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**Name in Heaven,
the Truest Ground
of Joy**



Matthew Mead





A Name in Heaven, the Truest Ground of Joy, on Luke x. 20. and the Power of Grace in Weaning the Heart from the World, on Psal. cxxxi. 1.

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Description: As a Congregationalist minister in 17th century England, Mead could not teach or preach without censure or persecution. Eventually, the harsh religious climate of his homeland drove Mead to Holland, although he returned to England to minister to a congregation in Stepney in secret. Here, Mead includes two sets of sermons on joy and the power of grace, drawing from Luke 10:20 and Psalm 131. He entreats his readers or listeners to live lives not characterized by the things of the world, but by the things of God, finding delight and joy in godliness rather than in the vain, passing things of worldly society.

Kathleen O'Bannon

CCEL Staff

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A

Name in HEAVEN

The Truest Ground of Joy

On LUKE x. 20.

AND THE

POWER of GRACE

In Weaning the Heart from the World,

On PSAL. cxxxi. 1.

Set forth in Two Discourses in Commemoration of the Happy Birth, &c. of the Only Son of a Person of QUALITY.

By the late Reverend
Mr. MATTHEW MEAD.
Minister of the Gospel.

Published from the Original Copies wrote out fair fit for the Press with the Author's own Hand, and by him Dedicated to the said Person of Quality.

LONDON, Printed for *Edmund Parker*, at the *Bible and Crown* in *Lombard-Street* near *Stocks-Market* *Nath. Hillier*, at the *Prince's Arms* in *Leadenball-Street* over against *St. Mary Ax*; and *Daniel Mead*, at the *Bible* by *George-Inn-Gate* on *Snow-Hill*. 1707.



Prefatory Material

THE
EPISTLE
To the
READER

READER,

THE ensuing Sermons are by a Providence somewhat peculiar presented to thy View. They were first Preached at the Request of a Person of Quality, the Right Honourable the Lady *Diana Verney*, and afterwards wrote out fair for her Use and Benefit, by the worthy Author himself, as appears by his own Epistles Dedicatory affixed; and lately (among a confused heap of Papers) fell into the hands of one who was well apprized of the Worth and Value of their Author, and therefore could not pass them by unregarded with those other Papers. On perusing them, he found such Impresses of the Spirit, and such *Vestigia* of the Wit and Parts of him whose Name they bear, that he concluded they were his genuine Offspring, and that they might (tho' preached on private Occasions, yet) be of publick Use and Service; and accordingly had thoughts of Printing them; whereto he conceived himself warranted, seeing they were drawn up in Form, with Titles, Author's Name, and Dedications annexed, as though they were intended for the Press. But his Owner of them though acquainted with the Stile, yet being ignorant of the Hand-writing of the Author (and knowing how easie and common a thing it is to invert the Sense and Meaning of a Man, by the Ignorance or Carelessness of a Transcriber) was not willing, on farther Consideration, to serve the Publick at the expence of the Reputation of a Person he so much esteemed, by publishing those Sermons for Originals, which, for ought he knew, might be only Transcripts; and thus those Thoughts were laid asleep until farther Satisfaction in that matter could be obtained. At length the Possessor of them (proud of such a Treasure) providentially shewed them to a Friend of his, who perfectly knew the Hand, and had by him several Letters and Papers of the Author's Hand-writing, which comparing with the Manuscript Sermons; the Hands were found exactly to agree, to the Satisfaction of both Parties; whereupon the Design of Printing them was reviv'd, and is now executed.

This (*Reader*) is the Account of that Providence which has attended these Sermons. They might have fallen into the Hands of an Enemy, who might have evilly intreated them, by committing them to the Flames, or otherwise, They might have fallen into the Hands of one who knew not the Reverend Author, and who might, on that account, ignorantly have slighted them. The Person into whose Hands they did fall, might (when he came at them) have unwittingly thrown them by without a notice, as he had done many of their Companions

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before. And therefore that they have been thus preserved, is a Ground to hope, that God hath design'd them for singular Use and Service.

As to the Reverend Author, to expatiate on his Praises were to hold a Candle to light the *Sun*: His Name and Memory is and will be precious to every serious Christian; and if it were possible these should fail, he has not only *a Name in Heaven*, which shall never be blotted out, but also *a Place there*, whence he shall never be removed: And as for the Sermons, they are of age to speak for themselves. It is enough to say of them, that they are the genuine Issue of the Reverend Mr. *Matthew Mead*, from whom nothing little, nothing mean, was wont to proceed.

As the Providence of God has preserved them, so may his Blessing attend them and thee in thy reading of them.



Dedication

To the Honourable the Lady Diana Verny.

MADAM,

I Here present Your Honour with the Transcript of that Sermon which your Command, at first to Preach, and since to Write out, made a Duty. It is a great Interest which your noble Favours have purchased in all I call mine, and therefore Obedience to your Commands herein is but a just Debt; which I was the more willing to pay, that so your Honour might have a fit Opportunity for a more leisurely Contemplation of those things which your Attention and Affections were so concerned in at the hearing. My Design was, to call your Heart off from the Pleasantries of Sense, and to be (if God would do me so great an Honour) an instrumental Redeemer of your precious Soul out of the hand of present Contentments, which the best of us are too willingly, by the strength misguided Affections, captivated to.

The World is too little and too strait for our boundless Affections; the Soul is too much confined whilst Sense terminates its Respects, because this Bed is too short for a Man stretch himself upon it, [Isa. xxviii. 20](#). Perishing Comforts to an immortal Soul are as unsuitable as a short Bed to a Man of a tall Stature, there is little Ease or Rest in one or the other. Love and Joy are never rightly placed but upon Things above: As the Strength of our Sorrows should be bestowed upon our Sins, so the Strength of our Joys should be bestowed upon Christ. I confess I know none who have a fairer Title to Satisfaction and Joy from an outward Condition than your Honour hath, to who God hath given so noble an Extract, so hopeful a Son, so fair an Estate. [Job xxix. 3, 4, 6](#). *The Candle of God shines upon your Head, and the Secret of God is upon your Tabernacle: Your steps are washed in Butter, and the Rocks pour you out Rivers of Oyl.* Riches, Honour, Beauty, Parts, have all conspired to make you as happy as the short Arm of such finite Felicities can do: yet, *Madam*, the joy of a Name written in Heaven transcends all these as far as the Light of a Sun-beam doth that of a Glow-worm. How happy therefore is your Honour, who (I am fully perswaded) have as good a Title to this Joy as to the former; for surely that God who hath so fairly written his Law in your Heart, and his Name in your Forehead, had also written your Name in Heaven. Which that your Honour may, by the eye of Faith, be enabled to read in the fairest Character which divine Love can make, is the hearty Prayer of,

*Madam, Your Honour's most
humbly devoted Servant*

Matthew Mead.



A Name in Heaven

LUKE x. 20.

—*In this rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject to you: but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven.*

IT is the Philosopher's Opinion, that Joy (considering the effects which it accidentally produceth within) doth more harm in the World than sorrow and sadness; and they give this Reason, That Joy, naturally dilating the Spirits brings the Mind to a loose carriage, and takes the Sense of Weariness from about it: but sadness, contracting the Spirits, keeps the Mind within the limits of sobriety, and brings it to serious Thoughts. And the wise Man, in favour of this Opinion, tells us in [Eccles. vii. 3.](#) that *Sorrow is better than Laughter, for by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better.*

But this seems a great Paradox, that joy should hurt, and sadness do good, that Sorrow should be better than Laughter. Is Hell better than Heaven? is not Hell a Place of sorrow? And who is made better by it? and is not Heaven a Place of Joy? And who is made worse by it?

The End of all our Motions and Desires is to avoid Sorrow, Perturbation, and to attain Rest and Delight; which is nothing else but the Sabbath of our Thoughts, and that sweet Tranquility of Mind which results from the Fruition of that Good whereto our Desires have carried us. The great End of Religion is to promote and stablish the Joy of the Soul, sin being the proper parent of Grief and Sorrow. Nay the great End of the coming of our Lord Christ was to bless the World with Peace and Joy, and therefore his Birth is called by the Angel that published the News of it ([Luke ii. 10.](#)) *good Tidings of great joy to all People.* The End of his Doctrine was to fill them with Joy; St. [John xv. 11.](#) *These things have I spoken to you that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full.*

This then being the End of all our Desires and natural Motions, the End of Religion, the End of Christ's coming and Doctrine, to fill us with Peace and Joy in believing; it no way interfereth either with the Opinion of the Philosopher, or the Doctrine of the Preacher to averr, that Joy is better than Sorrow, as Peace is better than Trouble, Light better than Darkness, Sweet better than Bitter, and Heaven better than Hell; the one being a Place of boundless Joy, the other a Place of endless Sorrow. That Joy therefore which the Philosopher charges with such mischievous Consequences, and which *Solomon* prefer's Sorrow to, is that which results from the Presence and Fruition of improper and unsuitable Objects, or which runs into excess and inordinacy, into which the Nature of Man, since the Corruption and Disorder of the Faculties and Passions, is too apt to degenerate: For this is certain, that there is nothing we can delight in much, without sin, but those things that lie most remote from Sence, the things of the invisible World.



And hence it is that our Lord Christ here in the Text, calls off his Disciples from rejoicing much in that which yet was as lawful and likely a Cause of Rejoycing as any, *viz.* Victory over infernal Spirits, and Successes against the Powers of Darkness; to fix their Joy upon a Good, infinitely to be preferred to that, and desired before it, and that is, a Name written in Heaven. *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your Names are written in Heaven.*

In the Words you have,

A Prohibition,

An Exhortation:

Somewhat from which they are dehorted; somewhat to which they are invited.

That from which they are dehorted is, rejoicing in their Success over infernal Spirits; *rejoyce not in this that the Spirits are subject to you.*

That to which they are invited is, to rejoyce in a Mercy of a much nobler Nature, and that is, their Share and Interest in the Glory and Blessedness above; *Rejoyce that your Names are written in Heaven.*

I shall begin with the Prohibition, and speak a little to that, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject to you.*

You will think a (rejoyce not) very unwelcome Entertainment when the Work ye come about is to rejoyce, to remember the Mercy of this Day, the Pangs and Throws the Lord brought ye through on this Day; the hopeful Son that took his Birth and Breath from this Day. This was doubtless a very great Mercy, if the Mother had been spared, though the Child had died, there had been Mercy in that, but that the Lord should preserve the Root and the Branch both; make your Honour the Mother of a Child, and that Child a Son, and that Son perfect, not a Monster, not misshapen, not born Blind, not Dumb, not Deaf, not deformed and crooked: How many Mercies are in this one Mercy! Now to afix *a rejoice not*, upon such a Cause of Joy as this, seems very unwelcome and unseasonable.

But I hope by that time I have done ye will justify my choice of this Text, which hath not the least Design to suppress your Joy; but to raise it from Objects of Sense to Spiritual Delights, from lower and lesser Mercies to greater and higher Priviledges, from a Name on Earth, to a Name in Heaven.

Rejoyce not in this that the Spirits are subject to you.

This Prohibition of our Lord Christ doth clearly imply that this casting out of Devils, by the Power of the Disciples' Ministry in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, was matter of great Joy to them; and one would think, if any thing in the World could justify the running out of their Joy below God, this casting out of Devils might.

For, I. It was a great and miraculous Gift of Jesus Christ.

II. It was a Gift foretold by the Prophets, as reserved for Gospel time.



III. It was a Victory over the most potent Enemy, who laughs to scorn all humane Power, a stronger than he must come and bind him.

IV. It was a Victory very conducing to the Honour of the Lord Christ, that his naked Disciples in his Name alone, could make the Powers of Hell submit and stoop; so that certainly here was in the Success of this Service sufficient Cause of Joy to the Disciples; and yet saith our Lord Christ to them, *Notwithstanding, in this rejoyce not*. It is not an absolute Prohibition, but rather we may call it a cautionary Limitation, Rejoyce not so much in this; though it was a true Ground of Joy, yet the Lord Christ takes them off from it, by raising their Hearts above it, to a higher and nobler Cause of Joy; and that for a twofold End.

1. To free them from the Danger of spiritual Pride, which is very apt to insinuate it self into our rejoycing: The Success of Duty is too apt to puff up and swell us beyond our Proportions. The Prosperity of the Creature in its Attempts, becomes a Temptation *to sacrifice to its own Net, and burn Incense to its own Drag*. When spiritual Pride mixeth it self with our Joy in God, we take from him more than we give to him, we rob him of his Glory, whilst we rejoyce in his Mercy.

Therefore the Lord Christ takes them off from this to a higher Object, the Devils are subject to you, it is true; the Power of the Gospel in your Mouths and Ministry, hath cast Satan like Lightning from Heaven, it is true; and I know that your Hearts are filled with joy; for so it is said in the [17th verse](#), *They returned again with joy*. Well, saith the Lord Christ, *Notwithstanding in this rejoyce not*, why should your Affections, be terminated in these Things, when ye have a nobler Object for your joy to dilate it self upon, and that is, the Electing Love of God, your Portion in the eternal Mansions!

Your joy in the subduing Infernal Spirits may be your snare, whilst they are subjected to you one Way, spiritual Pride may subject ye to them in another; and so, though ye conquer, yet they will overcome; *Therefore in this rejoyce not*.

2. To teach us that no external Mercy should terminate the Delight of our Souls, but that we should use all outward Benefits as a Ladder whereby to ascend to God in our Affections.

The Way to allay and moderate the Joy of the Soul, in common and present Mercies is to realize the Things of the Invisible World, and let out our Hearts much to the Glories above. The Design of Christ and the Gospel is to spiritualize the Christians Joy, and place it upon the chiefest Good; *Therefore in this rejoyce not, that the Spirits are subject to you*.

Quest. But ye will say, why should we not?

Answ. I will give ye a threefold reason for it.

Reas. 1. Because this Gift may be given where the Love of God is not injoyed; [Matt. vii. 22](#). *Many will say to me on that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophecyed in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful Works; then will I profess unto them, I never knew ye, depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* [ver. 23](#). Many may cast



out Devils in the Name of Christ, and yet after all be cast out themselves by Christ. *Judas* was one of them that cast out Devils, and yet *Judas* was cast out himself.

