

Practicall Divinity

OR A HELPE THROUGH

The blessing of God to lead

Men more to look within them-

Selves, and to unite experienced Christians

In the bond and fellowship of

The Spirit.

Delivered in sundry exercises lately spoken

By Cap. PAUL HOBSON,

Upon these Texts.

Prov. 28.1 The righteous are as bold as a Lyon.

Cant. 6.9 My Dove, my undefiled is but one.

Phil. 4.11 I have learned in whatsoever estate I am therewith to be content.

Published by an hearty Wellwisher to

Peace and unity among the dissenting godly and

*To the promotion of spiritual and experimentall truths, without affectation of opinions,
or prejudice against persons. Tending as to the edification of the reader chiefly: so
also, somewhat in vindication of the Author.*

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The Publisher to the Reader.

Reader,

These Sermons allthough not intended by the Author to be made thus publike, be being absent when they were taken in hand; But being very much desired by many and pressed hereunto, conceiving truth herein held forth so cleare, that the spirituall and experienced Christian will relish and seale thereto; Being desirious to owne truth wheresoever found, not daring to oppose it, truth carrying such a light, power and demonstration in it self, we durst not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory in respect of persons.

I could be wished the Author would publish his owne labours; but they appearing to many, worthy the communicating, they are here presented to thy view; And although they may not be so full and emphaticall as they were delivered, being taken by writing them from his mouth, yet love will make thee not curious to spy faults, which is too common a fault in our times, but to take in good part what is here held forth to thee, by him who aimeth at thy spirituall good, and somewhat also in vindication of the Author of these Sermons, (whose I believe they are, not only in regard of expression, but also in experience in a good measure) an imputation of errors being laid on him as on others, more than true.

And indeed we beleve as it was lately said before a solemne Assembly, there is (it may be) abroad a greater cry of errors then really there is, allthough with grieffe be it spoken, there bo many foule errors broached, and some very blasphemous which deserve as severe punishments as the word of God requires: yet let not reall and glorious truths suffer under the name of error; Our Lord Christ himself was counted among the transgressours, and St. Paul confesses after the way that you call heresie, so worhip I the Lord God of my Fathers; and let us not judge all the error, which we by reason of darknesse, or not being come to the same experiences, cannot see to be truth; but let us try all things and hold fast that which is good.

Neither as the Apostle saith ought we to boast of things without our measure, as the manner of some is, that is of other mens labours and experiences; in another mans line, of things made ready to our hand; for we are very ready to think higher of our selves then is meet, or wee have cause, having built up our selves in our owne conceits, to be something when we are nothing. That because the Apostle Paul, Luther & others, through affliction and high experiences of Gods assistance, and thriving by the Crosse, were transcendently bold in God and for God, therefore they are ready to appropriate and boast of their labours and experiences as if they were their owne, and were come to such an high pitch and had the same enjoyments.

But it were far better & safer for us that something were brought to nothing, and wee convinced of our owne weaknesse in grace and how carnall we are and how far

below the life of Christ and true boldnesse; This man sould goe home justified rather than the other. But he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord, that Christ may be all in all; for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the lord commendeth; for self being set up and gotten into the chaire, it will swell, boasting it self above what is meet, or what it hath received, and then others better than themselves must be their footstoole, that by the degrading of others they may advance themselves: but sayes the Apostle, they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts; the fruit of the spirit is joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodnesse, faith, meeknesse, temperance, against such there is no law, if we live in the spirit let us walke in the spirit, and let us not bee desirous of vaine glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

But read I pray thee these Sermons seriously and with a sinlg eye, (if so it be given thee) and weigh the subject of them and whereto they tend, and apply them to experience: and thou hast of the life of Christ. And if thou beest enabled to aime at thine owne good in perusing them, I doubt not but thou wilt accept, and not quarrell at them. So I commend both them and thee to the blessing of him, who only is able to make us grow up into him in all things who is our head, that speaking the truth in love, and having fellowship in the spirit; wee henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftinesse whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But holding forth the word of life, till wee all come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of fullnesse of Christ,

In whom he desires

To serve thee,

Fare well.

Dearest *friends*, that which I purpose to speake this morning very briefly, that I may give way to our Brother that is to speak also, shall be out of the 28. *Prov.* Part of the 1 ver. *But the righteous are as bold as a Lyon.* It will be necessary that wee read the foregoing words in regard of this word *But*, having some reference to somewhat said before, *the wicked flee when none pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a Lion;* most of the sentences in this book of the *Prov.* Are without any dependence, but are intire speeches, having their full sence in themselves; but here we have 2 sentences in one verse, on explaining and setting out the other, two affirmative Propositions in opposition one to another; whatsoever can be spolen of a wicked man and one that lives from God, without God, the contrary in opposition may truly and properly be said of a godly man, here called a *righteous man*, because he lives in God, lives with God, he lives in another Region, hath a contrary life, he is elemented in Divine loves, *partakes of the Divine nature*, and lives in the divine glory.

These words we have now read, they are an affirmation of a saints priviledge, and of a Saints property; All soules which are brought home to God, that live with God, this is their priviledge, they are made righteous by the glory and righteousnesse of God in them; and such a man cannot chuse but bee bold for such a God; And not only bold in opposition to wicked men, because *they flee when none pursueth, and feare where no feare is*; but the highest resemblance of the highest creature, is too low to set out what such a mans boldnesse is in God and for God, and therefore you see the Holy Ghost makes use of the choysiest of all the creatures for courage and boldnesse, to set out the temper of a saint, when he lives in God and God in him; nay the highest and most raised sublimity in the creature is too low to set out the lowest acts of a saints spirit.

I may draw on point from the former words, of wicked mens feare, because it leads to unfold the other points concerning a righteous mans boldnesse, *The wicked flees when none pursueth.*

The Doctrine, *That man that lives without God, although made by God, he is so far a man of fear and not of faith.* But I shall let that goe, and come to the words intended; There is not onely a difference in the spirits of wicked and rightwous men, but a direct opposition; the one acts alltogether downward to the earth, to self, to carnall, low, and base ends; the other acts alltogether upward to God, to heaven, to self denyall, to high and pure ends.

First observe, *That the people of God are a righteous people.* They are righteous, not only in regard of Justification, that is a righteousnesse held forth and made out to us: *but also in regard of that you call sanctification, that is, a righteousnesse revealed in us*; and this is peculiarly a saints priviledge; He not only lives under life, but he lives in life, is life it self: I confess it is a great and precious priviledge to live under life, to have and use Ordinances; but to have them and not live by them, nay, to have them and to not have lives above them, this is below a saints priviledge; the world hath thus much priviledge; But the saints they use not only the Ordinances, but they are a means to put them into life, to make them one with life, they know what the Anointing is, what the unction of the Father is. But now if you aske me what is meant by a righteous man? *Ans.* Some take it to be meant of *Christ* himselfe. *The righteous are as bold as a Lyon*, that is, (say they) *Christ*, for he onely is righteous, and not any man, therefore he is cald *the Lyon of the tribe of Judah*. But my light sayes, this a discription of a saints spirit, for there is nothing can be said of *Christ*, but may also be said of Saints, as saints; for he lives in the same life with *Christ*, in the same region, in the same glory; nay he lives in the same Sovereignty and authority; is *Christ* a son and heir of his fathers glory? So are all Saints, they partake of the same sonship, the same inheritance; Is *Christ* a King? So are the Saints, partakers of the same Kingship. Hath he put down all rule and all authority and subjected all his enemies under his feet? So have the Saints, so far as they live with and in *Christ*; they set their foot upon all their lusts, upon all the world: they are conquerors over Death and Hell, they have set their foot upon the very neck of Satan. I know beloved there be degrees to this life, there is a dying before we come

to this life; but this is certaine, as a Saint comes up to this life, so he puts downe Principalities, and Powers, when he lives as a saint he puts downe all rule and all authority that before he was subjected to and captivated under. And the very matter of Christs glory, the same for nature and kind, though not for degrees in this life, is a Saints portion.

The 2 Observation there words hold forth, is from this expression of boldness, *the righteous are bold. Doct. That the people of God are a bold people, full of courage.*

The 3 Doctrine, *Men and women must of necessity be made righteous by Christ, before they can be bold and courageous for Christ.* All other boldnesse is a false deceiving boldnesse, except it proceed from hence; in that we are freed, set at liberty, made righteous by Christ, many are bold tis true; but til no true boldnesse. Tis a presumptuous boldnesse, there is a natural boldnesse, and ther is a legall boldnesse, and there is a pharisaicall boldnesse, boldnesse of divers kinds; but this true reall, unconquerable, undeceaveable boldnesse, is only to be had and injoyed in the life of Christ, being made righteous by him, not only by a righteousness made out to us, but by a righteousness revealed in us.

The next Observation is from the resemblance here used. *The righteous are as bold as a Lyon.* Tis a comparison taken from the highest, and choycest of all Creatures for undaunted boldnesse and courage, in that hee fears no creature, nothing can turne him out of his way; the holy Ghost upon every occasion when he would set out the property and priviledges of Saints, he still chuses the choycest of all the creatures to set it out by; to set out of what a high, choise and raised spirit a Saint os of, as he is a Saint: the high frame of a Saints spirit that lives with Christ, is not to be set out by the choicest of all the creatures, and that may be the *next* the point.

