Physician, who is able to procure his Health and Recovery. Man ought but to humble himself under the Hand of GOD, and, like a Patient, quietly wait till he be healed, and relieved by this All-sufficient Love; which will not fail to visit him in time, and satiate him for ever with the Fatness of GOD's House, and with a River of Pleasures.

Twelfthly: Observe, that this most pure and perfect Love of GOD doth not reject the vilest Transgressor that can be, even if he be defiled with the very Blood of Sin and Iniquity. GOD looks upon a Man whilst he is in this
miser-

miserable Condition, with an Eye of Mercy, and with the tenderest Disposition that Pity can inspire: And being thus moved with Love and Compassion, He endeavours to prevent the Sinner from farther Mischief: He goes forth to meet him in his Return, He accepts and receives him, He washes and cleanses him from his Filth and Impurities. For it is from Him, the living Waters of the Holy Spirit do proceed, whereby the penitent Sinner is regenerated, renewed, made a new Man, and render'd acceptable in the sight of GOD. These and many other Graces flowing from the Love of GOD, are most copiously declared, *Ezek. xvi. 6. Luk. xv. 20. Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. iii. 5, 6. Rom. v. 5.*

Thirteenthly: Consider also the wise and wonderful Order, according to which divine Love doth proceed in its various Works and Emanations. *First,* It gaineth the Sinner so far, as to render him thoroughly sensible of the dismal Condition into which he hath plunged himself; and then it maketh him groan and breath after a Redeemer. After the Soul hath struggled

gled a while under a woful Sense of her Misery, and sees nothing but Poverty and Nakedness in Spirit; 'tis then that the Love of God steps in, and cloaths her with the Robes of Grace, and the Ornaments of Salvation, which are the Garments of the *First-born*, wherein the mystical *Jacob* receives the Blessing of his Father, *Gen. xvii. 15, 23, 27, 29.* For it is then that this divine Love admits a Man into the full Possession of *CHRIST*, and applies to him his Righteousness as his *own*; that so being justified by his Grace, he may be Heir of Eternal Life, *Tit. iii. 7.*

Fourteenthly: Observe that this Love produceth a lively *Hope* in Man, and that it granteth and giveth the Spirit of Adoption, with all other Graces that accompany it. And this must needs prove a most valuable Engagement, and the very Pledge and Earnest of that Inheritance, which in its proper Time, shall be most gloriously displayed. See of this heavenly *Earnest*, *Eph. i. 14. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. Chap. v. 5.* 'Tis this Hope which, as an *Anchor of the Soul*, both sure and stedfast, entreth into that which is
within

within the Vail, whither Jesus Christ is entred as an High Priest for us, Heb. vi. 19, 20. Rom. viii. 15,---25.

Fifteenthly: Remember that the Love of GOD is so free and communicative, as to impart its divine Power to Man, giving him all Things that pertain to Life and Godliness, by the Knowledge of Him that hath called him, by his own Glory and Power, 2 Pet. i. 3. This divine Power guardeth him faithfully from the infectious Lusts which reign in the World, and maketh him partaker of the Divine Nature it self; so that he is now no more led by the Flesh, but by the Spirit; that he walketh now no more after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, by which he mortifieth the Deeds of the Body, Rom. viii. 1, 9, 13. Gal. v. 22, 24, 25.

Sixteenthly: Consider, in fine, that this Love having once begun a thorough Reformation in you, and reclaimed you from your corrupted Ways; you ought now to go on steddily in the Lord, and improve his Love into a higher Degree of Sanctification. He is ready to sanctifie you more and more, nay, entirely, and render you Perfect throughout, that all that

that is in you, the Spirit, Soul, and Body, may be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; that you may be presented with Gladness before his irreprehensible Glory, *Phil. i. 6. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. Jude ver. 24.* 'Tis then that Love arriveth to its final *End* and *Perfection*, when it conducteth Man into the goodly Heritage of Eternal Life, where there will be no more Weeping, or Lamenting, but a full and constant display of that Love which hath been hid here under various Crosses and Tribulations, *1 Joh. iii. 1, 2. Joh. iii. 16. Chap. xvii. 24. Rev. Chap. xxi, xxii.*

And now, my Beloved, remember these Things, and meditate thereon with a serene and quiet Spirit, which is *of so great a Price* before God; that you may perceive at last, nay, taste and feel, to what Degree the Lord loveth Men. There is no doubt, but this divine Fire will soon begin to be kindled within you, after you have mused a while on its various and surprising Effects. But then do not rest in a transient Taste or View of this Love, but let it afford you some Matter

ter to higher and more practical Observations.

First then, cast an Eye upon *your Self*, and consider what Account you have hitherto made of the Love of GOD, and what Price you have set upon it: Whether you have regarded it as your greatest and most valuable Treasure; or whether you have made light of it, as of a thing that cannot give any great Satisfaction.

Consider further, what Place you have afforded it in your Hearts, whenever it hath presented it self to you, and endeavour'd to get Admittance into the choicest Faculties of your Soul.

Consider whether you have suffer'd it freely to operate, and to effect its divine Work in you; whether it hath transformed you into its own Nature, and happily united you to its Self.

And *Lastly*, I would have you consider, what the present Disposition of your Soul is, in relation to this Love: Whether your Sentiments, Thoughts, Affections and Intentions, Discourses and Actions; in a Word, whether your outward and inward Conduct and Manner of Life doth

con-

convince you, that this Love hath a real Influence upon you, and that it continueth to gain Ground in you every Day; so that from thence you may conceive a well-grounded Hope, that the God of Love will also finish his Work in his Time, and carry it to a happy Conclusion at last.

But, alas! if you find no such thing as the Love of God in your Souls, but rather what is contrary to it, I mean the Love of Sin and Vanity; I then beseech you to return betimes, and suffer your Selves to be found and embraced by the Love of God: For it seeketh you as a tender Mother seeketh her lost Child, and waits patiently, that you may receive the Comfort it is willing to bestow upon you.

Secondly: You ought well to weigh the Nature of that Love which you bear to your *Neighbour*, and your whole Deportment towards him. Consider whether the *Purity* of the Love of GOD towards you, hath wrought you into a pure and *disinterested* Love towards your Neighbour: And whether the compassionate *Tenderness* of the divine Love hath had so happy an effect upon you, as to cloath
you

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you with Bowels of Mercy towards your Neighbour, with Kindness and Humbleness of Mind, with Meekness and Long-suffering, and other Virtues which are wont to accompany that Love, which is the Bond of Perfection, *Col. iii. 12.* For truly, the good Will and Love of GOD towards us, ought to be the constant Model and Foundation of that Love and Affection we ought to bestow on our Neighbour, as the Apostle doth plainly set forth, *Tit. iii. 1.* compared with *ver. 4.*

Thirdly and Lastly, You ought to consider, that GOD himself is LOVE, and that consequently Love is the nearest Way to unite you to Him for ever, who is Love in a most universal and essential Manner. If you are not able to reach into the Bottom of this Sea of Love, suffer then, that a Drop of a living Faith may fall into this vast Ocean, and believe what as yet you cannot see. This Sea of Love will never be drawn dry, and this Ocean will never be fathomed by the narrow Dimensions of our Understanding: Let therefore your Faith sink into that Love which passeth

Love of God to Man. 23

feth Knowledge; and let it sink freely, without Fear and Anxiety. If you lose your Selves in the Depth of this Love, you shall certainly find your Selves again, and live eternally there, where it will be display'd in its sublimest Perfection and Lustre.

May the eternal and uncreated Love, that Love which hath so wonderfully manifested it self in CHRIST JESUS our Lord; Plant all these Graces in your Hearts, and water them constantly by the healing Influence of his Spirit!

Twenty

Twenty Four Motives to a faithful Discharge of the Duty of Bounty to the Poor.

MARK VIII. I, *seqq.*

In those Days, the Multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, JESUS called his Disciples unto him, and says unto them: I have compassion on the Multitude, because they have now been with me three Days, and have nothing to eat, &c.

TO encourage us to a faithful Performance of the Duty of Bounty or Charity to the Poor, the following Motives may prove very strong and engaging :

1. The first Motive to Christian Bounty and Charity is, the *unspeakable and incomprehensible Love and Mercy of GOD towards Mankind.* This Love

Love is explained to us by our Lord, *Joh. iii. 16.* telling us, that GOD *loved the World*: (that World which did lie in Wickedness, and had thereby drawn down upon it the Guilt of an eternal Death.) And in what manner did He love it? *That He gave his only begotten Son*: To what End? *that all who believe in Him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

The same Love of GOD towards Men, is most evidently set forth by the Apostle, *Eph. ii. 4*: *GOD who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith He loved us; Even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.* And *Rom. viii. 32.* *If God be for us, who can be against us? He hath spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* From both which Places it doth most plainly appear, that the sublimest Degree of the Love of GOD, is to be placed in his having delivered his own, and only begotten Son, into the most infamous Death of the Cross, and in having thereby redeemed us from eternal Death and Damnation. There is no doubt, but whosoever does duly ponder this Love with himself, and

revolve it again and again in his Mind, but his Heart will be excited thereby to bestow a like Love on his poor and indigent Neighbour. This divine Love, seriously weighed and laid to Heart, will stir up in him these and the like Considerations: “ Hath this
 “ infinitely great GOD been so mer-
 “ ciful unto me, as not to *spare* his
 “ only begotten Son, but to give
 “ Him up freely for me ; why should
 “ I be so stingy, as to *spare* my
 “ worldly Estate and Income, whilst
 “ I see so many miserable Objects a-
 “ bout me, who stand in need of my
 “ Help and Assistance? Nay, if I
 “ should bestow all whatever I have
 “ on the Poor, what an inconsidera-
 “ ble Proportion would it bear to
 “ that Love, which the Lord hath con-
 “ ferred on me ?