That Injoyment, whatever it be (be it Gifts, be it Relations, be it Honours) which may be separated from the Love of God in Christ; can be no true Ground of Rejoicing. Therefore what our Lord Christ saith of casting out of Devils, I may (upon a Parity of Superiority of Reason) say of all things below which we place our Contentment in, and look upon as matter of Joy, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not.*

Reas. 2. It is a Vanity to rejoice much in anything which we cannot rejoice in long. What the Apostle saith, [1 Corinth. xiii. 8](#), *Prophecies shall fail, Tongues shall cease, Knowledge shall vanish away*; the same I may say of all common and sublunary Mercies and Comforts, they shall fail and vanish. *The Fashion of this World passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 31.*

What Pleasure can that Man take in his Expedition whose Voyage is for a Year, and his Victual but for a Day? who sets out for Eternity with the Pleasures and Contents of nothing but Mortality? Therefore though ye may have all that Heart can wish of the Comfort and Prosperity of this World, yet *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not.*

Reas. 3. Why should we rejoice much in that which cannot rescue us out of the Hands of eternal Misery? None of these things which we glory in can: They are poor lying Delights, which like *Jordan*, empty all their Sweetness into a stinking and sulphurous Lake.

When I see the *rich Man* in the Parable *clothed with purple, and fine Linnen, and faring sumptuously every Day,*” [Luke xvi. 19](#), methinks I could wish my Lot might lie at his Table, rather than with an Ulcerous *Lazarus begging for Crumbs at his Door*; but when I look again and find him paying his Reckoning in tormenting Flames, who would have his Pomp and Glory at this Price? He buyeth his Pleasures too Dear, who pays for them with the Loss of his Soul.

We may have all the Comforts that this World can afford, and yet die comfortless? May we be rejoicing in our Relations to Day, and yet shut out of all Relation to God to Morrow? then whatever we possess of the Comforts of this World, *yet notwithstanding in this rejoice not.*

But rather rejoice because your Names are written in Heaven.

And this brings me to the Exhortation, in which the true Ground of a Christian’s Joy is propounded, and preferred before all other. *Rejoice not in this, &c. but rather in that, that your Names are written in Heaven.* Joy in this Mercy is not absolutely prohibited, but a higher Joy is preferred; an interest in Heaven is another-guise Mercy than casting out Devils on Earth, and therefore rejoice much more in this than that.

The Expression is in manner of Speech, much like that of our Lord Christ, in [John vi. 27](#), *Labour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for the Meat that endureth to everlasting Life.* that is, Labour not so much for this as for that, or rather for that than this.

Let us a little consider the Expression, *Rejoice because your Names are written in Heaven.*

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The Lord Christ might have said, Rejoice in your Discipleship to me, that I have called ye out of the World; *when not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble are called, 1 Corinth. i. 26.*

Rejoice that ye have followed me in the Regeneration, and that ye are become new Creatures, when the whole World liveth in Wickedness, 1 John v. 19.

Rejoice that ye are inlightned in the Mysteries of the Gospel, when *they are hid from the Wise and Prudent, Mat. xi. 25.* But if Christ had fix'd their Joy in any of these, then the Fountain and Cause of all had been hid, and therefore our Lord Christ leads them to the Fountain from whence all these Privileges are derived, and that is, the electing Love of God, this being the Cause of all future Good to the Creature.

Are ye called out of the World? It is *because your Names are written in Heaven.*

Are ye begotten of God, and born again? It is *because your Names are written in Heaven.*

Are ye taken into Membership to Christ, and thereby become the Sons and Daughters of God? It is because your Names are written in Heaven.

Have you the Earnest of your Inheritance in the Sealings of the Spirit upon your Hearts? *It is because your Names are written in Heaven.*

Can ye subdue Corruptions within, and resist Temptations without? Are the Devils subject to you? It is *because your Names are written in Heaven. Therefore rejoice not so much because the Spirits are subject to you; but rather Rejoyce because your Names are written in Heaven.*

Query, But what is meant by having our Names written in Heaven? How must we understand this?

Answ. The Name is in Scripture Phrase frequently put for the Person. *Acts i. 15. The Number of the Names together were about an Hundred and Twenty;* That is, the Number of the Persons. *Revel. iii. 4. Thou hast a few Names in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments.* A few, Names, that is, a few Saints in *Sardis.*

So that we are not to understand it, as if God did Litterally write down the Names of Men; but the Expression is to shew us what a Peculiar and Distinct knowlege God hath of Persons in the World.

When our Names are said to be written in Heaven, it is a way of Speaking borrowed from the Customs of Men, whose Names are Registered and Inrolled in some Publick Records, to keep in Memory, and assure them of their Freedom and Privilege in that Corporation.

The Apostle in *Philippians iv. 3,* speaks of Names written in the Book of Life; *whose Names are in the Book of Life.* And in *Revel. xiii. 8,* ye Read of Names written in the Book of the Lamb. *All that dwell upon Earth shall Worship the Beast, whose Names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.* And here in the Text, ye Read of a *Name written in Heaven.*



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They that have an Interest in the Electing love of God, that are his Chosen Ones, their Names are written in the Book of Life. But these lying in a fallen State with the rest of the lost World, must be redeem'd with the Blood of Christ, and when they come to share in the redeeming Love of Christ, then they may be said to have their *Names written in the Book of the Lamb*.

And when the Spirit of Grace hath changed and sanctified them, and given them a Right to eternal Life, then their Names may be said to be *written in Heaven*.

If ye share in the electing Love of God, ye shall also share in the redeeming Grace of Christ; and if ye are redeemed by Christ, ye shall share in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Spirit.

If your Name is written in the Book of Life, it shall be written in the Book of the Lamb; and if it be in the Book of the Lamb, it shall be *written in Heaven*, and if it be written there, then *Rejoice not that the Spirits are subject to you: But rather Rejoyce, because your Names are written in Heaven*.

But I conceive that all these various Phrases of the Holy Ghost, signify one and the same Thing, *to be written in the Book of Life, and in the Book of the Lamb*, is all one in Sense, with this Phrase before us in the Text, *of having our Names written in Heaven*.

Now the writing our Names in Heaven, imports and implies Three things.

1st. The Foreknowledge of God; the Names of Believers are said *to be written in Heaven*, because they are as certainly and as distinctly known to God, as if their Names were written and recorded there.

God is said *not to know the Wicked*, [Matthew vii. 23](#). But he knoweth all that are his, *you only have I known of all the families of the Earth*, [Amos iii. 2](#). *The Foundation of the Lord stands sure, having this Seal, the Lord knows them that are his*. [2 Tim. ii. 19](#).

2d. The writing our Names in Heaven, implies an Interest in the Electing Love of God. [Philip. iv. 3](#), *whose Names are written in the Book of Life*; that is, who are in an elected State, chosen to Salvation and eternal Life. The Book of Life is God's immutable and eternal Decree, wherein, as in a Book, the Names of the Elect are written.

3d. The Writing the Name implies and supposes the begetting Faith in the Heart. A Man's Name may be said to be written in Heaven, when he can by Faith apply the Promises of Life and Glory to his Soul, and see his Part in them, and Title to them.

A Man's Name is then written in Heaven, when by Faith in Christ he doth obtain a Right to the eternal Inheritance; and I will add this, when by a constant growth in Grace and Sanctification, he doth labour after a fitness for Participation and Possession.

For you must know that there is a double Right to Heaven, which every one must have that would Inherit.

The one is appendant to Faith, the other is annexed to the utmost Degrees of Grace and Holiness.

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Faith gives a Title to Heaven and Blessedness; we have a right of Inheritance granted by Christ upon our first Believing, [John i. 12](#). *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power* (in the Greek it is rather, he gave them the *Right* or the *Privilege*) *to become the Sons of God*: And it is a great Privilege indeed, it is given but to few.

Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God, 1 John iii. 1. This is the new Name in the white Stone, which none can know but they that receive it, Rev. ii. 17.

But then there is a Right of Fitness, and this lies in our Attainments in Grace; when we are sanctified throughout, when Grace is improved to the utmost, and our Measure filled up, then we have a Right of Fitness for Heaven, and a State of Glory.

We are decreed to this State by the Eternal Love of God from before the Foundation of the World; we are redeemed to it by the Blood and Death of Jesus Christ; we are called to it by the Preaching of the Gospel; but we are not actually entered into it, till we are renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

There are four Doctrines which the Words of the Text afford to us.

Doctr. 1. That rejoicing in outward Mercies is warrantable; the Lord Christ doth here allow of it, even when he preferreth the Joy of a Name written in Heaven before it.

Doctr. 2. That when the Lord vouchsafeth us any Matter of Rejoicing in the Mercies and Blessings which he bestoweth upon us, the best of us are too prone to take up with a carnal selfish Joy; this Doctrine is imply'd in that, *Rejoice not*.

Doctr. 3. That though rejoicing in outward Mercies is good and warrantable, yet to terminate our Joy, and let our Hearts rest in them, is evil and sinful.

Rejoice not in this, that is, not in this as the chief Good, not as the highest Cause of Joy, not so as to hinder your Hearts from a higher and nobler Matter of Rejoicing.

Doctr. 4. That a Right to, and Interest in the Glories of the World to come, is a greater Ground of Joy than anything this World can afford. The greatest Ground of Joy imaginable is to have a Name written in Heaven.

I shall pass by the Two former Doctrines, being only implied in the Text, and speak a little to the Third, to make way to the Last, which I chiefly intend to insist upon.

Doctr. 3. That though rejoicing in outward Mercies is good and warrantable, yet to terminate our joy, and let our Hearts rest in them, is evil and sinful.

It proceeds from an evil Cause,

It hath an evil Effect.

1. It proceeds from an evil Cause, and that is inordinate Love of sensual Objects; for Joy in any thing is proportioned to Love, we never rejoice much in any thing but what we love much, now, to have the choicest Respects of an immortal Soul, laid out upon, and center in present and perishing Comforts, is a great evil.

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2. It hath an evil Effect; hereby God is disparaged, the Lord Christ despised, the unseen Glories neglected, and the Soul in Danger of being misled and ruined. See [Job xxi. from the 7th Verse to the 15th.](#)

3. We hereby make a wrong Use of the Mercies of God, which are given to raise our Hearts, not for our Hearts to rest in; to elevate our Affections, not to terminate them; to Pully our Hearts up, not to Swallow them up!

Present Injoyments should be as a Glass for the Soul to take a view of the Goodness of God in; *David saith, The Earth is full of his Goodness,*” [Psal. xxxiii. 5.](#) you may injoy God in every Creature, and have an account of his Goodness from every Comfort.

To the believing Eye, there is a Transparency in the Creature; Faith can see divine Goodness and Bounty beaming thro’ every Mercy; and they that cannot, can never rightly use them, nor innocently injoy them.

The sensual Heart makes a Cloud to hide him, of that which God made for a Glass, in which we might see him. God made it for a Window to let in the Light of his Love, and we make it a Curtain to shut it out.

To let our Hearts rest in present Mercies is to make them our Images, our Idols, and this is the highest Abuse of God’s Mercy.

1. This God hath expressly forbidden, *Thou shall not make for thy self the Likeness of anything in Heaven above.* [Exod. xx. 4.](#) To make the Creature our chief Good, is to put it in the Room and Place of God, and to make to our selves an Image like God.

2. This hazzards the Continuance of our Mercies: When once we begin to set up Idols, it is time for God to pull them down: When once our Hearts center in them, he will quickly remove them, one of these Two things God always doth in this case.

Either he takes our Comforts away from us to recover our Respects to himself, or if he leaves them with us, then he withdraws himself.

Application.

Would you not have your Hearts should terminate in any thing below? Harken then to a double Exhortation.

1. Whatever you Love, let it be also your Fear; Fear will be a Bridle to Love, nothing hath such Advantage upon us to Steal our Hearts from God, as the Things we love and delight in. Have you a Child or Relation you love, a Friend or Ccompanion you love, &c. O be jealous of them, for these, like Wine, *and New Wine take away the Heart.* [Hos. iv. 11.](#)

If what you love be not your Fear, it will be your Loss and Sorrow; if *Samson* had feared his *Delilah* as much as he loved her, he had sav’d both his Locks and his Life. *Solomon’s* Wives became his Woe, Fondling Children often repay their Parents Dotage in Tears and Troubles, being Thorns in their Sides and a Grief to their Soul: Whatever thou overlovest look to find it to be thy Cross or thy Curse.



2. Then live above the Pleasures of thy Sense; what have you no nobler Delights? Have you not a God to delight in? A Christ to solace your Souls in Communion with? What a poor thing it is to put your Souls off with those Delights wherein the Bruits have as great a share as you. Where is peace with God? Where is joy in the Holy Ghost? Where is Peace of Conscience? Where is the Hope of Glory? Where is a *Name written in Heaven*? These are the only proper Pastime for immortal Souls. And this leads me to the Observation which I chiefly aim at.

Doctr. 4. The greatest Ground of Joy imaginable is to have a *Name written in Heaven*. An Interest in the Glories of the other World is a truer and nobler Cause of rejoycing than any thing which this World can afford.

I need produce no other Proof of the Truth of this Doctrine than the Authority of the Text it self; it stands clear in the Light of its own Evidence; the Lord Christ himself hath said it, and therefore we ought to believe it is so.

But why is it so?

Reas. 1. A *Name written in Heaven* is a rich Result of Electing Love. Love is the most comfortable Attribute in God, the best Name the Creature knows him by. *God is Love, 1 John iv. 16.* There are three things to be considered in it.

1. Love acts with a Priority to all other Attributes; Wisdom contrives the Good and Felicity of the Creature; Power and Providence maturate, and bring the Contrivements of Wisdom to pass; but Love hath the first hand in the Work. It was Love that first summoned the great Counsel held by all the Three Persons in *Elohim*, when neither Men nor Angels existed.

It was Love that first pitched upon the Son, and laid him as the Foundation of the whole Structure of Man's Salvation and Blessedness. Love sent Christ into the World, Love put him to Death, Love made him an Offering for Sin, *John iii. 16.* All the Attributes of God act in the Strength of Love; and all the Providences of God follow the Motions of Love.

2. Electing Love is the proper Source of all our other Mercies. So the Apostle makes it, *Ephes. 1st. 3d, 4th.* *Who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings; How so? according as he hath chosen us in Christ; and what those spiritual Blessings are he tells you v. 6. he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*

In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the forgiveness of Sins according to the Riches of his Grace, v. 7.

He hath abounded toward us in all Wisdom and Prudence. v. 8.