Doctrine, *That the highest of creatures is too low to declare the glory of a Saints spirit.* Tis impossible by the choicest of all creatures, & by the perfection of all creatures, to make it out to men in the full glory, beawty & excellency thereof; He that injoyes it knowes it best, but he is not able to comprehend it; for he is comprehended by it. And therefore he himself is not able to make it out to the full, but is swallowed up by it.

These pointes the words hold forth to us; but I shall not handle them severally, but we will rather chuse to gather the full sense of them all in one conclusion, *viz.*

That Soules made righteous by God are in the injoyment of God transcendently bold.

1. Here is Saints are made righteous.
2. Saints thus made righteous they are bold.
3. They are transcendently bold.

For the opening this point, we must open all the words.

1. To be made righteous what it is. We shall not now speake how we are made righteous by justification, as righteousnesse is purchased for us, and held out to us. Because I conceive the words intend a man in the other sense; a man made righteous, by revealing of righteousnesse in us, in that we are made one with the life and glory of Christ: we speak now of a righteous spirit, a spirit made one with Christ, a spirit overcome in the enjoyment of Christs spirit, a spirit wrapt up, overwhelmed by the sweet inflowings and comings in of the glory of Christ: a spirit wherein Christ sits in glory and displayes his loves to the soule, so that by the very coming in and injoyment of Christ, they are made one with Christ transformed into the very nature and glory of Christ. So that all selfe and the very forme of the old creature is annihilated, and all turned into Christ; Hee is removed from his former center, his own bottom; there is a new ingrafting and being carried up into Christ, so that he is transformed into the hidden, divine, superexcellent glory and riches and life of Christ: so as he is (as I may say) christed with Christ, made glory with the very glory of God and Christ, so that this they not onely know in their understandings, but have, feel, and enjoy it, and it works in them a life, and fruit sutable to this glory and transformation.

Those that lie in the heart of Christ, that have found themselves transplanted from themselves, transformed into Christ, by Christ, they finde their heart transformed with loves & ravishments towards him, to him, and none else, but as they see them, and enjoy them in him, and him in them; there are intercourses & returnes of love to each other. This is not the righteousnesse of Jsutification, when Christ holds out a righteousnesse purchased for thee, and thou by faith laying hold on it for the acceptation of thy person; but this is Christ himselfe; his hand taking hold of thee, bringing thee over from thy self into himselfe, and transacting thee into himself, and this is that that causes interchanges of loves, so that Christ in loving thee, he loves himself; and thou in loving him lovest the selfe, in one and the same act; and in all your acts Christ acts, and in all Christ acts within you, you act; so soome as ever you are brought over into these injoyments, you are swallowed up in Christ, and in your lowest acts Christ acts as well as in your highest; in the very lowest estate, you may have the highest injoyments: that when you are trampled on by the world, when your enemies think they have got the day and have their will of you, then may you have such sweet injoyments of Christ, that in this regard you may *rejoyce and be exceeding glad when you enter into divers temptations*; when the world and persecutors thinke they have taken from you all your comfort, and bereft you of all your life, then may you be more then conquerors, injoying a life hidden from them; that when they think you are captived, they themselves are captivated, and you the conquerors, *as deceivers, and yet true (sayes the Apostle) as unknowne; yet well knowne; as sorrowfull; yet aalwaysrejoycing; as poore, yet making many rich: as having nothing and yet possessing all things: you are dead to the world, but your life is hid with Christ in God*; by this you may take a sight and small tast of what is meant by a righteous man in this place, *the righteous are as bold as a Lyon*.

Secondly, what is meant by the word bold; truly friends I must confesse I have been a long time mistaken what this bold spirit in a saint was; I took it to be this,

and that, and mistaken in all; time was when I had a natural boldness which many men have, which is born with them, being of a resolute bold hardy temper of spirit; yet this was discovered to me to be but nature; and many a wicked man is possessed thereof: then afterward I came to be a civil man; then in that I paid every man his own, and lived uprightly to men ward, so that no man could tax me of doing any man wrong; herein I grew bold; But this also was discovered to be but civil boldness, and upon false grounds. Then I came to Legal boldness, and herein I grew bold indeed, and I thought it was true boldness: but it was discovered this was not the true boldness neither, and there is many other kinds of boldness; there is a sinful boldness, men being ignorant of themselves, and what sin is, and what God is; they are bold to sin, and sin with a high hand daringly, with brazen faces. So also there is a pharisaical boldness, when men are bold because of their external submitting to Ordinances, because they are in a right Gospel way, because they are of a fellowship where they enjoy pure Ordinances; And am not I (say they) as good as you, what doe you more then I? I do not speak this that you should neglect Ordinances, and forsake fellowship, for I know the High God may be enjoyed in a low Ordinance; And you ought also to hold forth God in Ordinances to others, to men of the World, and Saints below you; though you enjoy that which is far above all Ordinances, even the real and lovely presence of the Lord Christ in himself. Many men because they enjoy Ordinances in puritie, and hold forth a great Profession, they gather hence a great boldness, and look big upon themselves, and think who may walk more big, bold, and confident then they (what, they not Saints? Who is a Saint then?) I that have gone thus far, and tied myself constant to duty, what not I of thus longstanding? But beloved, none of all these is the true boldness; a Saints boldness is from other principles, of a more noble and higher frame; His boldness is, because he lives with, and injoyes the highest God: In that they are gotten above all the world. Things below are too base for their spirits; they count it gain to lose themselves: the other count it gain to gaine themselves; And hence it is, because they see themselves gotten above all things, they live undaunted noble lives; They live in the uppoe Regions where Christ lives, above all things inferior to himself.

They are so much drawn into Christ, that they cannot much mind these things below, they are not much troubled how they ebb and flow, because they are aloft; They are not tumbled to and fro, as they in their Tides tumble too and again; They are filled with noble bloud, divine bloud; the Spirit and Glory of *Christ and God*, rests upon them, and runs in all their veines.

Beloved, what can that man fear, that is thus transacted, transplanted, united to God, drawn up into God, in whom all self, and flesh, and carnal ends is perished, dead and buried, and he made a new man in Christ, risen in, and with Christ. Here is the man is here spoken of; Here is the boldness of a Saint: No marvel all the world, nor all the fluctuation of and in the world, cannot disturb this mans Spirit; for he is above all, aloft, he is in the bosom of Christ; Oh dearest friends, this life is a hidden thing, and you that enjoy it know it, and none else; I know your experiences of this life, far exceed what ever my tongue can express; when men have imprisoned you, and think they have overcome you, then are you most at liberty; When they

have brought you to poverty, then have they most enriched you; when ye die, ye live; when you have all things, then have you nothing; *when you have nothing, then have you all things*; you are so taken up with Christ, that all below Christ, *is as drosse, and dung*, and you say with Paul *God forbid that I should rejoyce in any thing, save in the Crosse of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

While you are with Christ, what can hurt you? All the troubles in the world sease no more on you then water on a Ducks back; While the world is reviling, you are singing; while the world is imprisoning, you are imbracing; While the world is hating and persecuting, you are loving; While the world is casting you off for sects and scismaticks, you are in your injoyings; While the world smites, Christ is kissing: such a mysterious hidden secret, is the life of a saint, that it befooles all the world. When the world thinks they deserve their hatred, they love and pittye them; while you think they look upon you, they looke above you; their eye is not upon their opposers, but what they injoy from Christ; they are of more noble, higher spirits, then to fasten their eyes so low as upon their opposers; I professe when God brought mee of from one condition of boldnesse to another; but especially when hee fetcht mee off from legall and pharisaicall boldnesse; in so much that I saw, that all boldnesse which had its rise and birth, in self, from self, and to self, it must bee confounded; and I came to see that all true boldnesse must run out from the very heart and loves of Christ; it must bee from a spirit filled with such royall, noble, divine bloud, as none but the sonnes of God pertake of; and then I saw the world was of a bloud so low and base, that it cannot bee sensible what this life is.

The second thing we would come to shew, is, wherein this boldness doth consist. A soul thus made one with God, made righteous by God in the enjoyment of God, and by the righteousness of God revealed in us, he is bold in these three regards.

First, He is bold with God. Secondly, He is bold in declaring for God. Thirdly, He is bold in undergoing any thing laid upon him by God.

First, He is bold with God, he is free and familiar with God; There is such intimate communication between Christ and him, that he can freely, and with a son like spirit and affection, ask any thing of God, his enjoyments embolden him; For he sees God so unbosom himself to him, that his *very* heart is not too much for him. Hee asks not as a servant with slavish fear, but as a son, as seeing all his inheritance is in God, in Christ, is as freely his as they are Christ's; he hath as true right to them as Christ; He lays claim to all the beawties and glories of Christ, to all the riches, life, and treasures in Christ, as his own proper portion. He does not ask with a daunted fearful spirit, he approaches into his very Bosom, to his very Heart: and what ever is there, he knows is his own to ask and enjoy; and this he does freely, fully; he lays claim to all Divine loves.

And by this injoyment, he makes returnes of loves; all the loves his heart can hold, shall all run out to God againe; by this very imbracement, he comes to act in God and God in him.

And I pray you observe this, and think of it when you do not see mee; The very injoyment of God carries over your spirits, & all you are to God, to give up yourselves to him; you will not stand upon such needlesse questions. Whether saints are bount to duty; they by that very act of injoying God, make themselves over to God, to be acted, and ruled by God: their owne will ceases, and Gods will is become one with theirs, and theirs with his; you cannot chuse but love & act for God, for you are with God in God:

Friends, I hope some of your spirits doe eccho to these truthes, and finde them true, by your injoyments in some degree. Doe not thinke that this is the life you must look for only hereafter, when you are come to Heaven after this life; I tell you this life is now, and I verily beleve the time is coming, that saints shall come to see this life made good to them, and in them more and more.