II. The *Second* Inducement to Acts of Love and Charity is, *the Love of our blessed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST.*

The Apostle hath drawn the Character of this Love: *Gal. ii. 20. and Ephes. v. 2: Christ hath loved us, says he, and hath given himself for us. And He hath in such a manner given Him-
 self*

self for Men, as to *die for the Ungodly*,
 (Rom. v. 6.) and to *tast Death for e-*
very one, Heb. ii. 9. being even forsaken
 of GOD for the sake of Men, as He
 complaineth himself, *Matt. xxvii.*
46. Whoever seriously meditates on
 this Love of *CHRIST*, cannot but
 think within himself: "Hath the
 " most Holy *JESUS* loved me to
 " that Degree, as to lay down his
 " Life for me; why should not this
 " Love inspire me with a Readiness
 " to bestow a bodily Benefit upon
 " my Fellow-Creatures? seeing there
 " is not the least Proportion betwixt
 " an outward Relief I confer on my
 " Neighbour, and that unspeakable
 " Love wherewith the Lord hath loved
 " me. With what Confidence can I lift
 " up my Eyes unto Him, and pour
 " out my Prayers in my Distress,
 " whilst I leave my Neighbour with-
 " out Help and Relief? *St. Paul* tells
 us, for this Purpose, *2 Cor. viii. 9:*
Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus
Christ, that, though he was Rich, yet for
your sakes he became Poor, that ye through
his Poverty might be Rich. It was in
 the Power of our Lord to enjoy all
 the Riches of Glory and Majesty, even

according to his humane Nature, and this by reason of the Union whereby the Manhood was united to his Divine Nature: But He hath freely forsaken all these Enjoyments, hath been made poor for our sake, both in his Birth, and the succeeding Course of his Life. *He had not where to lay his Head,* (Matt. viii. 20.) but received what others ministred unto him of their Substance, Luk. viii. 2. And what was the Reason and Motive the Lord underwent so deep a Poverty? The Apostle answers: *That we through his Poverty might be Rich.* He made himself Mean, and of no Reputation, that by his Humility, He might purchase to us the Possession of everlasting Bliss and Felicity.

This being duly considered, cannot but leave the following Impression upon the Mind: "Behold, my Soul! how deeply thy Saviour hath humbled Himself, being made so poor, as to have no room in the Inn where He was born; nay, who, during his Stay in the World, had not where to lay his Head; and therefore was fain to receive what others ministred to Him of their

“ their Substance: And since the
“ Lord hath given me so much of
“ the Things of this World, as to
“ have not only where to lay my
“ Head, but also wherewithal to re-
“ lieve others upon Occasion: Why
“ should I be backward to under-
“ go some degree of Poverty for
“ the Sake of my Neighbour, or at
“ least to employ Part of my Means
“ for his Relief, whilst I do not
“ thereby expose my Self to Straits
“ and Poverty? Should not I at
“ least begin to follow the Lord at
“ a Distance, whilst I cannot as yet
“ follow Him so close and effectually,
“ as to make my Self poor
“ for the sake of my Neighbour, as
“ the Lord hath done for me? ”

III. The *unspeakable Forbearance*, whereby GOD hath bore with our Sins, in Christ, is another prevailing Motive to Acts of Love and Charity.

Whoever doth but seriously enter upon a strict Examination of his former Life, and the various Sins heaped up, even from a Child, must needs be affected with a lively Sense of GOD's Forbearance to a Sinner, who deserved to be cut off long a-

go from the Land of the Living, and thrown away into Hell-Fire.

Considering therefore the merciful Dealings of GOD towards him a Sinner, and how bountifully he hath all along supplied him with Food and Raiment, together with all other Necessaries for this Life; he cannot but be mollified by such endearing Marks of Love and Benignity, and think it his Duty to be Kind to those again, who stand in need of his Help and Assistance. He will then more regard the present Want of the Poor, than be over-nice about enquiring into their Worth and Dignity; reasoning thus within himself: "How many convincing Proofs of Goodness and Mercy hath the Lord conferred upon me, and this even from my most tender Years, when I walked in the Ways of Sin and Vanity, and did not in the least deserve any such Favour at his Hands? Why should I then shut up my Bowels against those miserable Creatures that call upon me for Help and Relief? And why should I not alleviate their hard
" and

“ and woful Condition, by kind and
“ seasonable Supplies ?

IV. *The more peculiar Favours, GOD in his infinite Mercy hath bestowed on our Country in particular, by guarding it on one Hand, from Plague, War, and Famine, and other Calamities wherewith other Nations have been severely visited; and on the other, by heaping up on us so many visible Mercies, even in our outward and bodily Concerns.*

This, I say, may be unto us a new Persuasive to the Practice of Charity, and should be improved into mutual Love and Benignity. How wonderfully hath the Lord preserved our Town and Country a-midst so many Disasters inflicted on others? How plentifully hath He adorned and blessed our Fields? What a visible Blessing doth every where start into our very Eyes? Who can take a survey of all this, and not think within himself; How undeservedly do we, impious Wretches, enjoy all these Effusions of GOD's Love and Mercy! Truly, our last Years Gratitude could not be any Inducement to our gracious Maker, to continue this Year his Blessing up-

on us, since so few have used these temporal Gifts for that End for which they were imparted by Providence. But notwithstanding all this black Ingratitude, the Lord is pleased to add new Blessings to the former, and to wink at our Sins for a while; if perhaps, by such Temporal Benefits displayed in the Fields, we might be brought over at last, to a Taste of his more spiritual Mercies, display'd in the Gospel.

What an unparallell'd Mercy doth the Lord discover in all this! And why should we then be hard-hearted to the Poor, or grumble at so many distressed Objects that represent themselves to our Eye? Should we not rather express our Thankfulness for what we have receiv'd, by distributing Part thereof to those that want it, let them either be settled among us, or let them, by the Badness of Times, be driven to us from distant Places, to partake of that Provision, the Lord, beyond all our Merits, hath bestow'd upon us?

V. Another Motive which may inspire us with Christian Love and
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Tenderneſs to the Poor and Needy, may be particularly drawn from that *Branch of the Love of GOD*, whereby he hath been moved to explain unto us abundantly his whole Counſel about our eternal Salvation, together with all thoſe ſpiritual Riches and Graces which accompany it. Truly, our infinitely good God hath not been wanting on his Side, but hath fully declared unto us the Riches of his Wiſdom about our ſpiritual Recovery. This may ſuggeſt to us a proper Hint to the following Conſideration: “ Hath
“ the Lord opened unto me ſo large
“ a Field of ſpiritual Promiſes for the
“ Quickening and Edification of my
“ Soul; ſhould I think it a great
“ Thing to let the Poor reap part of
“ my Temporal Goods and Income?

VI. Another Reason which ought to diſpoſe us to aſſiſt the Poor in their Neceſſities, may be fetched from that ſingular Delight the Lord himſelf doth take in Works of Mercy.

The Scriptures are full of theſe Aſſurances: But more particularly hath our Saviour expreſſed it, *Matth. ix. 13: Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.*

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Whosoever is duly affected with a Sense of this Truth, will find it to be a strong Motive to Deeds of Charity. It will put him upon these and the like Considerations: " Behold, O my
" Soul! the Worth and Excellency
" of Christian Love and Bounty!
" What doth the Lord care for thy
" daily Attendance on Church and
" Sermons? What for thy Prayers
" and Thanksgivings? What doth
" He care for thy reading over so
" many Chapters a Day in thy Bible?
" What doth He care for thy verbal
" Confession of Sins? and what for
" the most solemn Use of his Ordina-
" nances; whilst thy Heart is desti-
" tute of Love and Mercy, of
" Charity and Compassion? Truly,
" all this Noise about Church and
" Religion, will prove at last but a
" scanty Covering, a bare Shew and
" Pretence, a dry and empty For-
" mality, whilst thou continuest deaf
" to the Cries of the Poor, and re-
" strainest thy Hand from relieving
" the Needy. Awake therefore, my
" Soul, from so drowsie a Worship,
" and do not rely any more on so
" dead a Performance. *Go and learn*
" the

“ the great Lesson of Mercy, and o-
“ pen thy Heart and Hand to them
“ that are in Distress : For the Lord
“ hath declared, He will *rather* have
“ Love and Mercy, than all the ex-
“ ternal Formalities wherewith Men
“ may presume to approach Him.

VII. *The express Commands of God, enforcing the Duty of Charity to the Poor, and inculcated over and over again in Scripture,* may afford us a fresh Motive to the Practice of this Virtue.

The Lord had particularly ordered his People under the Law, that they should suffer no Poor among them; or if there was any, that then they should *not harden their Heart, or shut their Hand from their poor Brother, but open it wide unto him in that which he wanteth*, Deut. xv. 4, — 11. The same Precept is left us, *Isa. lviii. 6, 7. And Matth. vi. 19.* we are forbid to *lay up Treasures for our selves upon Earth*; and this undoubtedly, by reason of the many Poor and Miserable that press upon us, the very Sight whereof should make us forget the laying up of Treasures for our Selves. The like Precept of Charity to the Poor, is repeated again
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and again in Scripture, and set home upon our Conscience, by many moving Obligations. Whosoever therefore doth but consider the Zeal of the Lord enjoining this Duty, and the strict Obligation whereby He requireth to be kind to the Poor and Needy, to Widows and Orphans, and to all those that want our Relief and Support, will, in the midst of all his charitable Deeds, keep an humble Opinion of himself, and constantly remember, he doth no more in all this than what the Lord hath commanded him a numberless Times in Scripture.

He will think within himself: " If I
" find my Mind never so well disposed to relieve the Wants of the Poor
" and Necessitous; yet in all this, I
" do no more than barely answer my
" Duty. I own God Almighty to be
" my LORD, and my Sovereign,
" and the supreme Disposer of all
" that I have: And since He hath
" commanded me to exercise Charity
" to the Poor; why should I be so
" bold as to rebel against his holy
" Will, by withdrawing that from
" the Poor, which He will have bestowed upon them? God forbid!