Having made known to us the Mystery of his Will. v. 9.

In whom we have obtained an Inheritance, v. 11. that is, a *Name written in Heaven*. All which the Apostle resolves again into Electing Love, *verse 11. being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who works all things according to the Counsel of his own will.*

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3. Love is the only Attribute which God hath acted to the utmost: we have never seen the utmost of his Power, what God can do; but we have seen the utmost of his Love; *He hath found a ransom for lost Souls; Job xxxiii. 24. He hath laid help upon one that is mighty, Psal. lxxxix. 19. He hath tabernacled Divinity in Flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. made his Soul an Offering for Sin, laid upon him the Iniquity of us all, Isai. liii. 11. made us the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21, accepted us in the Beloved, Ephes. i. 6. made us to sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus, Ephes. ii. 6. written our Names in Heaven.* How can divine Love put forth greater Efforts of it self than these?

It is infinite Love, and it gives the Soul Interest in an infinite Good, intitles it to an infinite Blessedness, and so fills the Soul with an infinite Satisfaction.

And is not an Interest in Electing Love the highest Cause of rejoycing? The Scripture compares the Love of God to Wine, *Cant. i. 2. New Wine is said to make glad the Heart, Psal. civ. 15. but the Love of God is better than Wine; Cant. iv. 10.* it gives a Name in Heaven, which causes an eternal Rejoycing.

Reas. 2. A Name written in Heaven is a Mercy with a Distinction, a peculiar appropriated Priviledge; *David* prays, *Psal. cvi. 4, 5. Remember me, O Lord, with the Favour thou barest to thy People;* but the *Hebrew* reads it thus, *Record me, O Lord, in the good Will of thy People.* God in good will to his People records their Names in the Book of Life, and there *David* would be recorded too; and why? *That I may see the Good of thy Chosen, that I may rejoyce in the Gladness of thy Nation, that I may glory with thine Inheritance.*

What if God give you Life, Riches, Relations, Honours? There is no Distinction in all this; can you prove your Title to the Love of God by any, or all of these? *Solomon* says no, *Ecclesiastes ix. 1. No Man knows love or hatred by all that is before him.* A Man may have Life, and yet be dead to God, dead in sin; a Man may be Rich and yet wretched, we may have Children, and yet be our selves Children of Wrath for all that; God doth not love us in giving us Sons, unless he give us his own Son: A Man may have Honour and yet not be honoured of God; *Herod* was honoured of the People, and yet eaten up of Worms, *Acts xii. 21, 22, 23.*

Peculiar Mercy causes peculiar rejoycing, common Mercies can cause but common Joy; a Name in Heaven is a Mercy with a Distinction, this is not the Lot of all, the Names of the greatest part of the World are written in the Dust, *Jeremy xvii. 13, All that forsake thee shall be ashamed, their Names shall be written in the Earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of living Waters.* The Expression hath much in it, it travels with a Curse.

The Earth is opposed to Heaven; as a Name in Heaven imports the greatest Happiness, so a Name written in the Earth implies the greatest Misery.

The Earth is a Place of short Duration, it shall not last always; *Heaven* (that is the lower Heaven) *and Earth shall pass away,* our Lord Christ says, *Matt. v. 18.* A Name written in

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the Earth implies a short Duration, a Name of no Continuance; so says *Bildad* of the Wicked,

Job xviii. 16; His Roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his Branch be cut off.

The Earth is a Place of Putrifaction and Corruption; what is buried in the Earth soon turns to Rottenness. so that a Name in the Earth implies Rottenness, according to that of *Solomon*, *Proverbs x. 7. the Name of the Wicked shall rot.*

The Earth is a Place of Oblivion, what is written in Heaven is recorded for ever, but what is written in the Dust is soon forgotten; so says *Bildad* of the Wicked, *Job xviii. 17. His Remembrance shall perish from the Earth, and he shall have no Name in the Street.*

V. 18. he shall be driven from light into Darkness, and chased out of the World.

V. 19. he shall neither have Son nor Nephew among his People, nor any remaining in his Dwellings.

V. 21. surely such are the Dwellings of the Wicked, and this is the Place of him that knows not God.

The Earth is designed for burning; it is decreed to be Fuel for the Conflagration of the great Day, *when the Lord Christ shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.* So saith the Apostle, *2 Peter iii. 10, The Day of the Lord will come, in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat, the Earth also, and the Works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* Whatever is of Affinity to Earth must feel the Flames of that trying Day; not only the Element of the Earth, but the Treasures of the Earth, the Pleasures of the Earth, the Names written in the Earth, earthly Affections, earthly Fruitions, earthly Designs, earthly Hearts, all must together make Fuel for that Fire: For the Earth and all the Works that are therein shall be burnt up.

You see what a Curse a Name written in the Earth is, and yet the Names of the greatest part of Men and Women in the World are written there; to have a Name written in Heaven is the Portion but of few, it is a special Privilege by which the Lord doth distinguish his from the rest of the World; and therefore to have a Name in Heaven, is Cause of Rejoycing indeed..

Reas. 3. A Name written in Heaven speaks the Soul in the highest Relation to God; you are his Children, his Sons and Daughters, the Adopted of the Lord, and what greater Ground of Joy imaginable

Whatever Excellency there is in the Relation, the Benefit of that Excellency redounds to the Correlate by Virtue of the Tie of that Relation.

What is it that first cloathes your Child with Honour and Name, but the Nobleness of his Descent; and how comes your Honour and Greatness to descend upon him but by being of the same Blood? It is the nearness of the Relation, that intitles him to all. So all that is in



God, all his Excellency's, all his Attributes, his Wisdom, his Power, his Love, his Justice, his Providence, all are yours, and work for your Benefit and Advantage, by Virtue of this Relation.

There is a twofold Relation to God,

A Relation	{	of Servants, of Sons.
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But the Difference between them is very great, especially in five Things.

1st. The Relation of Servants is a common Relation; all Creatures in the World are Gods Servants, as he is the great Master and Householder of Heaven and Earth. God hath Servants of all sorts, Good and Bad; *he hath good and faithful Servants*, [Matt. xxv. 23](#), and *he hath wicked and slothful Servants*, [verse 26](#). he hath some that Honour him, and some that rebel against him. God hath many Servants that take Wages of him, but do the Devils work.

All Creatures stand in this Relation to God, the very Devils themselves are subject to his Command, *every Knee bows to him, both of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth*, [Phil. ii. 10](#).

But the relation of Sons is a peculiar special Relation, that appertains but to few. God hath many Servants, but he hath but few Sons; he hath many in Subjection, but few in this Relation: All are his Subjects, but all are not his Sons and Daughters.

2. The Relation of Servants is a mercenary Relation; the Duty of that Relation is drawn forth by the Rewards of it; Servants work for Hire, it is Wages they chiefly look at. God hath many such Servants, that are meerly mercenarys in all their Duties. They know, God is a good Master, pays well, and keeps a good Table; his Commands are equal, and his Rewards are bountiful, therefore they own him. As many followed the Lord *Christ* when he was upon Earth, not because of his Miracles, but because of his Morsels; not because they would be saved, but because they *did eat of the loaves, and were filled*, [John vi. 26](#). It was not for the sake of his Person, but his Provision; not out of love to the Truth, so much as the Trenchard. The Lord *Christ* hath many such Servants now, that call themselves the *Servants of Christ*, and *Ministers of Christ*, but they are but *Trenchard-Chaplains* to him. It is the Salary they look at, more than the Service; Dignities, more than Duty; the Preferments of the Church, more than the Concernments of it: They have the *Flesh-hook* of the Law in their Hand, [1 Sam. ii. 13, 14](#). often to serve themselves, but the *Book* of the Law is in their Hand but seldom, whereby they should *save themselves, and them that hear them*, [1 Tim. iv. 16](#). These follow *Christ* indeed, but it is for the Loaves, no Wages, no Work: Like them in [Malachy iii. 14](#), that cry out, *What Profit is it to serve God?*

But now the Relation of *Sons* is more ingenuous: *Sons* obey and serve in Ingenuity; not for Reward, but Duty, they Labour, because they Love. Not but that the Children of God may look at the Rewards promised. *Moses* was Ingenuous in all his Performances, and yet he had a Respect to *the Recompense of Reward*, [Heb. xi. 26](#). *Christ* was a *Son* in the highest

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Relation, the *Son* of God's choicest Regards, [Matth. xvii. 5.](#) and yet it is said of Him, in his *enduring the Cross, and despising the Shame*, that He had *an eye to the Joy that was set before him*, [Heb. xii. 2.](#) A Dutiful Child may look at his Inheritance; yet he would pay the *Obedience of Children*, though he were to receive no *Father's Blessing*.

3. The Relation of *Sons*, is a Communicative Relation: The Relation of a *Servant* is not so. A Master doth not impart all his Mind, nor disclose his Secrets to his *Servant*; he lays upon him his Commands, but doth not betrust him with his Secrets. So saith our Lord *Christ*, [John xv. 15.](#) *Henceforth I call you not Servants, for the Servant knows not what his Lord doth.* But a *Father* will disclose and communicate his Heart to his *Child*; he will tell all his Mind, and Will, and Counsels, to his *Son*.

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4. The Relation of *Servants* gives no Claim; it doth not intitle them to the Estate of their Lord: The Law allows them a present Maintenance, but no Share in the Inheritance.

But the Relation of a *Son* is Intitling; it gives a Claim. By Virtue of his *Sonship*, he hath a Title to what is his *Father's*; his *Father's* Riches, his *Father's* Honours, &c.

If you are the *Children of God*, you are born *Heirs*, and your Inheritance is the greatest in this World or in the next; for *God* Himself is your Portion; and all He is, and all He hath, is *the Lot of your Inheritance*.

5. The Relation of *Servants* is not lasting; it is Arbitrary, founded in Will and Pleasure: You take one *Servant*, and put away another, at your Pleasure. But the Relation of a *Son* is *abiding*, it lasts for Ever, to the end of Being: So says our Lord *Christ*, [John viii. 35,](#) *The Servant abides not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth forever.* If you are the Children of God, you are taken into a Lasting Relation that shall never end: *God* is your *Father* for ever, and you are his Children for ever; it is an Everlasting Relation.

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How should we *rejoyce* in this near Relation to the *Great God!* *Sons* and *Daughters of God* is the highest Title I ever heard of in the World. *David* was made but *Son-in-Law* to a King, not *born* a *Son*; he was not of the Blood-Royal, but by Favour taken in and made a *Son*, and it was but a *Son-in-Law* neither, by Marriage, and this *Sonship* was but to a King, that dies like other Men, [Psal. lxxxii. 7.](#) and yet the Thoughts of it wrought to astonishment in him: *Seemeth it a light thing to you to be Son-in-Law to a King?* [1 Sam. xviii. 23.](#) What is it then to be taken into an Eternal *Sonship* to an Everlasting *Father*, before whom the Kings of the Earth are as *Grashoppers*; that *bringeth the Princes to nothing*, and *maketh the Judges of the Earth as vanity*, [Isa. xl. 22, 23.](#)

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Reas. 4. A Name written in Heaven, gives an assured Hope of Heaven: We are by this, for ever set free from all fear of miscarrying. If ye have a Title, never question the Possession: If the Right is yours, ye shall surely Inherit. When you look over a company of Deeds, and see the Name of such a particular Person run through them all, and expressly mention'd in

the Conveyance, and all things run in his Name; you conclude that Estate his, it belongs to him, and will come to him, for all the Law is on his side.

It is so in the Case in hand; if ye have *a Name written in Heaven*, the Estate is yours, the Conveyance is made to you: The *Covenant* is the Main Deed, which is sealed in the *Blood of Christ*, and therein the Inheritance is made-over and conveyed to you!

There is an inseparable Connexion between *Election* and *Salvation*: Tho' there are many Links in the Golden-Chain that reach from one to the other, yet not one of them can be broken: *Whom he did predestinate, them he called; and whom he called; them he justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*, [Rom. viii. 30](#).

It is observable in what Tense the Spirit of God puts it; not in the Future, as a thing to be done, but in a Tense that notes it done already, to shew the Certainty of it. If our *Names are written in Heaven*, we shall as surely share in the Glories of it, as if already in Possession; nay, we are already in Possession:

Partly in *Christ*, who is already enter'd upon the Inheritance in our Right; [Heb. vi. 20](#), *Whither the Forerunner is for us entered*. Hence that of the Apostle, *He hath made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*, [Eph. ii. 6](#).

Partly by the *Promise*: We have the Deeds, though we do not enjoy the Estate; we keep the Title, though we do not possess the Inheritance.

Partly in the *First-fruits of Glory*, [Rom. viii. 23](#), which we receive by the *Spirit of God*, and the *Graces of the Spirit in our Hearts*. Entrance upon the least Part of an Estate, gives a Right to the Possession, as well as Entrance upon the Whole: The least Turf of the Premises, conveys the Inheritance, and gives Livery and Seisin of all the Demesus. *Grace in the Heart*, is a Turf of the *Holy Land*, the *Land of Promise*, whereby God doth actually Instate us in the Glorious Inheritance.

APPLICATION.

The First *Use*, shall be for *Examination*. Is *a Name written in Heaven*, the truest Cause of Rejoycing? Then let us see what Cause of Rejoycing we may have in our selves upon this Account. The Apostle's Counsel is plainly to this Purpose, [Gal. vi. 4](#), *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself, and not in another*.

You have heard, That there can be no true Cause of Joy in the Heart, but *a Name written in Heaven*.

You have (*Madam*) set this Day apart for an *Anniversary of Rejoycing* in the *Birth*, and *Life*, and *Hope* of your Pleasant and Tender *Son*; and you do well: But doth your Joy begin here? or is *God* the beginning of it? Is *a Name in Heaven* the chief Ground of your Joy?

Quest. But you will Reply, Who can say his *Name is written in Heaven*? Who hath thus far known the Mind of the Lord? To whom hath he at any time opened the Sealed Book of his Secret Decrees? Was ever any Man admitted into the Regions above, to search the Eternal Records of the Divine Purpose?

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Ans. Surely, No: But yet let me, in Answer to this, lay down Two Conclusions.

1. The Knowledge of this, That *our Names are written in Heaven*, is attainable: Why else are we commanded to *make our Calling and Election sure*? Wou'd the Lord *Christ* have call'd upon us to *rejoyce*, because *our Names are written in Heaven*, if it were a thing that cou'd not be known? Surely therefore it is no such Secret, as lies out of the reach of *Faith's* Attainment.