Objection. But it may be some will say, you speak of a very high life; is it possible that such poore Creatures, such poore Wormes as we are, should be so imbraced by the Eternall God? How comes this to passe?

Answer. In three regards the Saints have experience of these things. First, In regard they know they have a propriety in him. Secondly, In regard they have knowledge in experience of recourse to him. Thirdly, of a constant familiarity with him.

First, They have a knowledge of propriety in him, they know that God hath made himselfe their Father, and they his sons, this makes them bold; who can be more bold with a Father then his sonnes? *Though Abraham be ignorant of us, yet thou art our Father, behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* They know God does not cast them off because of their sins; this does not make them no sons, but they look upon God as an infinite gracious loving Father; They have experience, that coming to their Father is a meanes to purifie their hearts, and if they stand off till they have clenched themselves, this has been a meanes to throw them more into sin; and though they have sinned, yet they throw themselves into his armes, they have experience that he does not upbraid them for coming to him, in asking themselves, how durst they approach to him, being so defiled with sin; But they finde, that bringing their hearts to him, is the only way to cleanse themselves; they finde such loves in the bosome of the Father, such bowels to pardon, such embracements, that they know no way in all the world comparable to this, to break their hearts, and to make them throw sin far away. Time was when they said, true it is, Christ calls, and invites mee to come, but I am so defiled, so sinfull, I dare not come: I will reforme my life, and get more power against sin, and then I may goe with boldnes.

But this soule who hath injoyed the loved of God, so sweetly, so intimately, he findes this is the way to remain soule still; And though hee might refraine sin, yet he

was not purged from sin; This end, and that end wrought with him; something from self, and to self: but sin as sin was as strong as ever. But he found this way the only way to heale sinne, and get a new heart, a new nature, *viz.* To throw himself upon his *Father*, into his *Fathers* armes: *Though Abraham be ignorant of us, yet thou art our Father*; And this going to God frees us from our sinnes, and nothing else. To say I am legall, and I am full of corruption, I am weake and I can doe nothing: all this while, we stand at a distance, and weaken our selves more; We are not free, we are lockt up in our selves, and strive by our own strength. But if you would be holy, throw your selves into the loves of *God*; this very injoyment will give you an enlarged, a free, and broken *heart*; then sin will be hated from a new *nature*. God dos not say I love you, if you be *holy*; but, I love you to make you *holy*. Beloved, this is the *new covenant* that the *Gospell* holds out to us; and herein lies the power of the *Gospell*, to make of *unrighteous, righteous*, to work by love, not by constraint.

Men that never had experience of this life, they lay Lawes, and Constraints upon men to duty, and know not the power of love. When the *Prodigall* had but a resolution to throw himself upon his fathers loves, you see now he was received; No sooner dos God open his heart to a poore sinner, but he sees the everlasting roling bowels of a *Father*, toward him, and then they interchange loves and bowels; *That their repentings are kindled together; I doe earnestly remember him still: my bowels are troubled for him*: Bowels role towards one another, and then the poore sinners come to see their own names writ in their own hearts that before was writ in the heart of God; And see his dearest loves have ever been toward them for good; He sees now he was not excluded from God, because he had backslided, and defiled himself; as Jer. 3.22 *Returne ye backsliding children, and I will heale your backslidings; behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*. He has experience that he had laine long striving against sin, but found no power from a right ground, from a right principle; But when he (it may be) after many years striving with his lusts to subdue them, and bring them under, he resolved at last to goe to God and said: Lord here is my heart, as bad as can be, the more I strive with it, the worse it is; I have striven long and cannot conquer one sinne; But Lord doe thou now take it, doe with it what thou will; all this while I was asham'd to come to thee, my heart was so bad; now I commit it to thee; and then he found a subdued heart, and never before.

So long as I look upon my obedience and my conformity, and when I see a want, I hold off from God; this breedes obstructions between the soul and God. Your praying, and your duties, and your obedience, doe declare that you live in God, and not that they may bring you to God.

Brethren, this is the way: have you sinned and falen from God? Stay not but returne to God, *then he will heale your backsliding*; Stay not, as men usually doe, till your selves have healed your own backslidings, and then you will beleve. This way doth never rightly overcome the heart; but be ye weake Christian, or be ye strong, try this way, and you shall find a wonderfull change in your spirits; you may draw

nigh to God, with boldnesse, the way stands open; God never chid a soule that throwes it self upon him.

Againe, this often recourse to, and familiarity with God, it makes a man rightly to understand God, to know his very nature; men that live out of God, mistake God; they judge otherwise of his nature then it is; Saints by injoying God, they know God; what a God of sweetnesse and loves he is; how free in communicating of himselfe; what an unchangable God he is; how ready to receive a sinner; what loves run from him into them, when once they are come in to him; though God frowne, they know his nature is nothing but unchangable loves; however he deales with them in his Providence, they know all his wayes are wayes of love to them; He cannot hate them, nor doe any thing as a fruite of hatred; They understand God, they know his wayes with his Saints; *though he kill them, yet will they trust in him;* Though in externall Providence hee seemes to frowne, yet they know whats in his heart; they take all in good part their Father doth unto them.

This is that which raises up their hearts to a holy boldnesse of spirit; What ever men intends they know God smiles; what ever his providences are, they know his loves are constant, unchangable; This makes their hearts rejoyce, and triumph, to live above; though the body be under sufferings, yet their spirit is free; walkes up and downe in loves, swallowing up in GOD, and lives amongst Divine Crownes.

If a man have no experience of these things, he lives darkly, mournfully, he measures God by himselfe; if men be angry, he thinks God is angry; if providence change, they think God changes; and this raises not, but overwhelmes the spirit of a man; this sinks his spirit; for he judges God like himselfe; but what sayes God? *Are my wayes as your wayes, and my thoughts, as your thoughts? As high as the Heavens are above the Earth: so high are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my wayes above your ways*

Secondly they are bold for God; ye never see any principle, but it works sutable to itselfe; so the Saints have a principle from God, which qualifies them so, that they can stand for God:

1. In suffering for him; if it be his will, they shall suffer losses, ignominy, derision, yea Death it self, they have a principle from God will beare them out; Look upon *Paul*, what a spirit had he when they told him of bonds? *What meane ye to weepe and breake my heart? For I am ready (sayes he) not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

And so the three Children, what resolutions had they to suffer? *Wee know our God whom wee serve, is able to deliver us, but howsoever be it known unto thee, wee will not worship this Image;* Frowns, nor scornes from men, will not turn them out of their way.

And the reasons of this are: First, the reall conviction of security in God, before they ingage themselves for God; as *2 Tim. 1.12. For which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have beleaved, and I am perswaded he is able to keepe that which I have committed to him, against that day.*

The soul seeing God such a buckler, and seeing himself so secure; this makes him not stand at any thing, but to ingage himself and all he is for God.

But you will say then, this is but self-love: not to ingage, but that he knowes he shall be secure.

I answer no, tis not self love, but love to God. But here lies a great mysterie, in a Saints thus ingaging for God.

It arises from being partaker of the very nature of God; and his will is so swallowed up and resigned into Gods that he acts Gods will, not his own; So that his security is not in any outward protection, but in what the will of God is and if his spirit live in and with God, what ever fall to him, this he accounts his security.

Every spirit acts sutable to that spirit if is in conjunction with; Now Christ's spirit, is the most noble, most high, most raised spirit; and the spirit that is in Christ, is in the Saints; their spirits are in conjunction with the spirit of Christ; therefore they must needs be of noble, high, & raised spirits; that though they be in the flesh, their life is in the spirit, their life is in Christ; though they have thornes and afflictions in the flesh, yet to them they are as none; they are not much troubled at them, for their spirits live among divine thrones and Crownes.

The third reason of a Saints thus boldly ingaging for God, is, Though they suffer externally, yet there is within a supply of contrary loves; and smiles;

Men indeavour to throw scornes, and derisions upon the Saints; and invent such deriding names, that they would make them odious: even as the very offscouring of the World, and that they may render them as the vilest men upon earth.

It matters not, God visits them with his loves; Hee communicates that to their spirits, which abundantly makes up their suffering, and makes amends a thousand thousand times.

One comes and he calls you Sectaries, another Independents, another Schismaticks, another Anabaptists, another Antinomians, another comes and tells you they are this day going to petition the *Parliament* against all your *Independents*; now what of all this? Were you but carried above and did you live in God? These would be like so many small puffes of wind that would scarce blow away a straw; For a man never feares a man, when hee knowes himselfe free from him, and out of his reach to hurt him.

All the men in the World cannot hurt a Saint; nor all the Divells in Hell; a man will never feare his Enemie, especially when he knowes he is kild before hee comes neare him.

Christ hath overcome sin, Death, Hell, the Divell, the World; and therefore, what need the saints feare any of these? *The afflictions of this life are but light and momentary: but there is an exceeding weight of glory to be revealed.* Will a man regard a small crosse, when he has a weight and an exceeding weight of Divine loves, of Divine Crownes?

This is enough to make a man, not only to be content to beare afflictions and frownes from the World; but also to love the crosse, to love the frownes.