VIII. A due Consideration of that *Train of Promises, which the Lord hath entailed on Works of Love and Mercy,* may prove another Means to make us concerned about the Necessities of the Poor.

Our merciful GOD hath not only promised to reward a Cup of cold Water given to our Neighbour, if it be done in the Name of *CHRIST*, and to one of his indigent Members on Earth: But besides this, He hath left on Record many *special Promises* to melt us thereby into Love and Compassion. Thus hath He engaged his Word to deliver the charitable Man, in *Time of Trouble; to preserve him, and keep him alive; to strengthen him upon the Bed of Languishing;* and to reward an hundred-fold, the Good he hath done to the Poor. The Lord knoweth very well how backward we are to take Care of the Poor, and how slothful to do his Will without his Promise: He hath therefore thought fit to add to the Precept most endearing Promises, and by a Prospect of future Glory, to invite us to a faithful Discharge of so Christian a Duty. He will not forget the least Act of Charity done to
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the Poor in his Name. And who would now be so hard, as not to be soften'd by so strong and winning a Promise of GOD himself? Nay, who would be so far stupified as not to blush at the very Consideration of so great a Promise on one Hand, and of the little Good he doth to his Neighbour on the other; since there is not the least Proportion betwixt what he giveth here, and what he is to receive hereafter?

IX. *The Lord hath particularly promised to bless the Works of our Calling and Industry, provided we do not shut up our Heart against our Fellow-Creatures, and thereby bereave our selves of so eminent a Blessing.*

This Promise, though it be in a manner comprehended under the preceeding Article, deserveth however a more particular Consideration. The Reason is, that great Care and Concern People are apt to take about the Things of this Life, and about getting a Livelihood in the World. They are for the most part never more eager and busie, than when they are employ'd in the Concerns of this Life; and never more
serious,

serious, than when they have Hopes to gain a Blessing upon their temporal Affairs. They are even more bent upon these visible Things, than the saving an immortal Soul from everlasting Ruine. But with what Colour of Hope, can a Man expect to thrive in Wealth and Estate, whilst he is so averse to the Poor, and turns a Penny ten times before he will part with it? Nay, when he hath done it at last, flatters himself with a Conceit of having done great Feats, and answer'd this Duty in a very eminent Manner. This Hardness of Heart, is the shortest Way to lose all the Blessings at once, as tenderness of Heart is a Means to gain more every Day.

And this Consideration should inspire him with Love to so useful a Virtue: Though, after all, he must well consider, that he ought never to rest in these *lower* Motives to the Duty of Charity: For these being in some Degree bent towards Temporal Interest, and carrying some earthly Respect in them, they may yield some Encouragement to a weak Beginner in the Practice of Piety, but ought never to be the only or principal Motive

tive to a more grown and generous Christian. Whoever therefore doth not rise *higher*, by acting on a *purser* and more substantial Principle, is in Danger of losing at last, all the Reward of his Beneficence.

X. Another Persuasive to send our Goods abroad for the Use of the Poor, may be derived from the Words of our Lord, *Luk. vi. 38: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good Measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall Men give into your Bosom. For with the same Measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

This Promise deserveth also a more special Consideration; since it contains in it a most winning Attractive to contribute what we can, for the Comfort and Sustenance of the Poor. It is to the same Purpose, what we find recorded, *2 Cor. ix. 6: This I say: He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: And he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.* The Lord keeps a watchful Eye over all our Charities, and strictly observes the moving Cause they are done by. He doth not only regard the Multi-
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tude of the Works we outwardly perform, but chiefly the inward Spring and *Principle* whence they flow; as the Widow's Mite doth plainly evince, *Mark* xii. 41, — 44. And this should put us upon a serious Trial of all our charitable Deeds, and more particularly, of the productive Principle by which they are wrought. And at this rate might our Works attain to a greater Purity in Time, and to a higher Degree of a free and disinterested Love.

The All-seeing Eye of our gracious GOD observeth, on one Hand, those that have a Will to support the Poor, but want Ability to perform it; and on the other, those that have Plenty wherewithal to relieve them, but want Zeal and good Will to bestow it. The Apostle extols the Churches of *Macedonia*, that they were willing to their Power, yea, and beyond their Power, to abound in good Works; which abounding Charity, if it be duly considered, together with the abounding Reward attending it, must needs excite a Man to a Love of this Virtue, and leave a most lasting Impression upon his Mind. For 'tis true, that Faith hath a Respect to
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42 *Charity to the Poor.*

the Recompence of Reward; (Heb. xi. 26.) though it be not in a servile and mercenary Manner, which would be inconsistent with the Nature of Faith; but yet in a free and filial Spirit, relying on GOD's Favour and Goodness.

XI. The Description of the last Judgment, as it is exhibited, Matth. xxv. is another powerful Monitor to relieve the Poor in their Straits and Indigencies.

Want of Love and Charity is the blackest, nay, the only Crime alledged against those that shall receive their Doom in that Day; particularly if this uncharitable Temper be shewn to the poor and indigent Members of Christ. Who can be so hard and refractory, as not to be melted into Tenderness towards the poor Members of *CHRIST*, when he pondereth with himself this moving Invitation which then will drop from the Lord's Mouth: *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World: For I was an hungry, and ye gave me Meat: I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink: I was a Stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye cloathed me: I was Sick, and ye visited*

visted me: I was in Prison, and ye came unto me. And who can read that dreadful Sentence, pronounced against the Unmerciful, and not for ever abhor a cruel and unmerciful Temper? Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, &c. Whoever doth but seriously muse on this final Sentence, the Good and the Bad are to receive in that Day, will thereby find himself rid from those frivolous Shifts and Evasions wherewith a covetous Niggard will put off a poor Man applying to him for Relief. People are apt to say: There are too many, one can't give to all. Why, if I should happen to want my Self hereafter, who will then give unto me? I have a large Family of my own, and can spare but little for the Poor. Another says: God knows where these hard and troublesome Times may end at last: 'Tis but fit a Man should make some Provision against old Age, and the Difficulties attending it.

Such, and the like Excuses, are frequently heard from those, who call themselves Christians, but are at the same time too intent upon the

the uncertain Riches of this World, though they will never prove a sufficient Guard against the Day of Trouble and common Calamities.

They should rather argue with themselves in this manner: If so unmerciful a Judgment shall be given there against those who have practised no Mercy here; how shall I lift up my Head in so dreadful a Day? And how can I expect Mercy from the Judge, whilst I have been so hard and unmerciful to my Brother? 'Tis true, I cannot pretend to deserve any Mercy by any charitable Deeds, let them be never so liberally scattered among the Poor and Needy: for whatever I do, is *Duty*, and no *Merit*. But since the Lord, in his infinite Mercy, hath declared to regard the least Charity done to my Brother, as if it was done to Himself, and to annex a most sure and exceeding great Reward to it, let it be henceforth far from me to harbour any uncharitable Temper within me, or to express any Roughness towards the Poor, in my daily Life and Conversation with them.

XII. *If the Picture of a merciless and uncharitable Heart could be drawn, nothing would appear more hateful and abominable in the Eyes of God.*

This Consideration affords us a fresh Argument against the Transgressors of so heavenly a Duty. Roughness and Hardness of Heart is the very Temper and Nature of *Satan*. This renders the Character of an unmerciful Man so black and odious in the Sight of God: And who would now take any delight in so vile and detestable a Vice, whereby the Soul comes to be allied to *Satan*, and to be transformed into the Diabolical Nature it self?

XIII. *If the Picture of a kind and charitable Heart could be drawn, it would appear most sweet and lovely in the Eyes of GOD.*

GOD himself is *LOVE*, and is called twice by that Name in one Chapter, 1 *Joh.* iv. 8, 16. And because this is the very Character and Description of GOD, 'tis plain from hence, that nothing can be more lovely, more sweet and amiable in the Sight of GOD, than an Heart enriched with Love, and set open to those

those that are in Need and Distress. In such a Person the Lord seeth his own Picture, wherewith He must needs be pleased. And who would be of so hard and untractable a Temper, as not to be wrought hereby into Love and Compassion, since hereby we are transformed into the Nature and Image of GOD himself?

XIV. *The inward Satisfaction a Soul tasteth whilst she is employ'd about Works of Love and Charity*, is another Encouragement to a faithful Discharge of Christian Bounty.

Whilst a charitable Person looks upon the distressed Condition of pitiful Objects, he is most *feelingly* affected with so woful a Sight, and shareth in some degree the Misery of his Neighbour: But no sooner doth he effectually relieve him, but he is in a manner relieved himself, by feeling the Rays of that benign Influence wherewith he cherisheth his Brother, and which will reflect on him that bestow'd them. A true Child of GOD taketh as much delight in doing Good to the Poor, as an hungry Stomach doth in satisfying its Hunger. And herein he endeavours to follow that
perfect

perfect Pattern set him by his Master, whose *Meat it was, to do the Will of him that sent him, and to finish his Work,* Joh. iv. 34. Whoever therefore will tast of this hidden Delight, ought to be the more Zealous in refreshing the Poor, in visiting the Sick, in relieving the Helpless, and in other Works of Love and Benignity.

But as a charitable Person enjoys here a Foretast of an endless Reward reserv'd for him in Heaven, so the covetous Wretch hath nothing but a constant Disquiet in the midst of all his worldly Wealth and Estates. Both what he giveth, and what he keepeth, is mixed with Pain and Vexation of Spirit. All his Gold and Riches, all his Possessions and yearly Revenues, wherewith he seems exceedingly pleased, and which he challengeth entirely as his own, breed nothing but Tumults and Perturbations in so weak and diseased a Mind.