Indeed, to Wicked, Unbelieving, and Impenitent Sinners, the Knowledge of this is impossible. How can a Man who forsakes *God*, know that his *Name is written in Heaven*, when *God* says, *They that forsake him, their Names shall be written in the Earth*? But *Believers* may attain to the Knowledge of this.

2. As the Knowledge of it is attainable, so it is evident from Scripture Instance, that many have attained to it: *God* hath sometimes unsealed the Book of his Decrees, and held it open to the Believing Eye; so that the Soul hath been inabled to read its Interest in Divine Love, by the Spiritual Opticks of *Faith*; For *Faith is the Evidence of things not seen*, [Heb. xi. 1](#). *Faith* can make its passage trough all the Obstructions that lie in the way between a *Soul* at home in the Body, and an absent *God*; for that is the case of every Incarnate Christian. The *Soul* is as yet wrapt up in gross Matter, imprison'd in Flesh, and confined to an abode in a tabernacle of Clay; and therefore distanced from *God*, and utterly incapable of any farther Converse and Communion with him, than what is attainable by the Mediation of *Faith*.

Now *Faith* enters within the Vail, removes the Soul out of the Valleys of *Sense*, and sets it upon the highest Ground of *Gospel-Consolation*, that it may stand at the fairest advantage to get a Prospect into the Glory of the other World. *Faith* draws infallible Conclusions of the Goodness of its State, from the immutable Decrees of *Electing Love*: What else made *Job* say, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth; and that though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for my self? [Job xix. 25, 26, 27](#).

And what made St. *Paul* glory in the Lord *Christ*, crying out, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me*? [Gal. ii. 20](#). And what made the *Church* say, with so much confidence, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine*? [Cantic. vi. 3](#).

Ques. But the great Question is, How shall a Man be able to know, that *his Name is written in Heaven*?

Ans. There are certain Discoveries of this in a Man's self; which if we attend to, we may have a sure Proof and Witness of.

1. *Effectual Calling* is a sure Proof of this: If the *Call* of *God* hath took hold of our *Hearts*, then *our Names are written in Heaven*. There is an inseparable Connexion between *Election* and *Vocation*; and therefore, when the *Apostle* bids us *give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*; though *Election* is before *Calling* (the one being an Immanent Act of *God*



in *Eternity*; the other a Transient Act of God in *Time*), yet the *Apostle* puts the making our *Calling sure*, in the first place; because a Man can never be sure he is *Elected*, till he is first *Called*.

Now then, if ye would know whether *your Names are written in Heaven*; satisfie your selves in this, That the *Call of God* hath took effectual hold of your *Hearts*. Hath it brought your Souls off from everything below *Christ*, wholly to follow *Christ*? It is said, when *Christ* called *Peter* and *Andrew*, they presently *left their Nets, and followed him*, [Matth. iv. 18, 19](#). Every Man hath his *Nets*, somewhat that his Soul is entangled in, till the *Call of God* take hold of him. Can you now, with *Peter*, when God *calls*; lay aside your *Nets* to *follow him*?

For it is not every *Call*, that will witness the Truth of our Election: There is an *External Call* of the *Word*, that is ineffectual, it prevails not upon the Sinner's Heart, he turns a deaf Ear upon it; this *Call* leaves Sinners as it finds them, in their *sins* and *lusts*, [Matth. xx. 16](#).

But then there is an *Internal Call*; when *Word* and *Spirit* go together, and work together, to bring the Soul off from *Sin*, and *Lust*, and *Self*, and *World*, and all to *Jesus Christ*, to live upon him as its Portion, and conform to Him as its Pattern. Now if thou art thus *Called*, then is *thy Name written in Heaven*: And therefore ye may'st go and rejoyce indeed; for if any in the World hath cause, thou hast.

2. If the Law of God be *written* in thy *Heart*, then *thy Name is written in Heaven*. It is one of the great Promises of the *New Covenant*, That *God will write his Law in our Hearts*, [Heb. viii. 10](#).

Quest. Now you will say, What is this *Law of God*?

Answ. It is the *Law of Love*, the *Law of Holiness*, a Law that takes in all the Duties that God requires of us, a *Law of Universal Obedience*: [Psal. xl. 8](#). *Thy Law is in my Heart*; it is a *Law* that comprehends the whole Rule of the *New Creature*. The *Law Within* is a Counterpart of the *Law Without*; so that, look whatever the Word of God commands, the Soul is enabled to perform, when this *Law is written in the Heart*.

Quest. When is God said to *write his Law in the Heart*?

Answ. When He doth powerfully impress a Divine Principle of *Grace*, by his *Holy Spirit*, in the *Heart*. *Believers* are said to be the *Epistle of Christ*, written not with Ink, but with the *Spirit of the Living God*, [2 Cor. iii. 3](#). An *Epistle*, is nothing else but a Paper, with the Mind of a Man written in it, and sent to another: *Believers*, are the *Epistle of the Living God*; there his Mind, and Will, and Law is written, not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshly Tables of the *Heart*.

So that if the *Law of God* be written in your *Heart*, then may you know that *your Name is written in Heaven*.

Converting Grace in the *Heart*, is the best Comment upon the *Election of God*; without which, the Eternal Decree concerning us, can never be read with Clearness, nor understood with Comfort. The *Decree* travaills and brings forth, in a work of *Grace* in the *Heart*: The

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Mind of God, concerning our Eternal Condition, is best known by a sound Conversion; for there he speaks plainly; that *Fountain of Love* which ran under Ground before, now bubbles up, and breaks forth. In *Election*, God spake within Himself; but in *Conversion*, God speaks to the Soul: In *Election*, God wrote our Names in Heaven secretly; but in *Conversion*, we see them written there openly.

A Work of *Grace in the Heart*, carries in it a Four-fold Witness:

1. That we are the Objects of God's *Election*.
2. That Sin is Pardoned through *Christ's Satisfaction*.
3. That *God* is Reconciled by *Christ's Intercession*.
4. That we are Secure, as to *Eternal Salvation*.

And the least of these is worth a whole World. Who would not be willing to know himself the Chosen of God? Who would not be glad to see *Sin* Pardoned? Who would not rejoice in a *Friendship* with *God*, whose Wrath burns to the lowest Hell? Who would not triumph, in an Assurance of being Saved for Ever? Now if *Grace* be wrought in thy *Heart*, this is thy Privilege, and may'st say, with *Tamar*, [Gen. xxxviii. 25](#). *Whose this Staff, and this Signet, and these Bracelets are, his am I.* and thou may'st rejoice in hope of Glory. No better Witness of *our Names written in Heaven*, than the Image of God engraven in the *Heart*: Say not, *Who shall ascend to Heaven?* &c. [Rom. x. 6](#).

As Sinners need not descend into the Deep, to search for Hell, to see if their Names be written, by the Wrath and Vengeance of God, in Eternal Misery: No, they may find it nearer home; there is an Hell within them; there is the Stench and Filth of Hell, in their vile Affections; the Smoak and Flames of Hell, are in their burning and raging Lusts; the Darkness of Hell, in their blind Minds; and sometimes the Torments of Hell, in their guilty and self-revenging Consciences, that *Worm that never dies*, [Mark ix. 44](#). So may *Believers* find a Heaven in their own Souls, a Heaven of Light, of Love, of Holiness, of Joy and Praise; the Kingdom of Heaven is within you.

3. If *true Faith* be wrought in thy *Heart*, then is *thy Name written in Heaven*. [1 John v. 10](#). *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.* *Faith* is a sure Fruit of *Electing Love*: *As many as were ordained to Eternal Life, believed*, [Acts xiii. 48](#). *God doth not* (you see from hence) *Elect* us because we *Believe*, (*Election* upon *Faith* foreseen, is an *Arminian Dream*) but we *Believe* because we are *Elected*.; it is some of the first-fruits which *Eternal Love* brings forth in the *Heart*; final *Unbelief*, is a sad Witness of a *reprobated State*: So says our Lord Christ, *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep*, [John x. 26](#).

Wou'd you know then whether *your Name be written in Heaven*? Then see what *Faith* is wrought in your *Heart*. Have ye ever truly closed with the *Lord Jesus Christ*? Do ye heartily embrace Him, upon the Terms He is offered in the Gospel? Can ye venture your Souls, your Salvation, your Eternal All, upon the single bottom of a *Redeemer's Righteousness*? Have you ever made actual Application of the *Blood* and *Righteousness* of *Christ* to your



own *Consciences*, to take off that Guilt of Sin whereby your Souls stand Bound-over to Wrath and Damnation? This is *Faith* of the Operation of God; and where-ever this *Faith* is found in the *Heart*, the *Name* of that Man, that Woman, is found *in Heaven*: And therefore well may the *Apostle* say, *In whom believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of Glory, 1 Pet. i. 8.*

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4. If the *Father's Name* be written in your *Foreheads*, then are *our Names written in Heaven*. In Rev. xiv: 1. it is said of those who stood with the *Lamb upon Mount-Sion*, That *the Father's Name was written in their Foreheads*.

The *Name of God* is *written in the Forehead*, when we openly confess the Truths of *God*, and are not ashamed of Religion, nor ashamed to own *God*, and his *Ways*, and *Ordinances*, and *People*, in the midst of a *Profane*, *Scoffing*, and *Adulterous Generation*. Now says our *Lord Christ*, *He who confesses me before men*, (that's the *Name of Christ written in the Forehead*) *him will I confess before my Father*; that is, he shall have a *Name written in Heaven*.

Now where is the *Name of God written*? Do ye *Repine at Difficulties*, *Shrink at Sufferings*, *Blush at being counted Religious*? Are you *Ashamed of Christ*, his *Ways*, his *Name*, his *People*? why if so, his *Name* is not in your *Foreheads*.

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Or can you lift up your *Heads*, and shew your *Faces*, in the Cause of *Christ*? It should be thus, *God is not ashamed to be called our God, Heb. xi. 16.* And will you be ashamed to be called his *Children*, his *Saints*, his *Witnesses*? *Moses* was not, when he esteemed the *reproaches of Christ greater riches than the Treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26.* He had the *Father's name in his Forehead*.

5. If your great Work be, is to *lay up treasure in Heaven*, then *your Names are written in Heaven*. This is the Counsel of the *Blessed Jesus, Matth. vi. 20. Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven*: and *Luke xii. 33. Provide your selves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.*

The *Treasures of most Men* are *Perishing*, *Earthly Treasures*, *canker'd* and *Moth-eaten Treasures*, *Treasures of Vanity*.

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Christians! Where is your *Treasure*? Is it in this *World*, or the next? Is it in present *Vanities*, or future *Glory*? Is it in present *Contentments*, or in *Everlasting Inheritance*? Is it in *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oil*; or is it in *the Light of God's Countenance*? Is it in *Profits*, *Pleasures*, and *Honours*; or is it in *Grace and Glory*? Do ye *build*, and *plant*, and *sow* in the *other World*, that hereafter ye may *reap* an *Eternal Harvest of Blessedness*? If so, then are *your Names written in Heaven*.

6. If *your Conversations* are in *Heaven*, then are *your Names written in Heaven, Phil. iii. 20. Our Conversation is in Heaven*. Many profess *Hope of Heaven*, but their *Conversations* are in the mean while upon the *Earth*: like that foolish Actor, that whilst his *Eyes* were fix'd

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upon the Earth, cry'd, *O Heavens!* they savour only Earthly Things; Earthly Profits, Earthly Comforts, Earthly Vanities.

Let a Man's Profession be never so Heavenly, his Prayers and Duties never so Heavenly; yet if they are over-topp'd by an Earthly Conversation, that Man's Religion is vain. The Scripture says expressly, *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John ii. 15.*

Never talk of a *Name in Heaven*, so long as your *Hearts* are buried in the *Earth*: Where your *Hearts* are, there your *Names* are: If your *Hearts* are Earthly, your *Names* are in the Earth, *Carnal, Worldly, Sensual, Enemy to God*, that is thy Name, and the Scripture gives thee no other, *Jam. iv. 4, He that is a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.*

Now what is your *Life*? How do ye live? Do ye live by *Sense*, or do ye live by *Faith*? Do ye live upon the *Creatures*, or upon the *Promises*?

It is said of the *Vertuous Woman*, *Prov. xxxi. 14*, that *she fetcheth her food from far*. So doth the *true Believer*; he uses the Blessings of the Creature, but he lives upon the Blessings of the *Covenant*.

From far.] That is, far out of the sight and ken of the Natural Eye: for it is *Bread* the World knows not of. The Natural Man is blind, and cannot see afar off. God *hath set the world in their hearts, Eccles. iii. 11*. They are strangers to this Joy.

From far.] *A man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesseth, Luke xii. 15. His Life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3*; and from thence are the Comforts of his Life. *He fetches his food from far*: It is *God in Christ*, and the Glories of the other World that are the *Bread* of his Soul.

Do ye *fetch your Food from far*, or nearer home? Are you fed by *Sense*, with what is next; or doth *Faith* feed you, with Clusters fetch'd from the Holy-Land? Do ye serve *Flesh, Lust, and Sins, and Times*, (which is the basest Thralldom) or do ye serve *God, and Christ, whose service is perfect freedom? Rom. vi. 16*; His ye are whom ye serve. The Apostle *Paul* will tell you whom he serves; *The Lord whom I serve in my spirit, Rom. i. 9. Forgetting the things behind, I press towards the mark, Phil. iii. 13*. Outward Privileges, Carnal Contentments, Perishing Hopes, these were once the things before him; but now he hath turn'd about, and set his face the other way, and left them all *behind* him.

I press forward towards the mark. He is now ascending upon the wings of *Faith and Love*, above this *Dung and Darkness*, to the Regions of *Light and Glory*

If your *Conversation be in Heaven*, it is thus with you in one degree or other. Heavenly Concernments are your Work, and Heavenly Comforts are your Support. It is not the *Fig-tree blossoms*, nor the *Olive's labour, Hab. iii. 17*, that can comfort and glad you; but it is Fruit from the *Tree of Life*, in the midst of the *Paradise of God*, that feeds you.

If thus *your Conversation be in Heaven*, then is *your Name written in Heaven*.

The next *Use* shall be by way of

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Exhortation.