When thou hast a losse in they Estate, in thy name, or any way, Christ comes with his loves, and makes an overabundant supply; I doe not say, he gives thee the same things; but, he gives thee that which is a thousand times more worth.

I thou locest farthings, and gainest pounds; if thou locest strawes and gainest pearles, what losse hast thou?

Thus Christ doth to a Saint at the very instant of his suffering, if he love with & in Christ; for Christs way is not to send the affliction and let it lie heavie, and presse a man downe, and then he afterwards lets men reason themselves into content; for a Saints content, as a Saints, is not from reason, but from a present enjoyment of Christ, which is communicated as that very instant, immediately from the very bosome and heart of Christ.

Intercourses of loves runnes out from Christ; which alone is their satisfaction, without reasons helpe.

The fourth Reason, why the Saints are so bold in declaring, and ingaging for God is; because, in all their sufferings, they ingage not at their own cost and charges; they live not by their own life, they live not by their own strength; but they ingage at Christs charges, & they love by Christs life, they spend upon his strength.

'Tis a Phrase wee have often up, especially in the Country; they may spend freely that spend upon other mens Purses.

So the Saints, they goe on in their way, and walke like Saints, because they live not by and of themselves; their life, and their strength, and their comforts, are all Christs; they spend upon his Stock.

This makes them so free and so bold, spend while they will, they have a vast Treasure, never to bee exhausted; Still Christ supplyes them with new strength, and new life.

Let men goe on to revile and abuse the Saints, and study names of Factious, and *Independents* and the like, to make them odious; No matter, Christ assists them; Christ hath names full of Love and sweetnesse for them.

And if they should proceed to persecution as they may, and imprisonment, no matter; There comes a new supply from Christ answerable to their sufferings.

But the Saints being weake and not knowing this, they many times needlessly trouble themselves with forethinking what they shall doe, if Suffering, and Afflictions, and Troubles increase; And the reason is, because they apply, and compare Future Troubles to present strength.

But those that live in Christ and with Christ, they know they cannot ingage upon any new affliction, But there is a new supply of Strength and Courage, and life from Christ; and therefore they reason thus.

If Bonds, Reproaches, and imprisonment, or Death it self do attend me; There is Fresh Joy, New Life, and more Strength attends.

The more opposers, the more Strength, the more Joy, the more Glory, the more Loves, the more Imbraces, The more overcomings of Loves.

And therefore this is that which makes them Bold in Declaring for God.

Who more bold for God in declaring truth then the Apostles, in *Acts* the fourth? Though they knew troubles and persecution attended them, and bods in every place, *be it knowne saith Peter unto you and to all Israell, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was this man made whole, whom ye crucified, but God hath raised him up, and this is the stone set at naught by you Builders and is now become the head of the corner, neither is there Salvation in any other; Now when they saw the boldness of the Apostles, and saw that they were ignorant men, they took knowledge that they had beene with Jesus, and could say nothing against the Miracle they had wrought in the name of Jesus; Then they took counsel and streightly charged them they should speak no more in that name, and they answered boldly, whether is it right in sight of God to hearken unto you more then unto God. Judge ye? For we can not but speak the things we have seen and heard:* and so the whole Chapter, and divers other places do declare, with what wonderful boldness they declare Christ; because Christ lived within them, lived in them, they had experience of his strength and love in supporting. And their love could not but return in declaring the things they had seen and heard.

And the Reasons of this are, because the enjoymment of these things beget a love to the things declared, & gives power to declare them with all courage and boldness; the Saints are made one with Christ, suckt and drawn up into Christ, they live by loving, and love by living, they declare through loving, & love through declaring. And suitable to their love they cannot choose but declare, love in them hath the

preheminence, it predominates, it over-rules all other things in them, they must needs, they are constrained to declare the life they live in.

If a Parliament should command, that men should not declare what experience they have of Christ, as I hope this Parliament never will, they could not containe, it would be as fire in their bosomes, it would burst out, loves would so constrain them; could they sit and see and not speak? I tell you there is such mighty constrains in the power of love, they could not keep in.

It bootes not the World to act against the power of love to raise persecution, the more they act against it the more it workes, the more it constraines.

Againe another reason is, why they are so constrained to declare what they see and know, because the matter declared is the very power declaring. They are so lapt up in the loves of Christ & so made one in him, that the things they declare is not another thing from them, but they are the very things.

And therefore if they are so bold in declaring, *never blame them*, for they and those things are the same; no nor *never admire them*, for there is such a constraining power in them they cannot do otherwise. And that he hath he receives not from others as their experiences, but they are his owne, they are himselfe. *Paul* (you see) when once Christ had appeared to him, there was such a Light, such a Glory, such a Power, such a Demonstration of Truth to his Soule, that he immediately went & preacht Christ; he went not to the Brethren to be confirmed in what he saw and felt, but the power love was such, that come life come death he must declare it.

And a third Reason may be, because he enjoyes what he declares; what he enjoyes he acts, and what he acts he enjoyes; whe he saies he sees he feeles; while he speakes of love, he acts in love.

Here now you see the quality of a Saints spirit. And indeed this acting and enjoying *he esteemes his portion, his everlasting inheritance, his Heaven; this very worke in his reward, esteeming (saith the Apostle) the reproach with Christ, greater riches then the Treasures of Egypt, this life was the recompence of reward Moses had an eye too, and Paul he counted all things losse and dung, to gaine & enjoy it; and David he rejoyceth in the word as one that findeth great spoiles, for in keeping thereof, there is a full reward.*

Beloved friends this is your Heaven, and if you cannot count this a sufficient Heaven and reward, you will hardly thinke Heaven hereafter a reward, especially in the condition you are in; but did you act in love and lived in Christ here, you would say were this life but perfected, I have enough, enough; I desire no other Heaven, this portion is enough; as *David saies in 16 Psalme. The Lord is the portion of mine Inheritance, the Lines are fallen to me in very pleasant places, yea I have a Goodly Heritage.*

Now we come to the Third thing wherein the Saints are bold: They are bold in undergoing any thing from God; must I be poor, must I be sick, must I be in prison, must I be in Death, he is bold to undergo it; he sees the loves of God in all that comes to him: Let all the world conjoyn together against this man, and look never so black and terrible upon him, he sees his God smiling, his God speaking nothing but loves.

As sin and the law, though they are in conjunction to terrifie him, yet he is bold, for he sees God reconciled. And as they (the greater) can not daunt his boldnes, so neither can men, nor can the Word, all they can doe cannot make him think his Father is angry.

Though God himself try the Saints; they living in him, and enjoying his love; Though he seem in his Providence to be angry; yet they find loves in his very bosom, in his very heart when men enjoy not this, every frown from men, and every frown from God, casts them down; they forsake their boldnes, because they have no experience of the sweet and unchangeable nature of God. As *Ezek. 22.14. Can thin heart endure, or can thin hands be strong in the daies that I shall deal with thee:* They being backsliden and departed from God they were not able to look on God as a father, when he afflicted them, as the Saints can doe; Doth God chide? Yet they know tis in love. Doth God wound? All are fruits of his love.

So now you see how bold a Saint is with God; How bold in standing for God; How bold in declaring God, how bold in undergoing any thing from God; and all this by living with God, by living in God, and enjoying God. This man must needs be a bold man that hath such inflowings of loves from God; what shall such a man account deere for such a God? How bold was *Jer. In the Prison?* Though put in the dungeon, where he sanke in the mire and was ready to starve? When he was taken out again and remained in prison, he could not hold his peace; the power of loves constrained him to speake what he had seene and felt.

And so *Job* though he was afflicted in his Estate, in his children, in his owne person, what (saith he) *though he kill me* he deserves to be trusted in; I cannot forsake him for all this.

And old *Ely* when there was such bitter things spoken against him by God, saith he *it is the Lord let him do with me what seemeth him good.* And that is the highest Act that is expressed of him. And the reason is, because that man that lives in God understands God in himselfe, what his heart is. If we looke on God as he acts out of himselfe and not as he acts in himselfe, there is nothing but changes, to day sick, tomorrow well; to day in prison, tomorrow not; this yeare rich, next year poore; Now if we shall judge that God changes as our condition changes, what comfort? But God in his nature is one & the same, no changes *nor shadow of turning*, alwaies alike. Againe a saint in God lives in the will of God, Gods will is all in all to him. And this is that which brings him up to that raisednesse and height of spirit; he sees God in what ever he doth to act his owne blessed will on him, and so he see but that

accomplished, therein he rests and rejoyces, because he lives above aloft, he lives in the Center, in the Fountaine of loves. If we live in the streames, if we live below among the Creatures, there is nothing but trouble and rumbling this way and that way, ebbing and flowing; but the Center, the Fountain, the upper Regions are quiet, still, composed, sattisfied. Againe, because if God do take all from the Creature and take him up to live in himselfe, he hath not lost all but found all a thousand fold. Yet in the most roughest acting out of God. He finds loves in God; else his spirit would be downe to day and up to morrow, according to those actings; but this life with God, in the bosome and bowells of transcendent loves, there *all disputes are at an end*, he lives in providence above reasons Region and Element, and therefore when Reason would make disputes and arguments from gods externall dealings; as if God were as rough as his providence; this life silences all, and layes the soule to rest in the sweet embraces of the loves of an unchaingable Father; *though he kill me yet will I trust in him.*

And againe the Saints have such experience of the loves of God, flowing warme from the heart of God, that they cannot be beaten out of good thoughts of God: as we say by a friend whom we know and love & have intimate acquaintance with; if this man or that should bring tales of evill intended by him towards you; you would say I will not beleeve him, for I know him so well that the thing is impossible to be true; So doe the Saints find God such a true friend such an intimate close friend, that hath so much exprest his love to them that though sin, the Law, Hell, Death, the Divell, the World, Providence, or whoever sould bring them ill tydings from their father: oh (say they) it cannot be, I know him so well, I have such sweet such frequent enjoyments with him, this drawes up the Soule to a high, yea a higher and higher enjoyment of God.