XV. *The absolute Necessity of following Christ in his Life and Conversation, is another strong Engagement to the Practice of Charity.*

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Our Lord spent himself entirely in Works of Love and Charity, *going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the Devil*, Acts x. 38. The whole History of the Gospel doth most copiously set forth the unweariedness of CHRIST, in doing Good unto others, and the variety of Deeds and Actions wherewith he expressed it. All this is recorded at large by the inspired Writers, thereby to engage us, *that we might follow his Footsteps, having left us a Pattern for that purpose*, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Whoever therefore will not disdain to follow his Lord and Master, ought also incessantly to employ himself about doing Good, particularly to the Poor and Needy.

XVI. *The many illustrious Instances of such Persons as have adorned their Faith with Works of Love and Bounty, and are recorded in Scripture, ought to animate us into a like Zeal of Goodness and Charity.*

The Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, exhibit the most endearing Examples of mutual Love and Beneficence. Whoever therefore will have a sure and safe Evidence of his being endued with Grace, and there-

thereby received into the Household of GOD, ought to express in his own Life those noble Efforts, which did so conspicuously appear in the Saints of old, and are left us for our Imitation.

XVII. *The Consideration, that God Almighty designeth to try and increase our Faith and Love, by presenting so many miserable Objects to our View, should engage us to a frequent Exercise of this Virtue.*

Whoever hath this World's Goods on one Hand, and knows the dismal Condition of so many Creatures on the other, is thereby put to a daily Trial, both of the Growth of his Faith, and the Degree of Love he is attained to. The Lord comes to prove our Readiness in serving the Poor, and whether we are as willing to support them, as He hath been to support us. As often we see a poor Man apply to us for Relief, we may consider, that there is an Object, whereby the Sincerity of our Love shall be tried; and that GOD himself hath then an Eye upon all the Motions of our Heart and Hand, observing both what we have, and what we
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give. He considereth the *Principle* whence our Charity flows, and the *End* to which it tends. All which is plainly intimated, *Mark* xii. 41. where the Lord is said to have sat *over against the Treasury, beholding HOW the People cast Money into the Treasury.* 'Tis true, the Lord, according to his infinite Knowledge, is acquainted long ago with every Thing that shall happen, and stands in no need to make particular Observations upon the Actions of Men: yet doth the Scripture speak in this Manner, thereby to teach us, how intent the Lord is upon our charitable Gifts, and how He *proveth* on all Occasions our Faith and Love, our Integrity and Obedience, and other Christian Virtues. 'Tis therefore high Time to look to our Selves, and to study sometimes the Lesson of Love and Compassion; lest we be found negligent, when the Lord comes to *try* us, and thereby to discover what Advances we have made in the Practice of Charity.

XVIII. *The daily Growth in FAITH, being the happy Effect of the Exercise of Love and Charity, proveth another Motive*

rive to recommend unto us the Virtue of Bounty to the Poor.

'Tis true, that a sound and living Faith is the Foundation of Love, and *worketh by it*; but then it is no less true, that Faith groweth by the continued Practice of Charity, being thereby nourished up into a greater Strength and Maturity. *Faith* and *Love* live in an inseparable Union together, and influence one another in their mutual Acts and Functions. If a Man be but faithful in that little he hath received, he will then soon be intrusted with more. And since 'tis matter of the highest Importance, to be endued with a strong and lively Faith; we ought therefore not to disdain even the lowest Steps of Love and Benignity: since by this we may arrive in time to an unshaken firmness of Faith, attended with the noblest Efforts of Bounty to the Poor.

If we do but observe our daily Experience in the Practice of Charity, it will soon convince us, that if we have but so much Faith as to part with a few *Mites* at first, we shall soon be enabled, as readily to part with so many *Groats*: and this being answer-

ed again, it will dispose us to so ample and diffusive a Bounty, as to lay out so many *Shillings* for the Poor, as before we spent *Groats* in their Service. Thus do the Works of Charity multiply under the Hands of a sincere Christian, and one Degree of Grace faithfully improved, will draw higher Accomplishments after it, and make him go on to Perfection in Time.

XIX. *It is a glorious Instance of the All-sufficient Power of Christ, when one time He filled Five Thousand Men, and at another time Four Thousand, with a very small Provision of Bread; whereof, however, there remained more in the End than was set on at first.*

The Consideration of these Passages, I say, may influence us with a merciful Impression towards the Poor, and help to overcome that natural Hardness of Heart which is so distastful to the Father of Mercies. 'Tis true, these are miraculous Works of our Redeemer, displaying his infinite Power and Mercy: But then they are also Means to strengthen our Faith in the Lord, and our Love to our Neighbour. And if there be but a small Provision laid up for our Selves, yet

yet ought we to be liberal, even with that little we have, and firmly rely on the Goodness of GOD, which will always so order it, that something may remain for a constant Supply of our own Wants.

XX. Our Lord's Reproof to his Disciples, for their not apprehending his wonderful Works, is to encourage us to a serious View of all the Steps of his Providence in general, and of his Love and Benignity in particular.

It was a sharp Reproof wherewith the Lord upbraided the Disciples for their want of Consideration : *Why reason ye, because ye have no Bread ? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand ? Have ye your Hearts yet hardened ?* Mar. viii. 17. The same Reprehension may be fitly applied to all who possess the Goods of this World, and have wherewithal to supply the Poor and the Needy ; but having no Will to perform it, let them perish without Help and Compassion. A Heart thus shut up by griping and greediness, is far worse than a Heart hardened by Ignorance only and want of Knowledge. Let us therefore be helpful to the Poor, and open our
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Hearts to them that are in Distress, least by contracting the Guilt of Unbelief and Hardness of Heart, we expose our Selves to the same Reprehension here, and to an unmerciful Judgment hereafter.

XXI. *The Uncertainty of our Days, and Shortness of Life*, ought to be a prevailing Inducement to remember the Poor, and to relieve their Wants betimes.

Let us consider again and again, that dreadful Word, *Luk. xii. 20: Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Such a Consideration will in a manner shame us out of our Covetousness, and teach us the Prudence recommended by the Lord, *Luk. xvi. 9: Make to your Selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting Habitations.*

XXII. *Because the Lord hath declared Charity to be the very Pledge and essential Character of a sincere Christian, and hath thereby raised this Virtue to a considerable Dignity,* it ought so much the more endear unto us the diligent Practice thereof.

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By this, says our Saviour, shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. From whence we may most certainly conclude: If a practical Demonstration of mutual Love and Charity is the Character and Indication of a true Christian and Disciple of CHRIST; then it must follow for certain, that the Want thereof is an infallible Sign of an *unchristian*, and of an unregenerate Person. 'Tis plain from his uncharitable Temper, that he refuseth to obey his Master's Command, even in the lowest Degree, I mean, in distributing Part of his temporal Wealth, for making some Provision for his indigent Brother's more tolerable Subsistence. O let us therefore never stain the Name of a Christian with so bad and uncharitable a Conduct.

XXIII. *The Gift of mutual Love and Benignity, which the Lord hath begun to inkindle in some Souls in these latter Days,* ought to be unto us a constant Monitor to Acts of Love and Compassion.

It must be own'd, that GOD, in this Time, hath up and down awaken'd some Souls from their spiritual

Deadness and Lethargy, and endued them with the Virtue of *LOVE*, the very Badge and Character of a Disciple of *CHRIST*. Such living Instances of Love and Mercy, of Bounty and Charity, are set before us for our Imitation, and ought to inspire us with true Fervor and Zeal in the Service of others. But woe unto us, if neither Words nor Examples, neither Threats nor Promises, are able to mollifie us into a Sense of Kindness towards the Needy! How shall we stand in the Day of Retribution, when every one shall receive his Reward according to his Deeds?

XXIV. *The present Judgments of GOD, together with those that are nearer and nearer approaching*, ought to be as so many powerful Means, to carry off that Hardness of Heart, that greedy and covetous Temper, which hath seized too many among us.

We both see and hear, that the Lord hath begun, by most dreadful Visitations, to shake whole Nations and Countries, by sending the Plague among them, together with Fire and Sword, and many other publick Calamities. You'll think, perhaps, that
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our Town and Country hath hitherto been preserved from such, and the like destructive Afflictions, and safely kept, when other Countries have been severely handled by Providence.

But should not this undeserved Mercy of God render us more Kind and Merciful, more Tender and Charitable! Should not all this dispose us to most compassionate Acts of universal Love and Benignity? Certainly, if we neglect to improve these temporal Mercies into spiritual Graces, by an unfeigned Repentance, and a sound Reformation of Life, we must then expect the nearer Approach of those Judgments which hitherto have but shewed themselves at a Distance. Perhaps there may be a Time, that People will say of many a rich, but covetous Man: If this Man had done good to the Poor out of what he possessed, and redeemed the Time whilst he had it, he might then comfort himself with a sweet Remembrance of what good he had done, and a quiet Expectation of a gracious Reward which is to follow: But since he hath slipt the Opportunity, when it was offered, and withheld

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from the Poor their Portion when they wanted it; he must now see with Sorrow and Grief, that his Riches are become the Objects of divine Wrath and Justice, and that the Judgments destroy what should have been spent in Works of Kindness and Mercy.

MAY the GOD of all Mercy, give us wise and understanding Hearts, to improve our Time well whilst we have it, and to disengage our Hearts from the Love of the World whilst we are in it! May He create in us a filial Reliance on his Power and Mercy, on his Love and Fidelity! May He inspire us with Love towards the Brethren, and a universal Benignity towards Mankind! That our whole Life and Conduct may declare, that his Word hath had a real Effect upon us, in regenerating our Hearts, and filling them with Fruits of Righteousness, to his Glory, and the Benefit of our Fellow-Creatures!

The

The Different Degrees of Glory.

MATTH. XX. 20,—23.

Then came to him the Mother of Zebedee's Children with her Sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him: Grant, that these my two Sons may sit, the one on thy right Hand, and the other on thy left, in thy Kingdom. But Jesus answer'd and said: Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them: Ye shall drink indeed of my Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with: But to sit on my right Hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them, for whom it is prepared of my Father.