IS *a Name written in Heaven* the highest Cause of *Rejoycing*? And can you, upon examination, find that *your Names are written* there? Oh, then set your *Selah* upon this Mercy! Fix your Heart, your Joy, your Thankfulness upon this Privilege. Other things you may rejoyce in, in their place, and by the by; but here your *Joy* should be fixed. See how the *Apostle* breaks out into Thanksgiving for this, [Ephes. i. 3, 4, 5, 6.](#)

Ver. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Ver. 5. Having predestinated us to the adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

Ver. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

His Heart dwells in triumph upon this Mercy; and so should ours also; the Lord *Christ*, here in the Text, commands it; *Rejoyce, because your Names are written in Heaven.*

Now give me leave to propound to you Six *Considerations*, which are very proper Motives to stir up your Hearts to the Practice of this Duty.

Consider (1.), There is no Name like this.

1. It is an *Honourable Name*: [Isa. xliiii. 4.](#) *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been Honourable.*

If God poureth Contempt upon the Creature, it must needs be vile and base: *God* is the true Fountain of *Honour*; if he puts *Honour* upon us, it is the truest *Honour* in the World.

2. It is a *better Name* than that of *Sons and Daughters*: [Isa. lvi. 4, 5.](#) *Thus saith the Lord to the Eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and chuse the things that please me, and take hold of my Covenant; to them will I give in my house a place, and a name better than of Sons and Daughters.* Though they have *no Children*, yet they shall be *my Children*; though they are without a *Name* in the World, yet they shall have a *Name in my House*.

Your *Honour* Rejoyces in the Name of a *Son*, this Day; and you do well: God forbid that I should make your *Rejoycing* void: Nay to encourage it, let me tell Your *Honour*, That God takes it kindly, that you own him, in the Mercies and Blessings of Providence. But I am, in Duty, to mind you of a *better Name than that of Sons and Daughters*; and this is it, to have a *Name written in Heaven*. To have a Child from *God*, is an inferiour Name to this of being call'd a *Child of God*. *Solomon* saith, *If a Man beget an hundred Children, and live many years, and his soul be not filled with good, I say, that an untimely birth is better than he,* [Eccles. vi. 3.](#)

3. It is a *Durable and Lasting Name*. A name in the world may be lost: The Wicked may Defame it.



Wickedness may Corrupt it.

God may Blast it: *Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever, Psal. ix. 5.*

Time may eat it out of the Records of Honour.

But a Name written in Heaven, is a durable Name, it can never be blotted out: *I will give them an everlasting Name, that shall never be cut off, Isa. lvi. 5.* As the Inheritance is Incorruptible, so the Title is Unalterable, and the Heir Immortal.

Consider, (2.) A Name written in Heaven, is a Blessing that sweetens all our other Blessings. This Land is mine, and these Riches are mine, and this Child is mine, and this Honour is mine: yea, and God is mine, and Christ is mine, and the white Stone and the new Name is mine, and Heaven and Eternal Life is mine: Ay, this, this sweetens all.

What if you could be supposed to enjoy all Outward Blessings imaginable? the fairest Estate, the highest Honours, the sweetest Children, the richest Pleasures; yet in the midst of all these, if Conscience should secretly gripe you within, and tell you ye are Strangers and Enemies to God, ye have no part in Christ, no portion in his Death, your Names are blotted out of the Book of Life, ye are Children of God's Curse: Oh, what a Heart-sinking would this cause, under all your Fruitions! This one thing left in doubt, *I know not what will become of my Soul to Eternity*, is enough to bring us into *Streights*, in the midst of all our Sufficiencies, [Job xx. 22](#), to soure all our Possessions, and to make the face of all our Enjoyments look dim and unpleasant.

Consider, (3.) This is that which gives confidence and comfort in Death, and makes us strong to grapple with that King of Terrors.

What is it which makes even Believers themselves (many of them) shrink at the thoughts Death? Why it is want of Evidence, they have never seen their Names written in the Book of Life. The sight of this, by Faith, makes the Soul triumph over Death, and despise the Grave, and say with Simeon, *Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.*

We know, (saith the Apostle, [2 Cor. v. 1.](#)) *that if our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

This we know, and are assured of; Well, and what is the fruit of this Assurance? He tells you, in the [2d and 4th Verses](#): *In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

What is Death, to the assured Believer, but a speedy Conveyance to the Possession of that Glory which Divine Love has Intitled him to from Everlasting?

Consider, (4.) Herein Joy can never run into Excess: In temporal things it may; it is possible and common to rejoice and delight in Outward Mercies too much; for they are every way disproportionable to the vast Capacity of the Soul; as unable to fill it, as the dim Light of a Candle is to give Day to the World, in the absence of the Sun.



Hear what the Prophet says in the Case, [Isa. xxviii. 20](#), *The bed is too short for a man to stretch himself upon it, and the covering too narrow for a man to wrap himself in it.*

How unsuitable is a short Bed for a long Body! so are perishing Comforts to an Immortal Soul. And from hence it is that the *Apostle* adviseth, (in [1 Cor. vii. 30.](#)) That *they that rejoyce, should be as though they rejoyced not*; that is, in worldly things. But in Spiritual and Eternal Concerns, Joy cannot exceed; for infinite Blessedness calls for infinite Joy and Delight.

Consider, (5.) This will be a *lasting and perpetuated Joy*. Therefore it is congruous and equal that we now *Rejoyce* in that which shall be our *Joy* for Ever. Other Joys have their Periods and Intermissions, their Terms, and Vacations; they ebb and flow, blossom and wither; a Fit of Sickness, or a pang of Conscience, extinguishes all: but this *Joy* is abiding; *Your joy shall no man take from you*, [John xvi. 22](#).

It is true, That the *Children of God* have many causes of sorrow, if they look inward; strong Corruptions, hard Hearts, weak Graces, many Temptations: But yet in *God* they have continual cause of Rejoycing.

A Name in Heaven, is an induring ground of Comfort; not like these transient Shadows. Can Stability be moved, or Eternity expire?

Nothing is Matter of lasting Joy, but that Good which is commensurate in Duration to the Soul that is to be satisfy'd with it.

The Times we live in are changeable and uncomposed; the hatreds of Religion great; we see Distractions at Home, Distresses abroad; the Lord is shaking Heaven and Earth, Church and State: Our Experience tells us how mutable are the Wills, how fickle the Favours, how sudden the Frowns of Men; how vain the Hopes, how unsuitable the Delights, which are drawn out of *broken Cisterns*; how full of Dross and Dregs the most refined Comforts and Contents of the World are. Nothing can be an enduring Joy, but this, which our Lord *Christ* propounds in the Text, as Matter of Joy.

Who would not therefore retire from the Noise of Laughter, from the Courtships of flattering Gallants, the Clutter and Vain-glory of a distracted World, to solace his Soul in the Joys and Delights of the World to come?

Consider, (6.) What *Heaven* is; and that will raise your Hearts to glory in this Privilege, of a *Name written in Heaven*.

1. *Heaven* is the Habitation of the Great *God*, where He dwells in his Infinite Glory. So that a *Name written in Heaven*, imports our future Inheritance of that Glory; according to that of the *Apostle*, [Col. iii. 4](#). *When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory.*

2. *Heaven* is a freedom from all Evil both of Sin and Suffering; so that a *Name in Heaven*, intitles us to a blessed Redemption from all Evil.

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There is no *Sin* there. *Grace* weakens *Sin*, but it is *Glory* that abolishes it. *Old Adam* shall there be put off, never to be put on again. The Lord *Christ* will present his *Church*, in that day, *faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding joy, Jude ver. 24.*

There is no *Affliction* there: *Sin* and *Sorrow* came in together, and they shall go out together. There the *Shunamite's* Son complains no more of his *aching head*, nor *Mephibosheth* of his *lame feet*. There *Job's blotches* are perfectly cured, and *Lazarus's sores* are all dried up.

3. *Heaven* is a Place of all *Perfection*. So that *a Name written in Heaven*, intitles us to a *Perfection of State*, which we cannot hope for in this *World*: *Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, Phil. iii. 12.*

All *Perfection* is above.

There is perfection of *Faculties*: The *Understanding* shall be elevated by the *Light of Glory*, into the *Vision of God*, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.*

The *Nature of God*, the *Mystery of Three in One*, the *Union of Two Natures in One Person*, the *Course of God's Decrees*, and *Providence*; these are the *Deeps of God*, and at present, there is *Darkness* upon the face of these *Deeps*; but there the glorified *Eye* shall see all.

The *Will* shall There be perfectly *Holy*, and swallowed up into the *Will of God*.

There is *Perfection of Privileges*; perfect *Union and Communion*. Here we lay hold of *Christ*; but There we shall have full *Possession*: Here we hang upon him, but There we shall dwell in his *Embraces*.

There is *Perfection of Graces*: Here the *Children of God* have *Perfection of Parts*, but not of *Degrees*.

Holiness in the best *Saint* Here, is mixed with some *Dregs of Flesh and Defilement*; but There it shall be compleat; we shall appear *not having spot or wrinkle, Ephes. v. 27.*

Love shall There be *Perfect*: Here we are either weary of the *Act*, or apt to make a change of the *Object of our Love*, ever and anon swerving and starting aside to the *Creature*; but then we shall act *Love* without ceasing, upon one and the same *Object*, without changing. There shall be an *Eternal Solace and Complacency in God*.

4. *Heaven* is the *Abstract of all Blessedness*, the *Sum of all Felicity*. Reckon up all *Comforts and Pleasures*, and *Satisfactions*, and *Delights*, and *Happinesses*, and put them all together, and then separate from them *Finiteness and Imperfection*, and that is *Heaven*.

So that *a Name written in Heaven*, imports our future *Fruition of all Blessedness*. Yet a little while, and ye shall be let into all this.

All the *Objects of Joy* which are scattered among the *Creatures*, are everlastingly heap'd up in *Heaven*: So that say what it is your *delight and joy in*, and I will shew it you there.

Is it *Wealth*? Why there are *unsearchable Riches in Heaven*," *Ephes. iii. 8. durable Riches, Prov. viii. 18. Unsearchable*, and therefore without *Bottom* and without *Bound*: *Durable*, and therefore without *End*.



Do ye delight in *Honour* and *Dignity*? Why in *Heaven*, the *Glory* of the Great God Himself shall be put upon you, [Col. iii. 4.](#)

St. *John* tells us, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, [1 John iii. 2.](#) Such honour have all his *Saints*, [Psalm cxlix. 9.](#)

Is it *Pleasure* you delight in? Why in *Heaven* there are *Rivers of Pleasures*, [Psal. xxxvi. 8.](#) In thy presence is fulness of Joy; at thy right-hand there are *Pleasures for evermore*, [Psalm xvi. 11.](#)

Do ye delight in *Feasting*? Why in *Heaven* there is *Plenty and Variety*, *Fulness without Satiety*; *Bread of Life*, the *Tree of Life*, the *Fountain of Life*.

Do ye delight in *Musick*? (it is not fit that such a *Feast* should be without it:) In *Heaven* the *Saints* and *Angels* are in one *Concord*, *singing eternal Hallelujah's* to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the *Lamb* for ever.

Do you delight in *stately* and *magnificent Structures*? Why in *Heaven* is a house not made with hands, [2 Cor. v. 1.](#) This is a *City*, whose walls are *jaspar*, whose foundations are *precious-stones*, whose gates are *pearl*, whose streets are *pure gold*, [Rev. xxi. 18, 19, 21.](#) whose *Builder and Maker* is God, [2 Cor. v. 1.](#)

Thus you see *Heaven* is the *Comprehension* of all Good, the *Abstract* of all *Felicity*. And your *Name* is written upon all this; it is all yours, as the *Apostle* says, [1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.](#) All things are yours, whether *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, or the *world*, or *life*, or *death*, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.

Ministers are yours, to *Instruct* you.

The *World* is yours, to *Supply* you.

Life is yours, to *Prepare* you for *Heaven*.

Death is yours, to *Convey* you to *Heaven*.

Things present are yours, to *Support* you in the *Way*.

Things to come are yours, to *Reward* you in the *End*.

What then remaineth? but as *David* adviseth, *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart*, [Psalm xxxii. 11.](#)

Whatever ye enjoy in the *World*, yet let your *Joy* be in *God*. Have ye *Riches*, *Honours*, *Pleasures*, *Children*, *Health*, *Beauty*, *Parts*? &c. Notwithstanding, *in this rejoyce not; but rather rejoyce, because your Names are written in Heaven.*

THE END



The POWER
OF
GRACE
IN
Weaning the Heart
FROM THE
WORLD,
Set forth in a
SERMON
Preached at the
WEANING
Of the truly Honourable
WILLIAM VERNY,

Only SON to the truly Vertuous and highly Honourable the Lady *Diana Verny*.

By the late Reverend
Mr. *MATTHEW MEAD*.

LONDON: Printed for *Edmund Parker*,
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Prefatory Material

Dedication

MADAM,

THIS Sermon doth of right intitle it self to your Honour's Tutelage, as being ..de by the Word of your Command; who said, *Let it be*, and it was so. The *Weaning* of your hopeful and only Son, was the occasion of that Meeting which this Discourse ..ve a plain and ..ly Entertainment to. That as Guests that come upon us uninvited take in good part such as they find, if a chearful Look and a hearty Welcome be but the Sauce to such Dishes as a Surprise can set upon the Table; so I know your Honour liked the Treat, which this Discourse gave you, not the worse because it was plain, and ...ch as could be soonest got ready; but the ...ter, because of your hearty Welcome, and ...ecially because it was (like *Jacob's Venison Gen. xxvii. 4.*) savoury Meat, such as your ...d loved. This an ...tes my Presumption ...set it before your Honour a second time for ...r Entertainment; only I wish that I have (like some penurious Houswife that ...tches to spend Meat till it will keep no longer) kept it so long by me till it hath lost its first savour. I must confess it hath hung the Pen nigh half as many Months as thy dear Son did upon the Breast. That which relieves me is, that it hath broken of your Honour's Commands, it not be called for in Paper: so that it being a Free-will-offering, I know your Honour will give it the readier Acceptance, though it be otherwise but a mean Present: Yet Goats-hair was accepted in the Building of the Tabernacle, [Exod. xxxv. 5,6.](#) from such has had no better to offer, if it came from a willing Heart.

Madam, It is for the compleating the Temple of God in your Soul, that this Offering is made; and I can truly say, it is with as wiling an Heart as ever *Israelite* offered, from him that brought Goats-hair to him that brought Silver and Gold to the Tabernacle.