This enjoyment transcends yea sleights all other enjoyments below it, it transcends Nature, it transcends Reason, it transcends externall providence, and all the roughest actings thereof. Let never so high accusations be layd on the Saints, they value them not, their life with God makes up all; As some have laid divers accusations on me and on the Saints, some are Truths, and we are ready to maintaine them, we hope to the death; others are false and charging upon us that we never said nor held, and all to make us odious to the World; As for instance that I should say, there was no other use of Christ but to declare love to the World, and for this end he came and for no other. Who ever holds it for my part I count it an errour, my Judgment is otherwise, I hold no such thing, I disclaime it; Christ came to satisfie and answer a law, as well as to make out love; and though these and the like, and such other things may be fathered upon us, partly through darkness, not seeing and enjoying Truth, & partly through malice, to lay to our charge, the things we never knew nor held; yet we hope God will vindicate his Truth and vindicate his saints, and Truth shall burne and flame out so gloriously, that he will make all opposers and slanderers ashamed, therefore let not the saints much trouble themselves at these things, let the Creature be still and silent, and let God alone, he is but working in a way for his owne praise, in confounding his enemies, and

vindicating the simplicity of the saints, who live with him and in him to their everlasting comfort and Joy.

My Dove my undefiled is but one

Beloved Friends, that I intend to speake unto you at this present, shall be from the word of God, in the 6 of *Cant. 9 verse*.

My Dove my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.

That which I shall speake to you at this time, shall be only from the first words, *My Dove my undefiled is but one.*

There is not much dependance of these words on the foregoing words, but so much dependance there is, that as you may see in the former words that the Daughters of *Jerusalem* enquire of the Spouse of Christ *where her beloved is*, she had so set him out and expressed her ardent affection to him, that they begin to wonder & desire to see what a one her beloved was, because she was so ravished with him, say they in the first verse, *whether is thy beloved gone, oh thou fairest among women, whether is thy beloved turned aside that we may seek him with thee?* She answers them in the next verses, *My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the Gardens and gather Lillies. And I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.* And then Christ in the next words begins to describe and set out what his Spouse is, and anotomizes her in all her portraiture and beauties, not only how beautiful she is to him and amiable through his beuty put upon her, but also how fruitfull his Spouse is in the enjoying her beloved *that ther's not one barren among them*, so amiable every way that Christ was ravished with her beuty, therefore (saith he) *turne away thine eyes from me for they have overcome me.*

Buth then this description might breed this objection, are all so beutifull and comly? Are all so fruitfull that there is not one barren amongst them; they are severall and of severall tempers and judgements, neither do they all appeare so fruitfull as he describes? He answers all in this ninth verse *My Dove my undefiled is but one*, All Saints in Christ are but one; men of the world, and poore Saints, weak Saints, that see not their priviledges by Christ, they are ready to say how can this be, that the Spouse of Christ is so beautifull so fruitfull, they see it otherwise, they can see no beuty in them, they bring forth but little weak and poore fruit, here is some of this way and some of that fellowship, some of this Judgement and some of that, some are in a Church way and some are not, some are Congregated and some are uncongregated, I but for all that, though among themselves they be divers, yet in Christ they are but one; You, 'tis true, make a difference but that should not be, This is but the folly and and weaknesse of men, but see and looke upon them as they are in Christ, and you shall see they are one to him, as they are in him and live with

him and in him, they are fruitfull, though not as they are in themselves. The points that I apprehend these words hold forth are these.

1. *Doct.* That Christ's Church is Christ's Dove, 2 *D.* Christ's Church is Christ's undefiled Dove, 3 *Doct.* That Christ's Church or Christ's dove is not divided but is one and united.

Now for the first of these, if you aske why Christ's Church is called Christ's Dove: I conceive for present 'tis in two regards, first in regard of their Priviledges, how much they are tendered by him: and secondly in regard they are made glorious and amiable by him. 1. Considering how precious they are to him, what affections he hath let out to them, the dearest loves and the very heart of Christ runnes out to them, singly, solely, nothing that is in the very bowells and heart of Christ, is too good, too deare for them; there's nothing in Christ but is there laid up, kept and preserved for a Saints treasure; all the choice loves of God, the choicest life of God is treasured up in Christ for his Saints; and when once they have forsaken themselves, them to be enjoyned by them, and delighted in for ever; he thinkes nothing too good for his Spouse: he hath not only filled himselfe for them, but emptied himselfe for them, poured out his own bloud, his owne life, his owne glory to save them, to inrich them.

Christ shews how precious they are to him, first in regard of the place where he layes a saint, that is, in his very bosome, in his very heart; not only in his common providence, but in his very heart, he never leaves a saint, till he bring it from step to step by degrees into himselfe; that the soule is so lapt up in him, that he hath made it one with himselfe. And that soule that is acquainted with this life knowes this, and none else; others know not what it means, I was (sayes he) a slave under the Law, and it tyrannized over me; many a hard lesson, and many a hard task I had set me, and may a bitter stripe; and hee in bowells of loves came and freed me, he redeemed me from that tyrannie; I was under the killing letter which threatened nothing but death and hell, and now I have found his loves in setting me at liberty; and now I can read his loves in every line, in all his proceedings, and these are, I say, such loves that none can prize, but those that have them, read, seene, and felt them in them. This is a Saints portion peculiarly to live with Christ, to live of Christ, to live in him. 'Tis the worlds portion to live under life, and not injoy life, but a saint lives in life; life and he are one; they are brought by Christ into the very overflowings of loves, they live in the very streams of loves; Christ comes to them continually, sups with them, wraps them up in admiration of himselfe, and fills them with divine loves.

Secondly, Christ declares how precious saints are to him, by taking all advantages to do them good, by sin, by sorrowes, by sufferings, by afflictions, by life, by death, every way; none of all these but Christ makes them advantages and helps to them. When they wrastle with sin, it would be too hard for a saint if Christ did not help them, and sin would get the advantage over them; should Christ but leave us in a temptation, we were undone, but Christ comes with a conquering unresistable power, & rescues us from sin, and brings us over to the loves of himselfe.

So also in affliction, the saints they moyle and toyle, and are even worne out in it, that they know not what to do, that they are ready to give out, and lay downe all, then Christ he comes in and supports, and puts under his hand to stay the soule from sinking; when our own strength is done, then Christ comes now and releases us; that when we lose our selves, he gaines us, and wrastles us into his owne loves and glory; he ravishes us with his loves, and then also is he ravished with our loves as you see in this chapter.

Secondly, they are made glorious by him, and with him, as *David* saith, *They are like the wings of a Dove covered with silver, and her feathers like yellow gold (Ps.68.13)*, 'tis a metaphor, you must conceive taken from very pleasant and glorious colored Doves, to set out how Christ beautifies, and makes his saints glorious and amiable. The very same glory that is on Christ, is on a saint; Christ and a saint have not two different lives, two different glories; but both one and the same, says the Apostle, *As he is, so are wee in this world (1 Joh.1.47)*. Brethren, the life of a saint is a misterie, Christ and they live in the enjoyments each of other, the life of a saint is internal.

Surely friends, let me tell you, 'tis not known by partaking of fellowships and ordinances, although wee ought to partake of them, and hold them forth to the world, but the beauty of the life of Christ consists in the enjoyment of Christ's loves; so that the soul, is therein centered and satisfied, as it is expressed (*Joh.17.23*) *Thou in me, and I in them, and they in me, that they may be made perfect in one*. All saints they are beloved with the same loves that the Father loves the Son, the same riches, the same life, the same love, the same glory is bestowed on them. We are now in this life, *set in heavenly places in Christ (Eph 3.11)*, many think they shall have this life hereafter, when they shall come to heaven; but those that live this life, they are in heaven here, and *sit now in heavenly places*; and herein is the great mistake among Professors, they do not live in and with Christ here; they use ordinances, and hold forth a profession and here rest; but for this heavenly life, this intimate uniting life, they look not after it, they expect it not, they know it not, they live it not. Oh brethren! Did you but know this life in experience, you would never rest till you were in it, and were comprehended by it, (for I pray mark) that this life must comprehend you, and not you it, *it doth not yet appear*, says the Apostle, *what wee shall bee, but when he shall appear in us, we shall see him as he is, we shall be made like him*. Christ's life shall be in us and we in him.

We may talk of this life, but when we live this life, then we shall know it, then shall we be swallowed up of it; I my self knew it not what it meant, though I often spoke to you of it, till of late; and alas that we see and have of it, is but little small glimerings of this life. In truth I now perceive there is but little injoyment of Christ in the world, this life is a hidden life, men talk of it, Christians talk of it but alas how coldly, without affection, without love, without overwhelmings, which shews they live without it, did you know this life, and did you live in the heart and loves of Christ, in the embraces of Christ, it would make us live other guess lives then we do.