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TO apprehend the true Meaning of these Words, we must look back into the foregoing *xixth* Chapter of the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, where our Saviour, *ver.* 28. speaks to this effect: *Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.*

This, withoutdoubt, the Mother of the Children of *Zebedee* had heard, and therefore (that we may express her Mind more at large,) she addresses herself to our Saviour in the following manner: “Thou hast given
 “that glorious Promise to the
 “twelve Apostles, that they shall
 “sit upon twelve Thrones, and
 “judge the twelve Tribes of *Israel*,
 “and this at that very Time when
 “thou shalt sit upon the Throne of
 “thy Glory. Now since they are to
 “be distinguish’d above others with
 “so eminent a Prerogative, there
 “will undoubtedly be a considerable
 “Distinction among themselves also:
 “And

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“ And whereas these twelve are all
 “ to sit upon Thrones, some of Ne-
 “ cessity will approach nearer to Thee
 “ than others, and consequently,
 “ Two must needs happen to sit, one
 “ on thy right, and the other on thy
 “ left Hand. And oh ! that it might
 “ be the Lot of these my two Sons,
 “ to be dignified with this Prehemi-
 “ nence ! ” This, I think, was the
 Substance of her Petition, and of
 her two Sons, who consented to it,
 (as appears both from the *Answer* of
 our Saviour in this Place, and more
 distinctly from *Mark* x. 35.) and de-
 sired they might be distinguish’d, not
 only from other Men in general, but
 also in particular from the rest of
 the Twelve Apostles themselves.

But our Saviour’s Answer was:
You do not know what ye ask. He di-
 rects his Answer to the Sons, as well
 as to the Mother, and declares, that
 they did not know what they asked.
 The reason was, because they did nei-
 ther understand the Nature of his
 Kingdom, (for they had no other No-
 tion of it, than that it would be like o-
 ther Temporal Kingdoms, consisting
 in the Distinction of outward Ho-
 nours,

nours, Power, Authority, and Preferments,) nor what it was to sit on his Right and Left. Not that he denied the Truth of the Thing it self, but only shews them their Ignorance in asking it: Yea, he intimates likewise, that they did not understand at all the Consequence of their desired Preferment, or what it would be attended with, if granted. Therefore He asks them: *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?* 'Tis usual in the Scriptures, to express the Sufferings by the Cup and Baptism; as *Psal. cxvi. 13: I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.* And *Luk. xii. 50:* our Saviour speaking of his Passion, says: *I have a Baptism to be baptized with.* In like manner, he saith here: *Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?* As if he should say thus: “Your Flesh and Blood prompts you
“to imagine that you could be Partakers of my Glory without Crosses and Tribulations: But I perceive you do not rightly understand
“stand

“ stand that you are first call’d to the
“ Kingdom of the *Cross*, which pre-
“ cedes the Kingdom of *Glory*, where-
“ in you expect to be preferr’d by
“ me; there being no other Way to
“ *Glory*, but that of the *Cross*. There-
“ fore, if you have a Mind to be next
“ to me in my *Glory* there, you must
“ consider, whether you are willing
“ to be next to me in my Sufferings
“ here.”

He refers himself to the Discourse made to his Disciples a little before, *ver. 18: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to Death.* This they should have laid to Heart, and ponder’d it well, if ever they would gain their End of being next unto him in his Kingdom, and of obtaining the first Places under his glorious Government: For then truly they must enter in by the same Way the Lord himself went through, when he enter’d upon his *Glory*. But as they had been mistaken before, so were they now mistaken again, when the Lord asked them, *Whether they were able to drink*
of

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of his Cup, and be baptized with his Baptism? For they answered him without Hesitation: *We are able.* The Readiness of their Answer, is but too plain a Proof how little they were sensible of their own Insufficiency, and of their Backwardness to undergo any notable Suffering at that time.

This *Presumption* of theirs, whereby they thought themselves able to drink of the Cup of their Master, and to be baptized with his Baptism, gives us a lively Representation of the Degeneracy of Man's Heart, which often flatters it self with being good and pious, whilst it is altogether destitute of the Power and Life of Regeneration. Such a Man maketh up to himself the fairest Hopes of Bliss and Prosperity, he thinks to meet with in the Course of Religion: he would readily serve the Lord, if temporal Happiness would but go along with his spiritual Concerns: For this Reason he puts away the evil Day as far as he can, and when he hears of any Sufferings, he either supposes 'em to be at a great Way off, or makes them much less than they really are: or, he persuades himself to have Strength enough to undergo and endure

dure all, rather than to deny CHRIST, or to be ashamed of him: But in all these Reasonings he is very much mistaken. Our Saviour had here a Compassion for the great Weakness and Blindness of this Mother and her Children, and therefore told them, *Ye shall drink indeed of my Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with: But to sit on my right Hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

Thus he foretold them, that in due time after they had been endued with Power from on high, or received that Spirit, by whose gracious Assistance they were to preach the Gospel, it would be also their Lot at last to drink of his Cup, and be baptized with his Baptism; that is, to glorifie the Lord with a Death of Martyrdom, and seal the Truth of the Gospel with the Effusion of their Blood. But yet he adds: *To sit on my right Hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father; or, (according to the Original,) to them ONLY for whom it is prepared*
of

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of my Father : (as the Word *ἀνά* intimates, which is also used in the same Sense, *Mark ix. 8.*) Our Saviour doth not deny that there would be such a Sitting on his right and left Hand : Neither doth he deny it to be in his Power to give ; for that would be contrary to his own Promise, *Rev. iii. 21* : *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* But the Import of these Words is this : It was not fit for him to give it to any, *but those only, for whom it was prepared of his Father.* As if he would have said :
 “ It was not such a Matter, as a Man
 “ perhaps might obtain by way of
 “ Petitioning, (like in humane Affairs,
 “ People might beg a Favour of great
 “ Princes,) or, which was conferr’d
 “ by an external regard to some particular
 “ Persons only : But in his
 “ Kingdom, every one would be
 “ weighed, as it were, in GOD’s Balance,
 “ (*Dan. v. 27.*) with the nicest
 “ View, that nothing be found wanting ;
 “ and nothing be done against
 “ the just and holy Counsel of his
 “ Heavenly Father. In as much as
 “ Man

“ Man was made conformable to the
“ crucified JESUS here, (as well to
“ his inward as outward Life,) he
“ should in like manner be made con-
“ formable to him in his Kingdom
“ hereafter, and the Degree of Glo-
“ ry should be proportioned to the
“ Degree of his Humiliation.

Now to make as useful an Applica-
tion of these Words as we can; We
may learn from hence, that for cer-
tain, there will be many and different
Degrees of Glory in the Life to come.

’Tis not without ground, what one
says: *There will be such a variety of Re-
wards in eternal Glory, that hardly Two
shall receive the same Reward alike.* For
tho’ in this Life, Men can never at-
tain to a perfect Knowledge of the in-
ward State, and the various Degrees
of the Christian Life in others; yet
GOD knows every one most exactly
and intrinsically, and will not forget
in the Life to come, to distinguish e-
very one according to that Degree
which he has arrived to here. And
even in this matter will the *Wisdom*
and *Justice* of GOD the more won-
derfully appear; since his Glory is
to be displayed in so many differing
Ways

Ways and Degrees among his chosen People.

The Truth of this Assertion may be somewhat cleared up from the contrary. For even the *Torments* of Hell will not be all alike, but admit of various *Degrees* and *Distinctions*: Some whereof will always be more exquisite, more terrible and intensive than others. Thus the Scripture tells us, that it will be *more tolerable* for some in the Day of Judgment, than for others, *Matt. xi. 24.* And our Saviour makes a difference betwixt him that knows his Lord's Will, and him that doth not know it, telling us: *That that Servant which knows his Lord's Will, and doth not according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes: Whereas, he that knows it not, and doth commit things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes,* *Luk. xii. 47, 48.*

As it is with the Torments of Hell, so it will be likewise with the Joys of Heaven, on which our Text treats more particularly. For the Mother of the Children of *Zebedee* doth not ground her Request on a bare Fancy of her own, but upon the Discourse
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of our Lord himself, who had said before : *When the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon Twelve Thrones, judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel.* From which Words it is plain, that the Lord conferreth a *Prerogative* on the Apostles above all the rest, who should attain to eternal Salvation. The same He hath confirmed, Chap. xix. 29 : *Every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Names sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit eternal Life.* Where he doth not say : And he shall also sit upon Thrones, as the Apostles shall do ; but only, he shall *inherit eternal Life.* By which he plainly declareth, that there will be many different Degrees in Glory to be bestow'd on those that believe in his Name.

Now when the Mother of Zebedee's Children begg'd of our Saviour, that her Sons might sit one on his right Hand, and the other on his left, he doth not absolutely reject her Petition, as a Thing altogether unreasonable and foolish in it self ; but saith only : *The Sitting on my right Hand, and on my*

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my left, is not mine to give, save only to those, for whom it is prepared of my Father: Intimating, that even among the Apostles themselves, as to the Distinction and Degrees of Glory, there would be a Difference, where one should approach nearer to his Glory than the other.

This Truth of the different Degrees of Glory in the future World, may be further evinced by several other Passages of Scripture: as *Dan. xii. 2, 3: Many of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life; and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt. And they that be wise, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* That the Lord here speaks of eternal Life, is plain from the Text it self, which expressly declareth, that some of those *that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, i. e. that are dead and buried, shall awake to eternal Life.* This is generally ascribed to all that are to be saved: But then, some of those are to have the same Prerogative beyond others, which they had here in the Kingdom of Grace. Some of them
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are called *Wise, Understanding, or Prudent*, or such as have here, in the true Prudence of the Righteous, prepared themselves for a blessed Eternity, and at the same time encouraged others, by their holy Life and Conversation, to follow their good Example.