One thing that inclined me to a Willingness to put it into your Honours hands, was the Use God made it of to my own Soul in the review of it; for I can say, I found God teaching my Heart by it, and giving me some Experience of that in the Transcribing, which lay only in the Notion in delivering: which made me cry out, *What rare Christians would Ministers be, could we but believe all we Pray, and experience all we Preach.*

Now, *Madam*, if the Heart of one Christian answers another's (as the Wise-Man averrs it doth, [Prov. xxvii. 19.](#)) who knows but God may bless this plain Sermon into a greater Success upon your Soul than it hath had upon mine: I know God hath given your Honour a teachable Heart, and a Love to his Word; and what greater Mercy? For where there is a teachable Heart, here God will ...l Instruction; and where there is a love to Word, there the Soul will bear Instruction. The Lord (whose Prerogative it is to teach Hearts of the Children of Men) instruct your Honour into this great Duty of Wean-...ess from the World.

Madam, Would God prosper me into a ...acity of Serviceableness to Your Honours ...cious and immortal Soul, I should value self more upon such an Happiness, than upon any other I can think of in this World: the unparallel'd Acts of Nobleness by which have so



often borne witness to the Greatness of your Respect to me (which I must ...ays thankfully mention) have so far out my Merits, that unless God (who ha not Suretiship for his Servants) will ...ise to see Satisfaction made (and your Honour may take his Word) I must live die your Debtor.

Lord make your Honour as good as ...t, that in you Nobility and Godliness may ...t together, and Grace and Grandure may each other, (this being that which will ...er your Honour truly lovely in the eye of and Man;) so prayeth daily and incessantly,

Madam, Your ever obliged
and most humble Servant,
MATTH. MEAD.



The Power of Grace in Weaning the Heart from the World

Psalm cxxxi. 1.

(The Latter part of the Verse)

—My Soul is even as a Weaned Child.

Chrysostom, in his *Homily of Evangelical Perfection*, commending the Grace of Humility, saith, *Humility is the Foundation of Christian Philosophy*. Indeed, it is the Ornament of all the Graces of God's Spirit: *Grace is the Beauty of the Soul*, and *Humility is the Beauty of Grace*.

Now the Prophet *David*, being about to commend this Grace to the Saints, doth propound himself as an Example of it, in this Psalm; *Lord, my Heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty: neither do I exercise my self in great matters, or in things too high for me, ver. 1.*

But what was it that thus humbled *David's* Heart, and took him off from doting upon the World's Grandeur, and from delighting himself in present Enjoyments?

Why *God* had, by the Power of his Grace, took his Heart off from all things here Below, by shewing him the Vanity and Emptiness of them; so that he was wholly *weaned* from them. So he says, *ver. 2, I have behaved and quieted my self, as a child that is weaned of his mother:--My soul is even as a weaned child.*

Doctr. *That where the Grace of God takes hold of the Soul, it makes it as a weaned Child, to all Worldly things.*

I. In the Discussing this Doctrine, I shall shew you what it is to be as a *Weaned Child*.

II. Shew you, That there is a great Resemblance between a *Weaned Child* and a *Gracious Soul*.

III. Shew you how *Grace* weans the *Heart* from all Worldly things.

1st. What is it to be as a *Weaned Child*?

This I shall shew, both	{	<i>Negatively, and Affirmatively.</i>
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Negatively First, and that in Two things:

1. It is not to be without the Comforts and Contentments of the World. It is possible to have Much of the World, and yet be *weaned* from the World: So had *David* here; he had *Riches* in abundance, Honour in abundance, for he was advanced to the Throne, he was the greatest Man in the Kingdom, and yet his Soul was as a *weaned Child*. Many may have Little of the World, and yet their Hearts not *weaned*; and many many have Much of the World, and yet be *weaned* from the World.

2. It is not to Slight and Undervalue our Enjoyments; for they are a real Mercy; they are *Gifts from above*, the noble Effects of the Bounty of Providence.

But *Affirmatively*.

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This being as a *weaned Child*, carries three things in it:

{ Content,
Humility,
Teachableness.

1st. *Content*. To be as a *weaned Child*, is to be Content in every State, in every Condition of Life. Whatever you give a Child, it is content, be the Bread whiter or browner, be the Meat hot or cold, be the Cloathes finer or coarser. So that to be as a *weaned Child*, is to have a Contented Spirit in every Condition, under every Providence. So had *David*, [2 Samuel xv. 25, 26](#). *If I shall find favour in the eye of the Lord, he will bring me again: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him.* So had *St. Paul*, [Phil. iv. 11, 12](#). *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need.* A Contented Spirit in every Condition of Life, is a great Mercy.

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2dly. To be as a *weaned Child*, is to be *Humble*. None so humble as little Children, they do not aim at or aspire after great things: Therefore our Lord *Christ* propounds them to his own Disciples for Patterns of Humility, [Matth. viii. 4](#). he calls a little Child, and sets him in the midst of his Disciples, and tells them, *Whoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.*

So that to be as a *weaned Child*, is to be of an *humble and lowly Spirit*. So was *David* here: *Lord, my heart is not haughty; I have behaved my self as a child that is weaned of his mother.*

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Oh, what an excellent Spirit is this! *Solomon* tells us, [Prov. xvi. 19](#). *It is better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.* And in [Prov. xxix. 23](#). he says, *A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.*

3dly, To be as a *weaned Child*, is to be *Teachable*. None so Tractable, none so Teachable, as Children. [Isa. xxix. 8](#). *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? they that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

To be a *weaned Child*, is to be *Teachable*: Naturally we are the most Unteachable Creatures in the World. How will you Teach one that can neither See, nor Hear, nor Understand?

This is the very Case of every natural Man.

1. He is blind and cannot see, [2 Cor. iv. 4](#). *The God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine into them.*

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2. He is deaf and cannot hear, [Psal. lviii. 3, 4](#). *The Wicked are estranged from the Womb, they are like the deaf Adder that stoppeth her Ear.*

3. He is sottish and foolish, and cannot Understand, [Romans iii. 11](#). *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

And therefore, a teachable frame of Spirit is a special Mercy of God, it is one of the great Blessings of the New Covenant. *They shall all be taught of God, [John vi. 45](#). and they shall all know me from the least to the greatest, [Jeremy xxxi. 34](#).*

An unteachable Heart is a great Judgment. This was *Pharaoh's* Judgment; no Counsel, no Message, no Reproof, no Warning, no Plague could soften him. When the Lord designs to bring Judgment upon a Soul, then he gives it up to an unteachable frame, [Isaiah vi. 9, 10, 11, 12. v. 9](#). *Go tell this People, hear ye indeed but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not, ver. 10. make the Hearts of this People flat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert, and be healed.*

[v. 11](#). *Then said I, Lord, how long? and he answered, Until the City be wasted without Inhabitant, and the Houses without Man, and the Land be utterly desolate.*

[12](#). *And the Lord have removed Men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the Land.*

And when the Lord intends good to a Soul, he gives a tractable Teachable frame of Spirit; a seeing *Eye*, a hearing *Ear*, an understanding *Heart*.

Thus you see, what it is to be as *a weaned Child*.

To be content, to be humble, to be teachable.

2. I will shew you that there is a great Resemblance between *a weaned Child* and a gracious Soul.

You may consider *a weaned Child* Three Ways:

1. In regard to its *Infirmities*.
2. In regard to its *manner of weaning*.
3. In regard to its *Disposition*.

1st. In regard to its *Infirmities*; What is weaker than a *weaned Child*? What Creature more helpless, more feeble?

It cannot feed it self.

It cannot defend it self.

It cannot govern it self.

1. It cannot feed it self. If it be not suckled, it must be fed: if it hath not the Breast, it must have the Spoon: it cannot feed it self without the hand of the Mother or Nurse.

It is the same, in a spiritual sense, with the gracious Soul; if it be weaned, yet it must be fed; If it be weaned from the Earth, it must be fed from Heaven; If it be weaned from the Creature, it must be nourished from the Promises.

Every Believer depends upon God for feeding, yea, for natural Bread; and therefore we pray, *Give us this day, our daily bread, [Matth. vi. 11](#)*. Much more do we depend upon God



for spiritual supports, for Soul refreshments: for it is he that *fills the hungry with good things*, [Luk. i. 53](#).

There are three things which are the *peculiar Privileges* of Believers:

1. To be *Born* of God.
2. To be *Taught* of God.
3. To be *Fed* of God.

They are *born* of God by the *power* of the Word.

Taught of God by the *Precepts* of the Word.

Fed of God by the *Promises* of the Word.

2dly. A *weaned Child* cannot *defend* it self. The security of an Infant lies in the Care of the Parent. Though the Breast doth feed it, yet the Arms must guard it: It is liable to many Harms: Set it down, and leave it alone, and what will become of it? It falls into the Fire, or into the Water; into one Mischief or another.

It is so with a Child of God; he cannot preserve himself, no not a moment: The greatest measure of Grace attainable will not do it. If God should set up a Believer with a stock of Grace, and then leave him to trade for himself, how quickly would he prove Bankrupt, and perish!

Alas! Grace is a mutable thing: though it shall never *perish*, yet in its own nature it is *perishable*. I have three *Witnesses* to prove it.

1st. That which is subject to decay in part, is subject to decay in whole: But Grace is subject to decay in part. [Revel. ii. 4, 5](#). *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.* Did not the Church of *Ephesus* decay in Grace here? And in [Revel. iii. 2](#). *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.* Is not here a sad Decay of Grace?

2dly. Whatever is a Creature, may perish. Now *Grace* is a Creature of God, as all other things are; it is indeed the noblest and best of Creatures; yet it is but a Creature: and all Creatures have a principle of perishing in them; and therefore *Grace*, considered in it self, may perish.

3dly. If ever *Grace* did perish, then it may perish. But there was a time when *Grace* did perish. Did not the *Angels* that fell, lose their *Grace*? Did not *Adam*, in Paradise, lose his? These had true *Grace*, and yet they fell from it.

By the same Reason that a Believer falls gradually when God withdraws himself, by the same Reason he would fall finally if God should leave him to himself.

It is not from anything *in* us that we stand and are preserved, but from *without* us; yea, from *above* us; even from the Power of God: So saith the Apostle, [1 Pet. i. 5](#) *We are kept by the power of God, through faith, to salvation.* It is, you see, *Grace* held *to* us, that causeth



Grace to hold out *in* us. Faith lays hold on God's Power to be kept, and we are kept by the Power of God through Faith.

A Christian hath the Stream of Grace flowing *in* him; but God is the Spring of Grace ever flowing *for* him, and overflowing to him: And if the Spring should be shut up, the Stream would soon fail. *All my springs are in thee, Psal. lxxxvii. 7.*

It is renewing Grace that changes us, or else we had never stood: It is supporting Grace that keeps us, or else we had quickly fell. This *David* averreth in the [66th Psalm, Verse 9](#). *He holdeth our souls in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.*

Consider but two things, and you will say, it is impossible a Believer can preserve himself: *1st.* The Power of indwelling *Lust* and *Corruption*. There is not only much of the Presence of Sin in every Believer, but much of the Power of Sin also.

Though where Grace is wrought, there the Power of Sin is much abated; yet it is not utterly removed: though the reigning Power be destroyed, yet Sin hath a raging Power still; and this too too often captivates the best of Saints: a *Paul* himself will find it, notwithstanding all his Grace. See [Rom. vii. 21, 23](#).

*I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.
I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

Now if so holy a Saint of God as *Paul* was, complains thus; what Complaints may we make, whose Corruptions are many and strong, and whose Grace is little and weak?

Suppose you should put a spark of Fire into the Sea, would it not quickly be quenched? Why our Grace is but like a spark of fire in the midst of a Sea of Corruption, and therefore would quickly be quenched if God did not preserve it alive.

2dly, Consider the *Frequency* and *Strength* of Temptation. The greatest degree of Grace will give us no immunity from Temptation; for the Lord Jesus Christ had no sin, and yet was assaulted by Satan; and therefore the Servant must not look to be above his Lord.

Satan's great Design is to Destroy the believer's Grace; yea, and he would do it, if the Lord should not hold him in, and hold us up.

There is a great Strength in every Temptation.
Partly as being managed by so Potent, and Subtle an Enemy.

Partly as being suited to our remaining Corruptions. Tho' when the Devil came to Christ, he found no Sin in him, nothing for Temptation to Work upon; yet when he comes to Christians, he finds much in them. Much Pride, much Worldly Love, much Lust, much Carnal Concupiscence, much Unbelief, much Deadness of Heart, much Unprofitableness, &c. and this is the Matter he Works upon.

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When Satan surrounds us without, Sin is Ready to surprize us within: When Satan besets us, Sin is ready to betray us; and therefore if the Lord put not underneath his everlasting Arms, we cannot stand.

So that you see the gracious Soul is unable, like the *weaned Child*, to defend it self. *The Lord is his defense. Isa. iv. 5.*

3dly. A *weaned Child* is not able to govern it self: it is destitute both of Strength and Wisdom.

And so it is with every Believer: he is not able to direct his own Actions; he cannot govern his own Thoughts; he hath not the least Self-sufficiency. So says *Agur* of himself, *Prov. xxx. 2, 3. Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the understanding of a Man.*

And therefore *David* seeing this, betakes himself to the Lord for Counsel and Guidance, *Psal. xxxi. 3. For thy name-sake lead me and guide me.* And God promises to guide them, *Isa. xlii. 16. I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will bring the blind by a way they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things strait: These things I will do, and not forsake them.*

Now there are two ways especially whereby the Lord doth direct and guide his People: 1st. By the Counsels of his Word, *Psal. lxxiii. 22, 23, 24.*

So foolish was I, and ignorant, I was as a Beast before thee, Ver. 22.

Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right-hand. Ver. 23.

Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Ver. 24.