Oh beloved, how full of loves and sweetness should we be? How full of self-denial? How much seeking the good of others as your own? It does not make men of that harsh censuring, judging spirit, that is now so rise in the world, it does not make men so sweld & fly-blown with their own parts and with, the good opinions of others, if you had it, it would make you love farre above all these things. And so far as any mans life and comfort runs not parallel with these things, truly let him be never so great in profession; in good earnest he lives yet in the flesh, and is not gotten into the life of Christ, Christ and they are not of one, but of two contrary spirits and lives. But oh the *sweet transcendent* loves, joys, overcommings that Saints enjoy, who live in loving, and love in living, Christ and they are of one Spirit, as (*Eze.16.6*) *When I passed by thee, I saw thee polluted in thine owne bloud, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy bloud, live, and I caused thee to multiply, &c. and then wast thou comly through my comlinessse, that I had put upon thee.* Christ makes his Spouse beautifull with his owne beauty; but we for the most part think highly of our selves, and of our own beauty, and are comly to themselves, through their own comlinessse, and therin they glory; and most in the world runne this way in practise, though in judgement they deny it; but he who is come up to Christ, to have his beauty put on him; his life and his injoyments; he hath put off himselfe, he hath put off his own life, his own beauty, his own comlinessse, and what ever injoyments come from selfe, all these he is crucified too.

But this is a life none come too, nor none knowes what it is in the injoyment of it, but he that has it. So much for that Head. Wee come to a second thing to be considered, that is, why they are called Doves, and that is in regard of the Saints property. The property of Doves is to be full of innocencie, and secondly full of love, and thirdly full of delight.

First, full of innocencie, a Dove os the harmlessest creature in the world, so are the saints; the meekest, the harmlessest of all men; if they be reviled, they revile not againe; they esteeme not of the praisings or revilings of the world, nor of the world, as saints. If they have, they live below themselves, they live apart from Christ; they are of so mortified a temper in any worldly respect, if they live with Christ, and in Christ, that they cannot thinke any thing a gaine in the world, nor any ting a Losse: if they lose any thing, houses, lands, wives, children, honours, these they account no losse, because to them they were no gaine, except they gaine their life in it; and that is God himself, Christ himselfe; to have God in all they have, or else they account they have nothing, & if they have nothing, if they live as I have before shewed you, in the very bosome and heart of Christ, and in the mutuall embraces of each other, that they can say experimentally and feelingly, and enjoyingly, my beloved is mine, and I am his. This is their gaine, this is their all, and they have no thoughts of gaining in the world. For if they gaine these things and not God in them, they thinke themselves losers. 'Tis true, they love wife, children, friends, honours, so Christ be in them, with the discovery of his sweetnessse and loves, then they are well and at rest.

They think it no hard thing to be reviled in the world, if God speak love; let blind self-seeking, self-advancing, men of the world say what they will. And therefore beloved friends observe your spirits; doe you find your selves moved and disturbed by others revilings? So far you live in your selves; so far you are unmortified, uncrucified, you live not as Christians, according to the life you hold forth; if you did, you would see where their life is & how far below Christ, and how much in themselves that live in reviling & defaming others; and in stead of being angry or to your selves and in your selves, returning like for like, you would pity them, and pray earnestly for them, that God would open their eyes, that they also may see upon what low and base principles they live and move.

Againe, Doves are single-hearted and full of love, so are the saints, as saints; they love and delight in loving; It is observed by some, of some Doves, and so of Hindes, that if their Mates had died, they were so affected with it, they would die also; such a resemblance is in the saints, they are full of love to each other, are sensible of each others sufferings; they doe not seeke to undoe, vex, and defame one another, but pity and helpe one another, they doe as they would bee done by; they will not requite evill with evill, as do the men of the world, and all those that are not come up to the life of Christ to live as Saints, for they delight in loving; they live by loving, and love by living, for 'tis said of the Hindes and Doves, they have these three properties, first, they live by loving; secondly, they grow fruitfull by loving; and thirdly, they die without loving. The saints do thus; they delight in love, they grow fruitfull by loving, and dye if they do not love. 1. They live by loving, they are carried out in the first place in love to Christ, as the cause of their love; for Christs love to them, causes their love to returne to him; and they love Christ also in the Saints, these loves are the saints feast; they live by Christs kissing and embracing them, and by their kissing and embracing Christ, and also in kissing and embracing one anothers spirits; by communicating to each other their experiences and enjoyments of Christ; theres no greater joy, nor higher act in them then to act love, these are the dainties they feast on, then are they transcendent in their spirits, and then are they most full of Christ. Secondly, Doves are made fruitfull by loving, so are the saints; when thrive they more then when they have the sweetest communion and are most open to one anothers, to each others enjoyments, and so kisse and embrace each others spirits?

No sooner hath a saint kissed the heart of Christ, but it is made fruitfull by that very kiss, by that embracement and by that enjoyment; The very enjoyment of Christ makes them fruitfull. And they cannot be otherwise. They being once come to this, to enjoy Christ they cannot be unfruitfull. Here is a saint then; his very love, his very nature provokes to fruitfulness; if he be not fruitfull, what ever he may be taken for, as a great Christian, because a great professor; hee never yet enjoyed Christ, never yet knew what the loves, the overcoming thranscendt loves of Christ were.

Fruitfulness is made over to the soule at that very instant; it is like the opening of the pores of the body, then the bloud interchanges and have free course and mingles

it selfe through the whole body; this love of Christ (I tell you friends) it opens the pores of the soule, love and fruitfulness runs from Christ into the saints interchangeably; as Christs heart is open to you, so is yours to him; there is a secret conveyance to each other in the acts of loves.

And thirdly they die without it, saints as saints, except they love they die; I pray observe, saints as saints cannot die, but their life dies, their joy dies, they live uncomfortably and as dying, as if they had no life. I speak now in regard of actings; a saint when he acts not love, he dies; he may have ordinances, and use externall intercourses to Christ and with the saints, and yet be as good as dead, no more life in act and comfort then the men of the world, if the warm heart-blood of Christ doe not run, and have free course into his soule; the saint acts not as a saint; but yet he may act in religion & worhsip, but tis but to him selfe, & to his own credit and honour, and esteeme among men, or for some other self end, and yet have no life as a saint. The new man and Christ is as dead, and acts not, and therefore it is, sometime a saint has overflowings of spirit, mightily enlarged, his spirit has no bounds, another time he is bound up, straitned, the pores of his soule are lockt up; he hath no intercourse of loves from Christ and therefore has no breathings, no declarations of Christs loves to him, no experiences, he is wrapt up in himselfe, and to himselfe: and therefore this makes him, (the soul being as sensible of this as of death (for 'tis a death to him) this makes him to goe to Christ, and complaine heavily, oh! How he groans in spirit till he be revived, till his spirit, till his loves come into him againe, and cause him to act and live. Oh! Sayes he, let my Christ come into me or I die, I cannot live; 'tis true (sayes he) here is ordinances, and here is a fellowship externally; but whats all this, if my heart be bound up; if I live within myself; if I have not intercourses and returnes of loves, from my beloved, I die, I die.

Now beloved, would you have me make some use of this point from the particulars thereof; I hope you have done that your selves as I went along, but I will a little make out some uses. I cannot be large because of the time and my own weaknesse; and I would make it out to you of what I have found in my own experience; though I must confesse it is but lately, and no great light neither; there are depths, there are glorious transcendent truths, in these experiences; but oh! How dark, at how small a crevice doe wee see? How short doe we come? I tell you, though I have many times spoken of these things, yet how coldly, no ravishings, no enlargings, no overcomings of the spirit, how bound up? Truth is, I had the Theorie in my understanding, and I though I had practised them, because I knew of them; but 'tis but new, 'tis but small the experience of them; but God will reveale and lead on his saints from step to step; that they shall go from strength to strength, digging up fountains till they appear before the Lord in Zion; Professors talke much of heaven, but I professe they never were in heaven, nay never will be, if they come not to this life; you hope it may bee this life will bee hereafter. But I tell you, your heaven is here as well as hereafter in a degree: be not deceived to perswade your selves you are saints and you are christians, and have not this life, we have described; so farre you are in your sins, you are not yet below Christ, you are yet in your selves, you are not come up to the life of a Christian, to the life of a saint.

Uses, from the particulars; first, are the saints so happy in their priviledges, that they are Christs Doves, and so precious to Christ? Then take this as the first confectory, this will follow, if it be so.

Then they will not long to be precious to the world; you will not be troubled though the world, though men, though friends, though enemies regard you not; so you be precious to Christ, this is enough for you; what though such a friend speake evill of you? What though such a Professor loves you not; and there another professor suspects you, and you are troubled; Why saints, where is your life in the world or in Christ? If in the world, no marvell you are troubled; no marvell you are *offended*; if your life bee in Christ, (you will say) what matter; so Christ thinkes preciously of you; if you have the sweet and mutuall embraces of Christ; and your spirits run into each other, and kisse and embrace each other, here would be your rest.

Secondly, observe from the next particulars, is nothing in the heart of Christ, too good for saints? Does Christ embrace, salute, kiss, ravish, the saints in his transcendent loves? Does he endow them with the same glory he himself hath with the Father? For I must put things together, strength will not hold out to take them all severally as the things deserve. Have any of you felt these things in your own experience? I do not ask you, of you have had the knowledge thereof in your understandings, but have you enjoyed them, and found the loves of Christ, so large, so overcoming to your souls? Doe you see and feel, that Christ thinks nothing in his very heart too good for you? The Scripture indeed is very full to prove this, I need not cite them, but have you made proof thereof? Are these things so to you? Are they proved by your enjoyments? Then I will tell you what it will work.