Of some it is said, that they have *turned many to Righteousness*, or have made many good and pious Christians, not only by shewing unto them the Way of Righteousness in their own Life, but also by inculcating unto them the same from Scripture: which being done in all Faithfulness and Integrity, the Lord hath given so eminent a Blessing to their *Planting and Watering*, that by their Endeavours many have been gained and converted. Of the first it is said, that they *shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament*; when the latter are to be raised to higher Degrees of Glory, and shall shine *as the Stars for ever and ever*. If it had been meant in general of all Believers, that they should shine as Stars, there had been no need to exempt those who have turn'd many to Righteousness and by a particular Character, not only distinguish

guish them from the rest of blessed Souls, but set also an additional Weight of Glory upon them; *viz.* that they *should shine* above others, *as the Stars for ever and ever.*

From these express Words of the Prophet, one may most evidently conclude, that the Lord will pass by none of his faithful Confessors, but bestow his gracious Reward on every individual Vessel of Grace, with this difference only, that a particular Crown of Glory is prepared for those *who have turned many to Righteousness.* Not to mention now those, who, in spiritual Matters, have been wise and prudent, and who are accordingly distinguished from a multitude of those that sleep in the Dust of the Earth, and shall awake to everlasting Life; the former having this Prerogative above the latter, that they shall *shine as the Brightness of the Firmament.* And doth not all this abundantly convince us, that in the Life to come, the Reward will not be equally alike, but admit *different Degrees* of Glory?

St. Paul confirms this matter likewise, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42: *There is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the*
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the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars; for one Star differeth from another Star in Glory: So also is the Resurrection of the Dead. The Substance of these Words amounts to this:

[As there is no small difference amongst the Heavenly Bodies, as to their Brightness and Glory, (for the Sun out-doth the Moon in Splendour; and again, the Moon, tho' she borroweth her Light from the Sun, shines however much brighter than the Stars: And again, as one Star exceeds the other in Bigness, Light, and Brightness;) so likewise will it be with the Resurrection of the Dead, in regard either of the different Degrees of Glory which will appear amongst the Blessed themselves, or in comparing their Bodies in the State after their Resurrection with their earthly, infirm, and necessitous Condition, they have been groaning under whilst they were in this Life.

'Tis observable, that the Apostle, after he had set forth the various Degrees of Glory in the Life to come, and explained this Matter by several Similitudes, he at last, in the Conclusion of the xvth Chapter, grounds

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thereon the following awakening Exhortation: *Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* For when he saith: *Ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord:* He doth not thereby intimate chiefly, that their Labour in the Lord should always prosperously succeed, and do a great deal of Good in the World; (tho' even this would be true,) but he will encourage the *Corinthians* to consider over and over again, that as they labour'd here in the Lord, so they wou'd be rewarded hereafter; and that the Crown and Victory would be the more bright and glorious; the greater the Struggle had been for obtaining it. That the Lord, for that end, did write down as it were, every one of their Labours and Conflicts upon his Book, and was not *unrighteous to forget the least Work and Labour of Love shewed here towards his Name*, Heb. vi. 10. In what Measure or Degree they had here expressed their Faithfulness in the Service of the Lord, in the same they should be

be rewarded in Glory, at the Resurrection of the Dead. This therefore should powerfully excite them, not only *to continue in the Faith grounded and settled, and never be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel;* (Col. i. 23.) but also to grow always in the Work of the Lord, to the End, that GOD himself might be the more glorified by a higher Degree of Glory conferred on them out of the Abundance of his Mercy.

To the same Purpose it is, what the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. iii. 8: *He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one: and every Man shall receive his own Reward, according to his own Labour.* If all shou'd be equally alike, the Apostle could not have said: *according to his own Labour;* since there would be no Distinction of Rewards, tho' there were a Distinction of Labours here. 'Tis therefore plain from these Words, that, as here the Labour in the Lord is different; (some being done in greater Purity, Fervency, and Constancy of Faith, Charity, and Hope, than others,) so also the Reward and Degree of Glory would be exactly dispensed according to every

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one's State and Condition ; that, as no Christian's Labour is in every Respect like to that of another ; so neither should any one's Reward or Degree of Glory be equally alike unto that of another in every Respect and Circumstance.

Upon this very Motive doth the same Apostle ground his Admonition given to Servants, *Eph. vi. 7, 8: With good will doing Service as to the Lord, and not to Men: Knowing that whatsoever good Thing any Man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be Bond or Free.* The whole Stress of his Argument, to persnade them to a faithful Discharge of their Trust, lieth in this, that it was not an indifferent Matter, with what Measure of Faithfulness, or what purity of Intention, they did serve their Masters. He will not have them rest in a bare external Discharge of their Trust, by believing they have done their Duty, when they have outwardly performed the Service incumbent on them ; but he will have them consider, whether in the midst of their outward Occupations they have steddily adhered to *Christ*, and with a Mind free
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from *secular Ends*, answered the Will of GOD in their Station. For the pure Eye of Christ exactly observes every one's Works in particular, and pondereth with what Purity of Intention they are done, and how the Heart in all these Things stands affected towards Him. When therefore *Jesus Christ*, the Judge of the Quick and the Dead, doth come to Judgment, we must not think He will equally bestow the same Reward and Degree of Glory on every one of those Servants that are saved by Faith; but rather, that the righteous Judge will reward every good Work, let it be great or small, according to the exact Measure of Faithfulness and Purity of Faith and Love wherein it has been wrought; so that he, who hath done more Good than others, and that with a purer Intention too, shall receive also a far greater Reward of Glory than others. And should not this Consideration prove a powerful Inducement to us to do good whilst we have any Time left for it?

To the same Purpose 'tis said, *Gal. vi. 7: Whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap.* This is to be understood,

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stood, first, of the *different Seed* it self which is sown; and secondly, of the *Measure* wherein this different Seed is committed to the Ground: And thirdly, of the several *Qualities* adhering to the Seed, let it be good or bad. In this Sense the following *eighth Verse* is to be taken: *He that soweth to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap Corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.*

That this is not only to be understood of the Difference of the Seed it self, inasmuch as it is either *good or bad*, and consequently attended with a different Harvest; but that the Apostle has a further Meaning in it, we may gather from a like Comparison he makes upon this very Subject, 2 Cor. ix. 6: *This I say: He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully.* The following Verses do likewise deserve our Consideration; wherein he tells us, that not only the Harvest it self, whereof he speaks, Gal. vi. 8. would be different, either *good or bad*, but doth intimate also, that one should have a richer and a more blessed Crop
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or Harvest than another, according to the just Proportion and Measure he had sowed here, either *sparingly*, or *bountifully*, that is, according as he had been a sincere Labourer by Faith in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. But as there is a Difference in the good Seed it self; (for those that sow *Oats*, *Barley*, *Rye*, or *Wheat*, they sow all good Seed, yet one sort is better and more pretious than the other:) so it is in spiritual Matters also. The more pretious the Seed is, *i. e.* the purer, and the more unmixed that Love is, wherein the Christian has acted for the sake of his Lord and Master, the more glorious will also be the Time of Reaping that succeeds it.

The same Matter is hinted at by the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10: *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Where the Words: *according to that he hath done*, intimate not only, that every Wickedness should receive its condign Punishment,

and every good Work, the promised Reward ; but also, that the more Sin any one had committed, the greater his Punishment should be: And the more Zeal, Fervency, Constancy, Purity, and singleness of Mind, any one had expressed in his Life and Conduct, in order to please the Lord, the greater Reward of Glory he should hereafter receive in another World.

Out of the many Scriptures which confirm this Matter, we will mention but one more, and that is, *Matth. x. 41, 42: He that receives a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward ; and he that receives a Righteous Man, shall receive a Righteous Man's Reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a Cup of cold Water only, in the Name of a Disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.* Here our Saviour most plainly points out the different *Degrees* in the Reward of good Works, extending it not only to this, but even to the Life to come. And tho' neither a temporal, nor an eternal Reward, can be merited by Works, but is entirely conferr'd out of pure Grace ; yet the Justice of
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the Lord hath fixed a *Proportion* betwixt the Goodness of the Work, and the Dispensation of the Reward succeeding it; insomuch, that as the former bears different Degrees in Goodness, so also the Reward bears different Degrees of Excellency. 'Tis then that the Words of Christ shall be fulfilled, *Luk. vi. 38: Good Measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall Men give into your Bosom. For with the same Measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.*

Now this Truth we have explained to you, both from *Matt. xx.* and other Places of Sceipture, is so useful and necessary, that it deserves to be considered over and over again. For if this Consideration be laid aside, Flesh and Blood, as it is apt enough already to make us backward in well-doing, so it will undoubtedly slacken the more, by the Neglect of so powerful a Motive, which is given us by Christ and his Apostles, to the End, that we might be excited to a diligent Performance of our Duty, and encouraged steddily to *run the Race which is set before us.*

And besides, if People are taught no other Notion of the Life to come, but that all the good Souls there would be on a *Level*, and no difference or distinction of Degrees admitted at all, they will easily fall away into such a Slumber and Deadness, as to fancy they'll come off at last well enough, though they should here spend their Time in the Service of Sin and Vanity, and all along neglect the Hour of their Visitation.

If they have but a few Minutes allow'd them before they quit this World, they think a *Lord have Mercy upon me !* will set them on a Level with all those holy Souls, who from their tender Years, through the whole Course of their Life, have served the Lord with Faithfulness, Zeal, and Fervency ; supposing that these, would gain no Pre-eminence to all Eternity, nor any higher Degree of Glory, notwithstanding all the Good they had done here in this Life. For this Reason, they will take as great a Length of the Pleasures of this Life, as ever they can, and believe themselves to be much wiser than those, who, with all their Might, early and earnestly strive

strive to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. For as these despise the transitory Felicity of this World, and content themselves with the Hope of Glory to be revealed hereafter; so the aforesaid profane Worldling thinks to take the wisest Course, by enjoying both the Happiness of the World here, and then to step into full Possession of that which is to come hereafter. A

The Song of this sort of People is set down, *Wisdom ii. 6, 7, 8, 9: Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good Things that are present: and let us use the Creatures like as in Youth. Let us fill our Selves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no Flower of the Spring pass by us. Let us crown our selves with Rosebuds, before they be withered. Let none of us go without his part of our Voluptuousness: let us leave Tokens of our Joyfulness in every Place.* But this is the Language of Epicurus and his Followers, some whereof will freely own, that *this is their Portion and their Lot.*

But as for those that flatter themselves with Hopes of Salvation in the midst of all the Provocations offer'd to a gracious GOD, they suppose they shall

shall obtain Mercy at last, and notwithstanding their continued Course of Sinning, be for ever as happy as those, who, perhaps, *have resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin*, Heb. xii. 4.