The Word of God is the best Counsellor; and therefore *David* betakes himself to it for Guidance and Direction, *Psal. cxix. 24, Thy Testimonies are my delight and my counsellors.* In the *Hebrew* it is, *The Men of my counsel.*

David was a King; and therefore, no doubt, had the wisest Men of the Nation to be of his Council. We read of *Hushai*, and others, Men of great Parts and Prudence, that were his Council: but yet he hearkned more to the Word of God than to all his Counsel besides. *Thy Statutes are my Counsellors.*

We should follow the Counsels of the Word in all things, and make it the Guide of our Way: so good *David* did: *Thy Word is a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths, Psalm cxix. 105.* For,

1st. It is the *safest Counsel*: We may, and too often do, err in following the Counsels of others: for Man's Wisdom is short-sighted; *the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch.* But we can never err or miscarry in following the Counsels of the Scripture. *Solomon* says, *Prov. ii. 10, 11. When Wisdom entereth into thine heart, and Knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, Discretion shall preserve thee, Understanding shall keep thee.* And speaking of



the Commandment in the 6th chapter, says he, [Ver. 21, 22, 23](#). *Bind it upon thy Heart; and when thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. For the Commandment is a lamp, and the Law is light, and Reproofs of Instruction are the way of life.*



2dly. It is the most *profitable Counsel*. It steads the Soul in all Concerns of Life: yea, the Happiness and Salvation of the Soul is the sure issue of following the Counsels of the Word. See what an Account *David* gives of the Word, in [Psalm xix. from the 7th to the 11th Verse](#). *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.* [Ver. 7](#).

The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the Commandment of the Lord is pure, inlightning the eyes. [Ver. 8](#).

The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. [Ver. 9](#).

More to be desired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-comb. [Ver. 10](#).



Moreover, by them is thy Servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.

O what a Mercy it is to be under the Guidance of the Word of God!

2dly. God guides his People by the Counsels of his Spirit. [Joh. xvi. 13](#). *When the spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

The Spirit of the Lord is called a *Spirit of Counsel*. [Isa. xi. 2](#).

How happy is the Condition of God's people, that have the Word and the Spirit to guide them! The Word without the Spirit *cannot*, the Spirit without the Word *will not* guide us. The Word is a Light without us, the Spirit is a Light within us: The Word propounds the Way to walk in, the Spirit enables the Soul to walk in that Way. Blessed are they whom God thus guides.

Thus I have shewed you how the state of a Believer resembles that of a *weaned Child*, in regard of its Infirmities.



II. There is a Resemblance also in regard to its *Manner of Weaning*; and that in three particular Circumstances:

1st. Many when they *wean a Child* from the Breast, will rub *Wormwood*, or some bitter and unpleasant thing, upon the Pap, to create a loathing in the Child to that it was so fond of before: and so the Bitterness of the Taste makes the Child forsake the Breast.

Now in this the Soul of a Believer is as a *weaned Child*. The Breast of the Creature is that which naturally Man lies at; for natural Man fetches all his Comfort from sensual things, and savours only earthly things.

Now, when the Lord designs to work Grace in the Heart, and redeem a Soul to himself, he ever weans it first from the World. [Psal. xlv. 10, 11](#). *Hearken (O Daughter) and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own People, and thy Father's House: so shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty.*



Now, the Difficulty of Conversion lies here, in taking the Heart from the Creature, and placing it upon God: for in the Fall we turned from God to the Creature, and in Conversion-work the Heart is turned from the Creature to God again.

Now because (I say) this is difficult, for the Creature is loth to leave the Breast of carnal Enjoyments where it hath sucked in such sensual Delights so long: Therefore the Lord, when he would wean the Soul from things below, he rubs *Wormwood* upon the Breasts of all our Comforts, and imbitters all our Enjoyments; so that though we seek for Satisfaction, yet we shall find none.

This was the way of God's dealing with the *Prodigal Son*. The Parable of the *Prodigal* is to represent to us the State of every Natural Man.

Now, it is said, [Luke xv. 14.](#) that *when he had spent all, there arose a Famine in the Land;* and this brought him home to his Father's house, [Ver. the 20th.](#)

God is never better to us than when the Creature is most bitter to us: *He famishes all the Gods of the Earth that Men may be brought to worship him,* [Zeph ii. 11.](#)

Thus God dealt with *Israel*, [Hos. ii: 6, 7.](#) *I will hedge up thy way with thorns, that she shall not find her paths:* And what then? *Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now.*

God has two *Hedges* which the Scripture takes notice of:

The *Hedge* of his *Protection*, that you read of [Job i. 10.](#) *Hast not thou made an Hedge about him, and about his House, and about all that he hat on every side?*

The *Hedge* of *Affliction*, that you read of here: *I will hedge up her way with thorns.*

Now the Lord make use of both these *Hedges*.

The *Hedge* of *God's Protection*, that is to keep his People from Danger.

The *Hedge* of *Affliction*, that is to stop them that wander.

The *Hedge* of *Protection* is to keep them in God's way.

The *Hedge* of *Affliction* is to keep them out of Sin's way.

The *Hedge* of *Protection* is to keep them from Suffering.

The *Hedge* of *Affliction* is to keep them from Sinning, and to put them upon returning.

So it was with *Israel* here; when God had hedged up her way, that, she could not find her Paths, nor overtake her Lovers, then she cries out, *I will return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now.*

It is a great Mercy for God to *wean* a Soul from the World; for it never suffers greater Loss than when it forsakes God to live upon the Creature: This is to regard lying Vanity, and so forsake our own Mercies, as the Prophet expresseth it, [Jonah ii. 8.](#) It is going out of God's Blessing into the warm Sun, (as our Proverb hath it) forsaking the living Fountain, to quench our Thirst from a broken Cistern, [Jer. ii. 13.](#)

By our Excesses in Creature-Enjoyments, Reason is commonly drowned in Sense, and Judgment extinguished in Appetite. The excessive letting out our selves to sensual Fruitions,

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is both a Sin and a Punishment; while thereby we lose both God, and the Creature, and our selves at once.

Now, when the Lord *weans* a Soul from the World, he doth imbitter the World to the Creature; either by some Affliction, or by some Disappointment in the Creature, which makes the Soul look out for more pure and lasting Satisfactions in Christ.

In a time of outward Prosperities, we are all *Martha's* Children, carried away too much with the World; but when God imbitters our Cup, then, with *Mary*, we look more after the one thing necessary, and mind the chusing the better part.

So long as we are full of the World, the Lord Christ can find no room in our Hearts: present Comforts have gotten Possession, and thrust him out.

As it was when he was born, there was no Room for him in the Inn: that was taken up with other Guests; therefore Christ must be laid in the Manger, in an Out-room.

Truly, thus it fares with the Lord Jesus Christ in the World still: the most of us lay him in the Manger, in an Out-room to this very Day.

Pray deal plainly with God and your own Souls, and tell me, What Entertainment do you give to the Lord Jesus when he comes to your Souls in an Ordinance, and offers to make his Abode with you, for so he doth: [Revel. iii. 20.](#) *Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone Man open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.*

Now, how do you treat the blessed Jesus? Where do you lay him? in the Inn, or in the Out-room? I mean thus: Do ye receive him into your Hearts and Affections? or, Do ye take him only into the Out-room of an empty Profession?

Truly, a lifeless, graceless Profession of Christ, is only a laying him in the Out-house; but a hearty embracing of, and a holy Affection to Christ, this is taking him into the Inn.

Now when God, by any Providence, doth imbitter the Creature to us, then this makes us remove Christ out of the Manger into the Inn; out of a lifeless Profession into our Hearts and Affections.

2dly. When a Child is *weaned*, the Nurse is many times hid, or put away, or removed, that the sight of her may not make the Child to cry for the Breast.

So the Lord many times strips a Man of the World, takes from him his Enjoyments, all his Comforts, meeely to *wean* his Heart from the World.

3dly. When a Child is *weaned*, the nature and kind of its Food is changed; he is fed with stronger Meat.

Now in this also the Resemblance holds: the Soul of a Believer is as a *weaned Child*: He hath another kind of Subsistence, and lives upon other kind of Comforts than he did before.

As Christ says, *I have Meat to eat which ye know not of*, [John iv. 32.](#) so hath every Believer Comforts to live upon which the World knows nothing of: *A stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy*, [Prov. xiv. 10.](#) As,

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1st. He hath the Comforts of the Promises: When God brings a Soul into a state of Grace, he brings him from living upon the Creatures, to live upon the Promises. And which is best, think ye, to live upon the Creature, or to live upon the Promise?

The Creature dies; but the Promise lives.

The Creature is *Yea* and *Nay*; the Promise is *Yea* and *Amen*.

The Creature is deceitful; but the Promise is sure and faithful.

The Creature feeds but Sense; the Promise fills the Soul.

The Creature is but a scanty Good; the Promise travails with all Good.

He who lives upon the Promise lives by Faith; and the Life of Faith is the only Life in the World.

1st. It is the only *safe* and *secure* Life. As the weak *Ivy* secures it self by twisting about the *great Oak*; so the weak *Christian* secures himself by cleaving to the *great God*. His place of Defence shall be the munition of Rocks; *Bread shall be given him, his Waters shall be sure.* [Isaiah xxxiii. 16](#)

The Life of Sense is full of Disappointments, *like a deceitful Brook.* [Job vi. 15.](#)

Sisera runs to *Jael* to save him, and she destroys him: he lays his Head in her Lap, and she nails it to the ground. [Judges iv. 21.](#)

2dly. It is the only *quiet* Life. The Life of Sense is full of distracting Cares and Vexations: the Soul is never quiet till it draws off from Sense to live by Faith; till it cries out with *David*, *Return to thy rest, O my Soul.* [Psal. cxvi. 7.](#)

The Philosopher tells us, if we could live in the Upper Region, there we should enjoy a perpetual Calm: there are no Storms, no Winds, no Tempests; these are only found in this Lower Region: Nearer the Sun it is not so.

Sense is as the Lower Region, where there is nothing but Storms, and Shakings, and Vexations. Could we, by Faith, live in the Upper Region, and have the Moon under our feet; could we live above the World, by Faith in God, resting in the Lord Jesus Christ; we should enjoy a perpetual Calm there. *In me ye shall have Peace.* [John xvi. 33.](#)

3dly. It is the only *sweet* and *comfortable* Life. The Life of Sense, like a smoaking Chimney, causes many a wet eye: When we live by Faith, then the Fire burns clear; but when we live by Sense, then the Chimney smoaks.

Is it not a sweet Life, to fetch all our Waters from the Fountain? Thus Faith doth. Sense drinks out of the muddy Chanel, but Faith goes to the Well-head. *All my springs are in thee.* [Psalm lxxxvii. 7.](#)

Is it not a comfortable Life to be *fixed* amongst all the Changes and Mutations that are in the World? Why Faith fixes the Soul upon God, and in that Fixation it is safe. *He shall not be afraid of evil-tidings, his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord.* [Psal. cxii. 7.](#)

Is it not a comfortable Life to live free from all Burdens in the World? There are but two sorts of Burdens;



The Burden of *Sin* and *Guilt*.

The Burden of *Care* and *Trouble*.

Now *Faith* takes off both these, and frees the Soul from the one and the other.

It takes off the Burden of *Guilt*, by resting upon Christ and his Righteousness.

And it takes off the Burden of *Care* and *Trouble*, by resting upon God and his Providence.

Ah (*my beloved*) there is no comfort to be compared to the comfort of believing; no Life to be compared to the Life of Faith. We may talk of Comfort, but till we come to live by Faith we shall never taste of Comfort.

4ly. It is the only *Christian* Life. *Sense* makes a Beast, *Reason* makes a Man, but *Faith* makes a Christian. We are no farther Christians, than as we can live upon Christ in all Conditions.

5ly. It is the only *honourable* Life. The World's Honour is but an imaginary thing, a meer Bubble, compared with the Honour that Faith leads the Soul into.

Is it not an Honour to have the King's Ear at pleasure, without tracing the tedious Climax of Court-accesses, as Strangers must?

Why, the Believer (as I may speak it with Reverence) hath the Command of God's Ear. *Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. Isa. xlv. 11.*

Is it not an Honour to be of the Blood-royal, to be born of God? We are very apt to value our selves upon the Nobleness of our Descent and Birth.

Why, the Believer is born of God. *John i. 11, 12. They are of the Blood-royal, of the Offspring of God.*

Is it not an Honour to live with God? Why Believers live with God, and walk with God, and have Fellowship with God here; and shall have an eternal Fellowship with God in Heaven hereafter. *Such honour have all his Saints.*

6ly. It is the only *lasting* Life. The Stability of all sorts of Lives, is according to their Principles and Causes. The Life which depends upon a failing Cause is a fading Life; and the Life which depends upon a constant Cause is an abiding Life.

Now the Life of Faith, proceeds from a living Principle; the Grounds of it are in God and Christ, and the Promise, no Change reaches to these.

Our Comforts may change, but Christ never changes; *Yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever, Heb. xiii. 8.*

The Creature may change, but God changes not: *I am the Lord that changes not. Mal. iii. 6.*

The Promises are unchangeable: They are not yea and nay, but *yea and Amen in Christ, 2 Cor. 1:20.*

Now *Faith* must needs be a lasting Life, that hath such lasting Grounds and Principles.

The Life of Sense is a fading decaying Life, it lives upon fading Objects: a Man hath Friends and delightful Relations, and these cheer and refresh his Spirits; but anon they die,



and drop into the Dust, and then his Spirits sink: they go down to the Pit, and his Heart breaks for want of Comfort.

But the Soul that lives by Faith can never be at a loss.

What can he lack who hath him who is *all*? And what can he lose who hath him who knows no change at all?

The *Mariner*, when he puts forth to Sea, quickly loses a sight of Land; but though he sails never so far, yet he never loses a sight of Heaven.

Thus the Soul of a Believer is as a *weaned Child* in this sense also: it lives upon other kind of Comforts than it did before, *viz.* the Comforts of the Promises.

2. I might add, That the Believer lives upon the Comforts of the Ordinances. *I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his Fruit was sweet to my taste. Cantic. ii. 3.*

3. He lives upon the Comfort of Experiences: *Psalm lxxiv. 14. Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be Meat to the People inhabiting the Wilderness.*

Leviathan here, is meant of *Pharaoh* and all his Host: When God drowned him and all the Host of the *Egyptians* in the *Red Sea*, then he brake *Leviathan's* Head: And God is said to give him to be Meat to his People in the Wilderness, in that the Experience they had had at the *Red Sea*, of the wonderful Care and miraculous Doings of God for them and their Deliverance, was intended to be Food for their Faith, that by this Experience they might learn to live upon God in Wilderness-straits.

4. He lives upon the Comfort of the Divine Presence. *Thou shalt make me glad with the light of thy countenance.*

This is the Food that the *weaned* Soul hath to feed on,

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Promises.

Ordinances.

Experiences.

The divine presence.