First, nothing that you have will be too precious for Christ, Christ's very heart, his life, his riches, his loves, his glory, is not too precious for you. And your very heart, your life, you will not think too precious for him, much less your honor, your riches, your credit; I tell you friends, nothing will be too dear to part with, so you may be taken up to these injoyments; you will tread upon all as dirt, as dung, so you may gain the loves, and embraces of Christ. Will friends, will honors, will parts, will ordinances, stand you in such stead as the loves of Christ? Will they lay you in the very heart and bosom of Christ? Will they redeem you from the law and set you free? Will they take you from under the power of the killing letter, which threatened nothing but death and hell? Will they take all advantages to do you good, by sin, by afflictions? Will they come in and help you, when you are quite worn out? Will they help you out in straits? No, no, they will not, they cannot: but all they can doe, is but to lay you in their own bosoms, they cannot help against the terrors of the Law; they take all advantages to do you hurt, they cannot help you out of straits, &c. The saints, as saints, they look on all outward comfort thus, and how then can they bee in love with them; they look on them as chaff, as stubble, as nothing; their life, their loves, their treasure is in the loves of Christ, and having Christ's heart running out to them and theirs to his; *Thou in me, and I in them, and they in me*: Thus much you hold forth by your profession of Christ, and if it be so, then I wonder why something

of yours is too good for him; if you loose your honor, your good name, your estates for him, you think much, you think Christ deals hardly with you; and well you may, if he bestow not himself upon you; but had you as good a thing in the room of that you lose, you would never repine, if Christ be such happiness, such riches, such ravishings, so that he is better then all things else; whats the reason you sticke so much upon the creature? Whats the reason you come not off to this life? Whats the reason you come no sooner, make no more hast, have no more longings to it? But friends, were you in the armes, in the embraces of Christ, you would repent you came no sooner into these joyes and loves; that you were no soomer crucified to the flesh, and to your selves. Oh! Beloved, I tell you, you would sleight all things as they stood in opposition to Christ. But as I told you before, they doe love wife, friends, children, but 'tis in Christ, as Christ appears to them, in them. But friends, where is your great boasting of your profession and Christianity, and living to Christ, if these things be so? If Christ take away staves and give Diamonds and Pearls, what cause hast thou to complaine? If thou dost complain for the losing of these straves, it is sign for all thy boasting thou hast no Pearles; but these straves, these nothings were thy Pearles and thy Diamonds.

Againe, is a saint made glorious by Christ, and is Christ and his glory all one? Then were you made glorious by Christ, you would be swallowed up in the loves of Christ; you could not live apart from Christ, but you should live in Christ. You have heard this is your priviledge, as saints; you shall not love in one region, and Christ in another, but you shall enjoy the same life, the same joyes, the same loves with Christ.

Again, is the preference of Christ in himself? Then 'tis not to be enjoyd else-where; 'tis not in fellowships; 'tis not in ordinances, simply considered; yet these ye are to use to hold forth the discipline of Christ to the world, yet not to rest in these; these distinguish you externally from the men of the world; but you will be as of the world still for all them, if you enjoy no more but bare ordinances. This I speak, because many satisfie themselves in this, in receiving outwardly the ordinances, and that they are accounted Professors, and sequestered from the men of the world, and because they are found in such and such fellowships, being well thought of by others: alas these will doe you no good; for all these you may have no more life then the men of the world. You see no man can live in the bosom of Christ, and in the glory of Christ, but he is made one with Christ; Saints, they are not only made perfect hereafter; as most Professouts run away with that; but they are admitted and have some entrance into heaven here; they live as Saints, they walk as saints, they trade as saints, they live with Christ; they walk up and down in loves, love compasses them round about, they are swallowed up of loves; they live in loving, and love in living; ordinances are the shells; but saints while they are cracking the shell to others, they are eating the kernall themselves, and live thereby. Alas friends, you may be partakers of all externall ordinances, you may submit to Baptisme, you may come into right order of a Church way, you may frequently break Bread together, but whats all this friends? This is but the shell of the businesse, the huske, the bone; but is Christ glorified in your spirit, (here is the life) and you in his Spirit,

here is the kernell, the marrow; doe you live as he lives? Are you made one in spirit? Truly friends, examine, and look wel to your selves, for mine own part, often I have spoken to you, & taught to you, that which I found not in experience; yet I thought I had; but truly I find now I comprehended them, yet I was not comprehended of them; I knew not what eating the kernell was, nor tasting the marrow, the sweetnesse till of late.

Againe, are saints well and fitly called Doves, in regard of living in loves, and by being made fruitfull by loving, and in regard they cannot live except they love? Then observe that the people of God, are an innocent people; they are innocent to the Law; Christ hath fulfilled it for them, and freed them from the Law, and brought them to peace and liberty from under the power of the killing letter.

Againe, are the saints no self-seekers but self-deniers? Then I wonder what means that rough and rugged carriage in those that say they live with Christ, and in Christ, and injoy Christ; & yet their life is much in seeking to defame others, and to set up themselves: This is not to live as saints, this is farre from the carriage of saints, this is not to live in loves, & to grow fruitfull by loveing; the carriage of a saint is (you have heard) to seeke others good as their own:

These then live not in Christ; but they live in the world, Christ and they live in two contrary Regions; these declare they yet live in the Creature, in selfe, in flesh: these seek for honour of men, and not of Christ; so they may but set up themselves, it matters not what becomes of their brethren. As those that love Honour or Riches or what else in the World, so they can but get them for themselves, they care not how many suffer for it, so they have it: are these (beloved brethren) such as live as Christ lives? Those that revile because they are reviled, nay revile when not reviled, how farre is this below the practice of saints? Such men proclaime and hold it forth they are no saints in practice, what ever they would have the World or Gods people thinke of them.

The saints, (you see) they undervalue all mans reviling, it is to far below them to revile again, to return evil for evil; you see they are passive in suffering, but active in loving: the other are proud, self-seeking, self-boasting, and they yet live in the flesh, and are not come to live in and with Jesus Christ.

Again, observe from the second thing that the saints grow fruitful by loving and delight in loving, then they are not constrained by the law to duty, but they love it of themselves, it is not forced thing in them; they do not task and force them selves to obey Christ but it is their nature, and they work freely, their lives are in loving, and in loving they have their life. Till men come to live this life, these things, to all men else are a hidden mistery; and if a mistery no marvel then men so much mistake in setting out this life, and what a Christian is, for no man knows it, nor hits it right but he that lives it, for all else, live and grope in the dark and few attain to it.

Some men say this is the Christian, and some that is the Christian, and it may be mistaken in both, for they make Christians according to their own fancy; if he do but jump with them in opinion, this is enough to hold him up a Christian, oh! He must needs be the godly man, and yet see not that rule the word holds forth in the life, marrow, & mystery of it: but beloved it will be so, every man judges by what light he has; & if his light be false or dark, so must his judgement be. Yet in my experience I see but (as it were) a dram of that weight of glory that is to be revealed upon the sons of truth.

And I will tell you what my thoughts are; I am perswaded, ere long, God will pick out himself a choice people; now here is some what to do about Churches and selected Congregations, but you will see (if I mistake not) ere long, Congregations pickt out of Congregations; of Men that have experience of this life of living with God. And the ordinances shall be yet more and more purified; and yet they not rest in ordinances, but shall have the marrow or ordinances: I say the time will come, that there will be a people who kisse and embrace one another in spirit, and shall live in loving and injoying one another, farre more then ever, yet our eyes have seen.

We should now have further proceeded to the next points, namely these from the words, *My Dove, my undefiled is one. Doct. 2.* That Christs Dove is not a defiled, but an undefiled company. Thirdly, that Christs undefiled Dove is but one; though they be scattered and divided here to men, yet to Christ they are but one, where wee should have shewed the folly of many in these dayes, that they ty their loves only to that congregated body of which they are in fellowship with; and if they differ in judgement from them, they have no love to them; neither doe they account them of the number of Christs one, undefiled Dove; this is grosse ignorance, and proceeds from weaknesse, pride, and folly; and is indeed meere Antichrist, and the fopperies of men: congregated, or uncongregated, so they bee Christs Doves, we ought to love them. But my strength faileth me, and so I commit to you, and what hath been delivered, to the blessing of God.

PHIL. 4.11

I have learned in what ever estate I am therewith to be content.

The first point from these words is this. *Doct.* That contentation, is a Saints lesson; first, let us see what a Saints contentation is? Secondly, the benefits that flow from a Saints contentation.

First, what a Saints contentation is, it is this; to bee content with God and in God in all conditions; herein is only a true rest; if it be in any thing else but God, it is no true rest; If honor, or pleasure, or profit, or credit, or applause, or riches, or any thing besides God doth give thee rest; thy rest and content is in the creature, and not in God: for then, as these things ebb and flow, so doth thy content. But he whose content is in God, his content is, as God ebbs and flows to him; so that if he have

God and enjoy him, he cares not how the creature comes or goes. If hee have riches, and not God in them, he hath no true rest.

And on the contrary, if he have poverty, disgrace, bannishment, or imprisonment, and enjoy God, hee hath his rest still. Because his content is not in, and with the creature, but it is in and with God; Gods will is his rest. He that loves in the will of God, he sees Gods will is best for him; and his will is so swallowed up in the will of God, and made one with it, that he hath no peace in this.