Those, I say, fancy to get much more than the fading Pleasures of Sin in this World. For after having taken here their Fill of the Lust of the Eyes, of the Lust of the Flesh, and of the Pride of Life, according to their Hearts Desire, they do not question but they shall, after a short devotional Groan, be translated to Heaven immediately, and be not only eternally saved, but even enjoy such a Portion of Happiness as all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, and faithful Followers of Christ, shall ever enjoy. Nay, they will make you believe, that also these might have been wiser and happier, had they not led such an austere and mortified Life here, but taken as much of the Pleasures of this World, as possibly they might; and after the Enjoyment thereof, slept over, by the shortest and easiest way, into a full Possession of unspeakable Joy and Happiness, to
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fit with Christ upon his Throne, and to reign with him to all Eternity.

Behold! a piece of Prudence of the Children of this World, who in all these Conceits think themselves to be very wise, whilst they are indeed the greatest Fools upon Earth. Do but hear what the Lord saith concerning this sort of People, *Mal.iii.13*: *Your Words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: Yet ye say, what have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, it is in vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? And now, we call the Proud happy; yea, they that work Wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered. Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned, and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that Day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them, as a Man spareth his own Son, that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the Righteous*

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Righteous and the Wicked ; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. Thus doth the Lord decide this matter at once, and calls that a hard Saying against his divine Majesty, when a Man says, it was *in vain to serve God, and no Profit to keep his Ordinance, and to walk mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?* The Children of this World call a pious Life, a Life of *Vapours* and Melancholy, or, according to the Prophet's Phrase, a *sad and mournful Walking* ; whereas nothing can be sweeter and more grateful to the Minds of Men, than an unspotted Conversation ; and nothing harder and more tiresome, than the Service of Sin and Vanity. The Lord himself hath declared the Untruth of this Assertion, and promised to shew at last the vast Difference between him that hath served his Master, and him that hath served him not.

Alas ! these Men are highly mistaken in their Conceits about Religion. They harbour a wrong Notion of the Work of *Repentance*, supposing it to be a thing they had within their own Reach and Command, and that consequently they could re-
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pent of their Sins whenever they had a Mind to it, contrary to the Words of *St. Paul*, *Phil. ii. 13, 14: Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling. For it is GOD which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good-Pleasure.* They do not consider the imminent Danger of their Ways, and how hazardous a Matter it is to turn the Grace of GOD into Lasciviousness, and yet, after so long and horrid an Abuse, depend upon it for Life and Salvation.

Truly, they have reason to fear, lest these Tenders of Grace, which they have rejected so long, may, by a just Judgment, withdraw in Time, and leave the Sinner to his own Ways and Delusions. For both Scripture and Experience confirm the Truth of what is commonly said: *As a Man hath lived, so he dieth.* Upon the whole, it has been sufficiently proved from express Testimonies of Scripture, that GOD keeps a most exact Account of all the Actions of Men, to the very Thoughts and Desires, nay, the very least Motion, and most secret Disposition of the Heart: And that all these, let them be good or bad, shall be laid open

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open in the Day of Judgment, in Order that what is Evil, receive its condign Punishment; and what is Good, its gracious Reward. Let therefore the Word of Solomon be a daily *Memento* unto you, recorded *Eccles. xii. 14.*: *Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments: For this is the whole Duty of Man: For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be Good, or whether it be Evil.* Likewise that of St. Paul, *1 Cor. iv. 5.* *Judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to Light the hidden things of Darknes, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts: and then shall every Man have Praise of God.*

If one should offer to argue from *Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 16.*: (*If the Wicked turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right; none of his Sins, that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him;*) that those that repented at last, before they died, should obtain a full Remission of all their former Sins and evil Actions, and consequently lose nothing at all of that eternal Glory, which is promised to
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true Believers ; He ought to know, (1.) That the Text quoted from *Ezekiel*, doth by no means speak of such a *Death-Bed* Repentance, as consists in a few penitential Groans, or some transient Fits of Devotion. For thus runs the whole Text: *When I say unto the Wicked, thou shalt surely die: If he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right: If the Wicked restore the Pledge, give again that he had robbed, WALK in the Statutes of Life without committing Iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his Sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned unto him: He hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.* From whence it is plain, that new Obedience, together with the succeeding Fruits of Repentance, must most visibly appear in a returning Sinner, and manifest it self to that degree, that every one may be convinced of his real Conversion to GOD.

(2.) However, though it be very hazardous to put off the Work of Repentance to the latter Days of a Man's Life, yet it cannot be denied, that even a late Repentance may be attended

ed with a Remission of all former Offences, provided it be but sincere and unfeigned. But then 'tis to be observed, that a late and earnest Repentance is a greater Rarity than People imagine; the whole Scripture affording no more than one only Instance in the Thief on the Cross, and this of so extraordinary a Nature too, as is not to be drawn into Imitation. And there may be some reason to believe, that a Sense of his Crimes was wrought in his Soul immediately after he had committed them, and was now by the Laws of Justice cast in a Prison. But suppose that even a late Repentance be also sincere and unfeigned; yet can so late a Penitent never pretend to reap in Eternity, what he has not sown in Time: whereas others reap there, what they have sown here, every one according to the Measure of his Seed, either sparingly or plentifully, as has been mentioned before.

St. Paul assureth us, that the Work of such a Teacher as hath preached up nothing but *Wood, Hay, and Stubble*, (that is, such things as do not greatly tend to a real Edification, 1 Cor.

iii 13.)

iii. 13.) *shall be burnt, that he shall suffer Loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by Fire.* That is, as a Man is glad to escape with his Life, when the whole House is set on Fire: So likewise such a Teacher will be glad, if his Soul be but saved, (which cannot be without true Repentance,) tho' he should find no Reward for all the Labour and Pain he hath endured in his Ministerial Function.

The same will be the Case of all those, who, tho' no Teachers by Profession, have however, in the midst of all the Acts of their pretended Religion, done nothing but heaped up *Wood, Straw, and Stubble*, that is, have wasted their Time with Trifles and Vanities, rather than endeavoured to lay up in their Souls the pure Gold and Silver of a Faith working by Love, or the precious Pearl of the Kingdom of GOD. If those be saved at last, it must certainly be as through Fire, of a sincere, tho' late Repentance; wherein, nevertheless, they will suffer the Loss of all the Works that did not proceed from a divine Principle. 'Tis therefore beyond all Doubt and Exception, that the Reward attending
good

good Works, will not be equal, or equally conferred on all; but that there will be differing *Degrees* of Glory, as so many evident Proofs of the Truth and infinite Wisdom of GOD, rewarding every one *proportionably* to what he has sown to the Spirit during the Time of his Visitation upon Earth.

Those therefore, who defer their Conversion till they have first enjoyed the Pleasures of this World, act very imprudently in the Management of their Soul and eternal Salvation. For suppose they could be sure, that notwithstanding the long Abuse of all the Tenders of Mercy, GOD would give them Repentance at last; yet would they be great Losers by that short Pursuit of Temporal Pleasures and Vanities. For when other Children of GOD, (after having faithfully followed the Lord JESUS, and been constant in well-doing, and from their Heart abhorred evil and vicious Ways,) shall appear at last before the Throne of GOD, adorned with all the glorious Fruits of Righteousness they have wrought here; and find there recorded to their unspeakable Joy,

Joy, that they have here fed and cloathed, lodged and visited the Lord in his *poor* and indigent Members; (tho' all this be done from a Principle of Faith working thro' Love, and not from any mercenary Regard to Gain or Reward;) when these, I say, shall find all their Works again *laid up in Store* whilst they were here; (1 *Tim.* vi. 19.) then others, and even the late Penitents, cannot pretend to reap what they did never sow.

Then it will appear, which of those have acted most wisely. And this Difference which then appears, will stand to all Eternity. We shall then see what a Difference there is betwixt a Child of GOD, which has prov'd obedient to the early Summons of Grace, and never forsaken the first Love, or, after some Coldness therein, retrieved it again; which hath daily improved in Goodness and Grace, and after having finished at last the glorious Fight of Faith, obtained eternal Life and Felicity: And between another, who is saved like a Brand plucked out of the Fire on a sudden. Such a one must pass through a short but painful Contrition of Heart, in order

der to be the better prepared for the Enjoyment of Grace, and that lively Faith which is conceived and born amidst the various Pangs of unfeigned Repentance. Thus is such a Soul saved at last, yet *so as by Fire*. However, the Salvation it self she obtains, will afford her for ever most plentiful Matter to praise and exalt that Love, which hath rescued her on the very Brink of Destruction.

Far be it however to ascribe in the least any Merit or Righteousness to the Works of Men. The Doctrine, that we are justified by Faith alone, out of the pure Grace of GOD, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom GOD hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood; (Rom. iii. 24, 25, 28.) is a divine and an eternal Truth, which ought not to be broke in upon by any other Doctrine whatsoever. The Confession of our Ancestors is very plain upon this Head: *We are justified before GOD, not in Regard to our Works; but we obtain Remission of Sin, and are justified before GOD for Christ's sake out of meer Grace, by Faith; the Conscience drawing at the same Time a Comfort from the Promise*
of

of Christ, and believing firmly that we have Remission of Sin, and Mercy, and Righteousness, nay, Eternal Life it self conferr'd upon us for the Sake of CHRIST, who has reconciled us to GOD by his Death, and made full Atonement for our Sins. And again: We obtain Remission of Sin by Faith in Christ, and merit nothing either by our preceeding or subsequent Works, but receive Forgiveness out of mere Grace for Christ's sake. We ought therefore constantly to believe, that notwithstanding our good Works, we are reputed Righteous before GOD for Christ his sake, not for any Merit of Works, &c.