3dly. There is a Resemblance between a *weaned Child* and a *Believer*, in regard of its Disposition and Affection.

As for instance,

Take a weaned Child, and lay it to the fullest and fairest Breast, and it will suck no more; it turns from it, and loaths it as much as heretofore it loved and delighted in it.

Now in this the gracious Heart is as the weaned Child: The fullest Breast of Creature-comforts and sensual Delights cannot allure it: and why? Because it hath chosen God for its chiefest good, and therefore cannot be better. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth I desire in comparison of thee. Psal. lxxiii. 25.*

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The Soul sees a greater beauty in God, than in all worldly Comforts; it tastes a greater Sweetness in communion with the Lord Christ, than in all worldly Friendships and Fellowships.

So did *David*; and therefore he cries out, *One day in thy Courts is better than a thousand elsewhere*, [Psalm lxxxiv. 10](#). So did *Jacob*; and therefore tells his Brother, *God has dealt graciously with me, and I have enough*. [Gen. xxxiii. 11](#). In the *Hebrew* it is, *I have all*. He that hath an Interest in God, hath all; all that the Soul can want, or the Heart can wish. *No man having drank this old Wine desireth new, for he saith the old is better*, [Luke v. 39](#).

III. I will shew you briefly, how *Grace* doth wean the Heart from all worldly things.

By a threefold Efficiency.

1st. *Grace* sets up a Light in the Soul, which discovers the true Nature of things: Every natural Man is in Darknes: a graceless state is a state of Darkness. Now in Darkness the Vanity, Emptiness, Insufficiency, and Unsatisfactoriness of worldly things to the Soul of Man, cannot be discovered.

Grace is Light in the Understanding, as well as Holiness in the Will; and by this Light the Soul is able to pass a right Judgment of things, to distinguish between seen and unseen Good, between perishing and durable Comforts; to discern between things that differ. *The spiritual Man judgeth all things*, the Apostle says in the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, [chap. 2. ver. 15](#).

2dly. *Grace* has a farther Efficiency upon the Heart, and that is this: It extinguisheth and removes that out of the Soul which makes the things of the World to be our chief good.

There is that in every carnal Man that propounds to the Soul somewhat below God as its chief Good; and that is, the sensual Mind: and by this the Will is misled, and the Affections misplaced; and the World is preferred, and God left out.

Now by a work of *Grace* in the Heart, the sensual Mind is extinguished, the Old-Man is put off, that which savours only the things of the Flesh is abated and removed.

3dly. *Grace* elevateth the Soul above sensual Objects, to live upon more real, more suitable Comforts; Grace to live upon God, to lay up Treasure in Heaven, to fetch its Refreshments from the Fountain of divine Fullness: and how easily is that Soul weaned from all earthly Enjoyments, that hath learned to fetch all its Comforts from Heaven?

THE APPLICATION.

Use 1. Shall we now improve this Doctrine to the use of Tryal? Shall we be serious in this matter, and call our Hearts to a strict account of what we experience of the Power of God upon our Souls in weaning them from things below?

There is the greatest Reason in the World that moves me to urge this Duty upon you. For,

1. There is no greater Duty incumbent upon a Christian, than frequent Tryals of Self and State by the measure of present Truths. When the Word of the Lord is spoken, and



Truth discovered, then to bring it home to the Heart, and try our Spirits and Condition by it, this is a great Duty. This is the meaning of that in the second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, [chap. 13. ver. 5](#). *Examine your selves, whether ye are in the Faith; prove your own selves*. And that in [Galatians vi. 3, 4](#). *If any man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing he deceives himself: But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another*.

2dly. Herein doth the Vitality and Power of Godliness formally consist. It is not what we profess outwardly, but what we are inwardly, that God looks at. [Rom. ii. 29](#). *He is a Jew which is one inwardly*.

Many profess much, pretend to great measures of Mortifiedness, and Weanedness from worldly things; but look upon them in their Conversations, follow them into the World, and none are more carnal, more vain than they.

3dly. We can never be able to adjust our Claim to a Work of Grace, unless we are able to satisfy our selves in this point. There is no greater, no surer Evidence of a Work of Grace in the Heart, than Weanedness of Soul from present things.

4. If we be not brought into this weaned state by the Power of Grace here, we shall be shut out of Heaven hereafter. Will you hear what our Lord Christ says in the case? Then see [Matth. xviii. 3, 4](#). *Verily except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. [Ver. 3](#).

Except ye be converted: is that all? No, but ye must become as *Little Children*, in Meekness, Humility, Self-denial, Weanedness. So says the next Verse; *Whoever shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven*.

It is one thing to be converted, it is another thing to become as little Children, to be wrought into a childlike Disposition. This is the true Qualification, the proper Fitness of the Soul for Glory: No Weanedness, no Blessedness.

Is there not then great Reason for my urging you to this Self-examination?

Let us therefore to the Touchstone: that is not true *Grace* that will not endure Tryal.

Put the Question: Is my Soul as a *weaned Child*? Am I under the Weanings of God, or am I not?

Quest. Now you will say, How may I know whether my Soul is under the Weanings of God? whether I am weaned from the World or not?

Answ. In Answer to this, I shall lay down some Rules to try your selves by:

1st. To have heavenly Affections amidst earthly Possessions, this is a sign of a weaned Heart.

2dly. To reckon our Happiness, our Riches, rather from divine Fruition than from any worldly Accommodation, this is a sign of an Heart under the Weanings of *God*. *David* was a King, a great Man; but he doth not reckon this his Happiness; no, but from his Interest in God. [Psalm xvi. 5, 6](#). *The Lord is the portion of my Inheritance, and of my Cup, thou main-*



tainest my Lot. And what then? The lines are fallen to me in pleasant Places. I have a goodly Heritage.”

3dly. What do we most desire; most hunger after? This shews whether we are weaned or not.

The sucking Child cries for the Breast: whatever you offer it, or put into the hand, nothing can quiet it till it is laid to the Breast.

Now, what is it that quiets our Minds, that satisfies our Desires soonest? If it be worldly Pleasures, worldly Comforts, worldly Honors, &c. then our Hearts are not weaned.

4. To bear worldly Evils, worldly Troubles, worldly Losses, with a holy Quietness and Satisfaction of Spirit; this is a sign of a weaned Heart. [Heb. x. 34.](#) *Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your Goods, knowing in your selves that ye have in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance.*

5thly. To chuse Holiness with Affliction and Loss, rather than Sin with Pleasure and Preferment; this is a sign of a weaned Heart. Thus did *Moses*, [Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26.](#)

[Ver. 24.](#) *By Faith Moses, when he was come to Years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh’s Daughter.*

[Ver. 25.](#) *Chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of sin for a season;*

[Ver. 26](#) *Esteeming Reproach for Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt; for he had respect to the Recompence of reward.*

The Whore, in [Revel. xvii. 4.](#) is said to have a *golden Cup in her hand full of Abomination, and Wine of her Fornication*: that is, full of abominable Doctrines and adulterated Worship, denying God’s Ordinances, and bringing into the Church Ordinance of her own.

This her Cup is full of; ay, but yet the Inhabiters of the Earth are said ([Ver. 2.](#)) to be made *drunk with the Wine of her Fornication*. How so? Why meerly because it comes out of a golden Cup: the Whore gives it in a Cup of Gold: it leads to Honours and Preferments in the Church, and in the World, and therefore the Inhabiters of the Earth cannot be weaned from this Cup.

6thly. To be able by Faith to overcome all the Smiles and Frowns of the World; this is another sign of a weaned Heart.

Now can ye do this?

When the World smiles upon us with its Splendours, Honours, Riches, Pleasures, Delights and Glories; can we then look upon all these as mean and abject things in comparison of Christ? Can you look through all this to the Righteousness of Christ? as that noble Marquis (*Galeacius Caracciola*) did, *Their Money perish with them that count all the Gold in the World worth one days Communion with Jesus Christ.*

Or, when the World frowns upon us with Crosses, Losses, Sufferings, Reproaches, &c. Can we then overcome it by laying aside carnal Fear, by Patience in Tribulation, by looking

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upon Afflictions and Sufferings for Christ as our Honour and Happiness; by eying the invisible God in all, as *Moses* did? [Hebr. xi. 27.](#) *He endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

Use 2. Are your Souls under the weanings of God? Then there is a double Duty incumbent upon you from this Doctrine.

Duty 1. Bless the Lord, magnify the Riches of his Mercy, in calling and taking your Hearts off from the World.

It is said in [Genesis, Chap. 21. Ver. 8.](#) that the Child (speaking of *Isaac*) grew, and was *weaned*: and *Abraham* made a great Feast the same Day that *Isaac* was *weaned*.

It is not said, that the Child was *born*, and *Abraham* made a Feast: indeed that was not so proper a time, because then the Mother was in Weakness and Grief.

Nor is it said the Child was *circumcised*, and *Abraham* made a Feast: nor was that so proper a time, because then the Child was sore and in Grief; but the Child was *weaned*, and *Abraham* made a Feast. This seems the proper time, because now Father, and Mother, and Child, might all rejoyce together.

There was, no doubt, a Mystery wrapt up in this Feast of *Abraham*: and what was that? Why the Mystery is this.

Believers, who are the Seed of *Abraham*, should rejoyce in the Lord when the Soul is become spiritual, and weaned from carnal Desires.

To have the World, and yet be weaned from the World; to possess it, and yet not to be possessed by it; this is a great Mercy.

It is an easie matter to profess Weanedness from the World, where but little of the World is enjoyed; it is a common thing for them that are poor to declaim against Riches and Greatness. *I would not be in their Condition*, says one. *I would not be under their Temptations for all they enjoy*, says another, *I would not have that to answer for as they have*, says a third; *for as they are great, so they are proud, high-minded, and covetous*. Thus it is usual for the Poor to envy the rich.

But to live above all, amidst the enjoyment of all, this is the greatest Mercy in the World.

To see no Greatness in anything but in the great God, no Beauty in anything but Holiness, no Glory in anything but Christ, no Goodness in anything but Religion; O what a Mercy is this! How few can look through worldly Greatness to this Prospect! and therefore not many mighty, *not many noble, are called* &c. [1 Cor. i. 26.](#)

Duty 2. Labor to wean others from the World; as *Christ* said to *Peter*, *When thou art converted strengthen thy brethren*, [Luke xxii. 32.](#) So when converting Grace hath took hold of thy Heart, labour to convert others: When the Lord hath shewed thee the Vanity of things below, endeavour to lead others into this Prospect: Is thy Soul weaned? strive that others may be weaned. O what Honour might you bring to God upon this account!

We preach of the Vanity and Emptiness of the World; but alas! few believe our Report. They say we know nothing of the Grandure, Honour, and Glory of it in our selves: God

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placed us below it, and laid our Lot in a narrow compass; and therefore we envy it to those who enjoy it, because we want it.

But when such whom God hath advanced to Greatness in the World shall yet live above it, and prefer the Interest of Religion, and the honouring of God, before all worldly Grandure; this will carry a strong Conviction with it to the Consciences of others.

Therefore endeavour to be instrumental to wean others, especially Relations: Labour that they that are near to us may not be far from God; and chiefly our Children, whose Souls God will more immediately require at our hands.

The Lord hath graciously given *Your Honour* a Child, *a Son*: you have taken great care to *wean* him from the Breast, and the Lord hath blessed your Care in it: And if *Your Honour* would be thoughtful and prayerful about *weaning* him from worldly Lusts, would not the Lord bless that Care too?

A second Branch of the Exhortation is to them who are not yet as a weaned Child, whose Souls are not, as yet, taken off from present things.

Is not this our Case? May we not fear it is? For if we are weaned from the World, why do we doat upon it? Why are we so fond of present things? Why do we conform so much to the World, and study the Guise and foolish Fashions of the World?

If we are weaned from the World, why is our Joy and Grief so great, and proportionated to present Comforts, or present Losses?

Surely therefore we have cause enough to fear our Hearts are not yet under the Weanings of God.

Nay let me tell you this, that it is possible to be a true Believer, a true Christian, and yet not weaned from the World.

It is one thing to be born of God, as every Believer is; it is another thing to have a weaned Heart: this every Believer hath not.

This Child is a living Child so soon as it is born; but it is not weaned from the Breast till it has got Strength to live without it: and therefore it is said of *Isaac* ([Genesis xxi. 8.](#)) *that the Child grew, and was weaned.* Weaning follows Growth and Strength.

So a Man is a Believer so soon as he is born of God, so soon as he is wrought upon by Grace; but he is not weaned from the World, but by a superadded Strength, and growth of Grace.

Truth of Grace proves a Man a Child of God; but it is Growth of Grace that makes the Soul as a weaned Child.

This Weanedness is begun indeed in Conversion, for that is the Seed-time of all Grace; but it is only perfected in the growth of Sanctification.

You read in Scripture of a twofold Redemption:

One is a Redemption by the Blood and Death of Christ, from Hell and Damnation: Thus every Believer is actually redeemed at his first Conversion.



The other is a Redemption by the Spirit of Christ from carnal Affections: this follows Conversion. In [Revel. xiv. 3.](#) ye read of some that were said to be *redeemed from the Earth: They sang a new Song, and no Man could learn that Song, but the hundred and forty four thousand which were redeemed from the Earth.*

Many are redeemed from Hell that are not yet redeemed from the Earth; redeemed through Grace from Damnation, that yet are not redeem'd from a carnal Conversation.

Well then, are we born of God, and yet not weaned from the Breast of worldly Comforts?

Oh then go away, and beg of God for this Mercy of a weaned Soul; that you may no longer fetch in your Satisfactions and Comforts from the Creature, but from God in Christ.

And lastly, Let us do that which is our Duty in order to Weanedness of Heart.

1. Inuring our Souls to Wants and Abatements: Whilst we satiate our selves, and surfeit our Spirits in the Fullness and Excesses of present Enjoyments, we are not like to learn this Lesson. One way to put out the Fire, is by Subtraction of Matter: Take away the Wood, and the Fire will die, and go out of it self.

2. Be much in mortifying carnal Appetites and inordinate Desires; and let this be our daily Work; for the sooner it is done, the easier it is done: A Child is easier weaned at one Year old than at two; Affections are not yet so strong, nor Custom so prevailing.

It is in like manner with the Soul: the longer it lives upon the Comforts of the World, and fetches its Contentments from the Creature, the harder it will be to draw off the Affections, and wean the Soul from them.

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