But that this Doctrine of Justification by Grace through Faith alone, doth not clash in the least with the Doctrine of the different Degrees of Glory in Heaven; hereof Christ himself, together with St. Paul, (who most copiously explaineth the Article of Justification,) hath clearly convinced us; as hath been sufficiently proved from *Matth. xx.* and other Scriptures quoted on that behalf.

Eternal Life is entirely a Gift of GOD, *Rom. vi. 23.* But it doth not follow from thence, that the gracious

ous

ous Reward of the Lord must be *equally* bestowed on all. The Distribution of the Land of Promise may give us some Light in this Matter. This Land was not given to the Children of *Israel* out of any Regard to their Merits or Righteousness, as the Lord himself doth fully declare, *Dent.* ix. 4, 5, 6. And nevertheless was the Partition *unequal*, according to their several Tribes. In like manner there are *many Mansions in the Father's House*, (*Joh. xiv. 2.*) But then they will be *unequally* distributed among the blessed Inhabitants.

I say, all these *different Degrees of Glory*, are by no means to be look'd upon as a meritorious Reward entailed on those that best deserve it; but are as a free Gift only, conferr'd for Christ's sake: They will however help to display the Riches of the Wisdom of GOD, of his Love and Faithfulness, of his Truth and Justice, and in a Word, the *Unsearchable Riches of Christ*, *Eph. iii. 8.* As in the Kingdom of Grace, to every one that believeth, *Grace is given according to the MEASURE of the Gift of Christ*; (*Eph. iv. 7.*) so in the Kingdom of
Glory

The Degrees of Glory. 97

Glory to every one, that hath persevered in Grace, shall be given Eternal Life, and a *Degree of Glory according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ*; who alone is the procuring Cause of all the Gifts and Mercies of God. Praised be God for his unspeakable Mercy!

Before I conclude, I exhort you all, that hear this now, or shall read it hereafter, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you consider more and more so important a Truth, and in the Fear of the Lord search the Divine Oracles on that Account: But then search them not out of an itch of Curiosity, to feed your Fancy with Knowledge, (which wou'd but tend to your greater Damnation,) but, *in the Fear of the Lord, to sanctify your Heart through this Truth.* Do not lose any more Time hereafter, and do not stand idle in the Market-place any longer, as if you were not hired: But improve your Time whilst you have it, and present your Bodies, a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. Strive to become every Day more careful, more fervent, and more zealous in proving, what is the
E good,

good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Rom. xii. 2. Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong. Let all your things be done with Charity. 1 Cor. xvi. 14. We beseech you, that ye increase more and more. 1 Thess. iv. 10. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, think on these things. Philip iv. 8. I conclude my Exhortation to you with the Apostle, from 1 Cor. xv. 58: My beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, (and now perhaps have learnt to understand it better) that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God; be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*A Prayer for the Love of CHRIST,
taken out of John Arndt's Prayer-Book, called the Garden of Paradise.*

“ **D**ear Lord JESUS CHRIST,
 “ thou Ever-blessed Lover of
 “ Souls! Grant unto me thy Grace,
 “ that I may love thee again with a
 “ sincere and cordial Affection, and
 “ out of that Sense thus speak unto
 “ thee: Ever-blessed Lord and Re-
 “ deemer! Give me such a Measure
 “ of thy Love, that I feel nothing
 “ within me but thy Love. Turn
 “ out of my Heart whatever doth
 “ not bear the Character of thy
 “ Love; for I wish to find and to
 “ feel nothing within me, but thy
 “ Love and Affection. O how en-
 “ dearing is this thy Love, how
 “ sweet and gracious! How doth it
 “ quicken the Soul, and delight the
 “ Heart of those that earnestly seek it.
 “ Prevent me, O Lord, with this
 “ thy Love, and replenish me there-
 “ with

“ with to that Degree, that I may
“ think on nothing, see nothing, de-
“ fire nothing, feel and tast nothing
“ but thy Love. For thy Love is
“ All ; it possessees all, it compre-
“ hends all, it excels all. O that I
“ might for ever preserve this Trea-
“ sure within me, a Treasure of so
“ high and inestimable a Value. Let
“ me stand Day and Night upon my
“ Guard against all my spiritual E-
“ nemies ! Let me earnestly watch
“ over, take care off, and incessantly
“ pray for it : For this Love is the
“ very Foretast of Life everlasting,
“ and the Entry of Paradise it self.
“ O thou great Lover of Souls,
“ thou hast been wounded out of pure
“ Love to me ; be pleased to wound
“ also my Soul with the same Love.
“ The Blood which thou, by a Mo-
“ tive of Love, hast shed for me, is
“ so sublime and excellent, so strong
“ and powerful, as to mollify even a
“ Heart of Stone. Let this thy Blood
“ pierce and penetrate my Heart, that
“ also thy Love may penetrate it, be-
“ cause thy Love hath been made
“ manifest by thy Blood. O that my
“ Heart was but set open, to receive
“ and

“ and ardently to gather up those
“ lovely Drops, which in thy Agony, as
“ so many Pledges of Love, fell down
“ to the Ground. O that mine Eyes
“ were as Fountains of Water over-
“ flowing with Tears of Love, and
“ in most fervent Desires weeping
“ after thee, till thou didst receive
“ me into thy Favour, adopt me into
“ the Number of thy Children, fetch
“ me home to my Father’s House, and
“ embrace me with the Arms of thy
“ Compassion: Nay, let me never
“ be easy till I taste **THY SELF**
“ and thy abounding Goodness,
“ and be at last espoused unto thee
“ by the Tye of an heavenly Marriage
“ never to be dissolved, being made
“ with Thee one Heart, one Spirit,
“ one Body.

“ Draw me, O Lord, with the
“ Cords of thy Love, and I will run
“ after thee. O that I might kiss
“ thee in my very Heart, and re-
“ ceive from thy Lips that Grace
“ and Sweetness which is so abun-
“ dantly poured into them. Thou
“ art my Strength and my Comfort,
“ my Life and my Light, my Treas-
“ ure and my Salvation, my only
“ Sove-

“ Sovereign Good, and my Love
“ Unite me, O Lord, with thee, as
“ the only Object worthy of my
“ Love and Devotion : For what-
“ soever I enjoy besides, and with-
“ out thee, is nothing but Gall and
“ Bitterness, Sorrow and Labour,
“ Vanity and Vexation, Trouble and
“ Anguish of Mind. But thou, O
“ Lord, art the only Center of my
“ Rest, my Peace and my Joy !
“ Vouchsafe that the sacred Flame
“ of thy Love may constantly irra-
“ diate me, and diffusing it self thro’
“ all the Faculties of my Soul, set
“ all on Fire what is within me.
“ Let thy Love be unto me a Fire
“ of Holiness to refine me, and a
“ Fire of Gladness to nourish and
“ warm me. Let its gentle Flame
“ descend upon my Heart, and hallow
“ the Place of thy Abode ; for this
“ Flame is free from Pain and Hea-
“ viness, from Trouble and Sadness.
“ Let thy Love be unto me a sweet
“ smelling Savour to revive and
“ quicken me : Let it be unto me a
“ celestial Balm to heal and refresh
“ me, and by its fragrant Virtue to
“ draw me powerfully after thee
“ through

“ through all the Lets and Impedi-
“ ments of a profane World.
“ O thou great Lover of Souls!
“ Can there be any solid Joy or Sa-
“ tisfaction which thy Love doth not
“ afford us? It is a green and plea-
“ sant Pasture to the Weary, and
“ a neyer failing Comfort to the
“ broken in Heart: It is Meat and
“ Drink to the Hungry and Thirsty:
“ It is the true Bread of Life to
“ strengthen the Heart, and a sweet
“ Wine to rejoice it. It carrieth
“ with it Joy and Peace, and giveth
“ a safe Repose to the Feeble: It
“ is attended with Life and Light,
“ with Health and Happiness, with
“ Riches and Pleasures, with Honour
“ and Beauty, with Grace and Glory.
“ Let me never be so unhappy as to
“ lose the Pearl of this Love, which
“ is of so great a Price, and with-
“ out which I must needs be Poor
“ and Naked, Blind and Wretched!
“ Vouchsafe therefore, O Lord, that
“ with Tears of Love I may cry af-
“ ter thee, and not cease seeking till
“ with *Mary Magdalen* I happily find
“ thee: For thou hast loved me with
“ an everlasting Love, and therefore
“ with

“ with loving Kindness hast thou
 “ drawn me.

“ Let this Love be my constant
 “ Guide in the Days of my Pilgri-
 “ mage, and let it accompany me
 “ wherever I go. Let it fetch me
 “ back, when I have strayed from
 “ thy Ways. Let thy Love teach
 “ me in my Ignorance. Let it be my
 “ Wisdom in my Folly, and let it re-
 “ claim me when I am offending a-
 “ gainst thy Law. Let it keep me
 “ steady when I am in danger of
 “ Stumbling; and when I fall, then
 “ let it speedily raise me. Let it
 “ comfort me in my Sorrow, and
 “ let it support me in my Weakness.
 “ Let it blow up the dying Flax of
 “ my Faith, and when I go hence,
 “ then let it receive me into ever-
 “ lasting Habitations. *Amen.*

“ is of to great a Price, and with-
 “ out which I must needs be poor
 “ and Naked, Blind and Wretched!
 “ Vouchsafe therefore, O Lord, that
 “ with Thy Love I may say at-
 “ ter thee, and not cease seeking till
 “ with Mary Magdalen I happily find
 “ thee: For thou hast loved me with
 “ an everlasting Love, and therefore
 “ with

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