And this life he hath and enjoys not by reasoning himself into this condition; as, for a man to say thus; this is Gods will, and I must be content; it is but a folly to resist his will; it must bee so, and I cannot help it; therefore I were better be content, then to fight and strive against it; for I cannot remove it, till God please.

Now this is not the content of Saints, but that which reason dictates to a man, which a man without grace may reach; and in this content most are satisfied, and take it to bee a Saints submission, and contentation when it is not.

But a Saints rest, content, and satisfaction, is not from reason; but from a sweet enjoyment of God in every condition; so that in every condition, he finds God so sweet, so ravishing, that he concludes; these conditions are best for him, better then any other. And this man he sees really; that God chooses his conditions better for him, then he can choose for himself; so that this man finds really, and experimentally, such enjoyments of God, such sparkings of love, such precious experiences of grace scattered up and down in those contitions, that he cannot wish them otherways, except the will of God be to change them, and to put him into any other condition better for him.

For if he desire health, or honor, or riches, or parts, or any other conditions, and therein find not God and his glorious out-goings in his soul, and experiences of his loves; he hath no rest: but poverty and the contrary he desires rather, so he may have the enjoyment of his God in them.

For I told you, it was God alone, and God in all things, and with all things, was the true rest of Saints. His rest is not in this and that, but God in this and that; so that whether he have this thing, or that thing, if he have not God in this, and that thing, he hath no rest, not as a Saint; I pray observe that. I doe not deny, but many men may have a rest, but it is not a Saints rest, as a saint; and that which flows from grace, and from the loves and embraces of God himself.

Whether it flow from reason (as I told you before) or whether it be from injoying the creature. As many men that love below reason, that live by sense; they have a content and satisfaction; because they have the creature; riches, or honor, or credit, or beauty, or parts, and they are herewith content: truly friends, this is no better then a sensual content; and this is far short of that content that comes from reason; and therefore, much more of that which flows from God and grace; for he that hath

it from God, and by enjoying that sweetness of loves that is in the will of God; he lives with God, lives in God, is in the very bosom of God, in the very heart of Christ.

And he that lives there; no marvel though he regard not the motion and alteration of the creature; but as God alters to his enjoyments.

When he enjoys most of God, then hath he the greatest content, though he have the least of the creature; and when he enjoys less of God, then hath he the less content, though never so much of the creature; and the reason is, because nothing without God, nothing below God can be his rest.

Secondly, for the good, and for those benefits that flow from this enjoyment, of God and from a Saint's content. He that lives this life, he is free from the combustion of opposition; for when God doth one thing; and the will of man would have another, here now Gods will and mans, fight; and rush one against another, like two contrary streams or seas, which will not mingle. Where these two wills meet, there must needs be much trouble, and great combustion in their opposition; the man cannot be at rest; but as the Apostle *James* says, *He is in a very unsettled, wavering condition, like a wave of the Sea carried and tossed every way, and cannot receive any thing of the Lord, being double minded, and unstable in all his ways.*

He would have a rest composed of God and the creature. And such a man cannot receive any thing of God, in a saint-like way; till he come to enjoy God singly and nakedly; he can have no lasting, no true rest.

But did we rest in God and not on the creature, wee should be free from this combustion, and this alterity in our spirits. And so far as we want it, so far we are short of a saint-like satisfaction and rest.

And where this content is not, there is that combustion in opposition, and resisting Gods will, (as I said) like two mighty Seas that dash on against another, and where that is, there is a foam, froth, and filth cast up which annoyes the man; *A discontented heart, that cast up mire and dirt*; Much sinne, froth, and defilement. And as the Apostle, saith; *this man is unstable in all his wayes, and carryed about with every wind of Doctrine.* Every wind of Doctrine changeth his opinion; and certainly there is no man rightly establisht, and groundedly firme in his opinion, till hee come into this life, to live with God, and in God.

But he whose will is emptied into the will of God, he lives with God, and in God; he sits above all the Alterity of the creature; change this man from one condition to another, he changes not, as his condition changes; throw him into any condition, which way you will, he still falls on his legs.

This is the man that *David* speaks of, *that he makes to ly down in green pastures and leads him beside the still waters, he restoreth his soul and leads him in the path of righteousness for his Name sake, and though he walk in the valley of the shadow of death he will not fear; thy rod and thy staff is with me. And they comfort me, they see*

loves, and gains, and profits, and sweet experiences more precious then pearls in the very rods of God, and are fully satisfied with the goodness of God. God spreads them a *faire Table in presence of their enemies, and their head is sweetly anoynted with oyl, and their cup runneth over, like the oyl on Aarons head, which perfumeth al Gods dealings, to them & runneth down to the very skirts of their garments, and like the dew of hermon, and as the dew on the mountaines of Zion, for there he commandeth the blessing even for evermore, and this is that David speaks of in the 37. Ps. 4. Delight thy self in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thin heart.* What think you? That you shall have riches, and plenty, and credit, and ease, and full tables and great earthly possessions? No no, but that in the want or fullness of these things, you shall have God to be your rest and content; that your will and Gods being united, you shall have no desires but whats agreeable to the will of God.

This is that *dwelling in the Land and being fed of God, as David speaks in the 37. Ps.*

For so long as we love on the creature, we cannot have this spiritual life, and these divine promises made good to us; but of necessity, wee living on the creature, wee must be subject to the troubles distractions and changes of the creature.

As those that live in any element must needs be subject to the motions, Alterations and toubles of that element in which they live. As birds, or fishes: birds live in the aire, if the ayre change and be infected, so needes must they: or fish, if the element of water wherein they live, be poyson'd or disturbed so are they; and so it is in this; those that live in the creature and with the creature: must needes simpathize, and bee sutably qualified to the creature.

But he that sits above with God is above all the change in the creatures element; hee is selfe-denied to the world, and all in the world.

Again, this is the way to perfection; so far as we are satisfied with God, and satisfied with truth; so far we live in perfection; I doe not say that person is perfect, or without sin; no, but so far as we live this life, so far we come toward perfection, and live in perfection, and live with God; the new man carries us to God and perfection; it assends and carries us upward, to God and Christ: but so far as we come not up to this life; so far we love below God, and are drawn downward to the Creature, to the World, to Hell-ward, to Divel-ward: as one when he saw a Bird tyed with a stone to her Leg, as she mounted to flee upward, still the stone drew her down to the Earth, and thereupon he fell a weeping; because it did so fully represent to him his own condition, he could not but weep. Grace carries and draws a man on to perfection; but the old man draws down to the Earth, to defilement; to destruction.

Again this condition of a Saints rest is a gathering condition; it puts him in a gathering way. I pray you observe it, this man is the thriving man, he only is in a thriving way; this man is like to grow a rich man indeed. All our ways are scattering ways; if we live on the creature we gain not, but scatter and lose all; he that loves

this life of a Saint, that God has taught him this lesson, flowing from his own self, from the very heart of God, and the bosom of Christ; he gathers such precious flowers of experience, and gains such precious Jewels and Pearls, that he counts himself rich in them, and in nothing else; If he live beside God, he looks on himself rich in them, and in nothing else; If he lives beside God, he looks on himself as a man that scatters all; as a growing to be a bankrupt; one that has no experience of the rich gainings of grace; *Godlinesse with content* (sayes the Apostle) *is great gaine*. Ther's no true content but in gaine by grace, and the rich experiences of Gods workings in the soule; to see which way corruption comes to be crucified, and he kild to the world and the world to him; to see how his power and life comes in; and to observe the glorious outgoings of God, and the manner of his glorious and Godlike proceedings with his soul; this satisfies and composes his heart; to see how sweetly God hath conquered his soul and brought his will into subjection, that was so raging, so rebellious. *Then he counts it all joy to fall into divers temptations; knowing, & finding by experience, that the trying of faith worketh patience, to be intire wanting nothing; so far as he comes into this life of perfection? To rejoyce in that he is made low; and he that is of low degree in the creature, to rejoyce in that he is made rich in God, and high in God; and he sees how patience bringeth forth experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.* We will now come to some short uses and confectories from this point, and from the benefits thereof.

Use the first; is contentation a saints lesson? Is a saints spirit a satisfied spirit? Then so far as any one of us have not a satisfied spirit, so far we have not a Saints spirit, so far we are not saints; so far as we are not satisfied, contented, at rest and composed, so far we are short of God, and have not the life of God; so far as we live not with God and in God; For this is held out to us in the very nature of God; God is in himself at rest, serene, composed; no distraction in the Creature touches him, he sits above; that is, he is free from all changes and all alterations in the world; so is that man so farre as he is a Saint, being united and made one with God; though he live among the creatures, as God has his being in and through all the creatures, yet he is not altered by the creatures; So has this man as he is a saint, not his joy, his life, his riches, his treasure in the creature, but in and with God, above all creatures.

Againe, is a saint as he is a saint, of composed satisfied spirit, composed of one spirit; for that is promised in Jer. *I will give them one heart, and one spirit?* Then he is not of a devided discontented spirit; hee is not troubled with those wishings and wouldings as men below are. Oh that I had this condition or that condition: but (saies he) let any condition come, so I have God in it: God is my rest and not the condition; be it with riches, or health, or the best condition wherein the men of the world, and so farre as we are unregenerate, to think therein is rest; oh saies one, had I but such a ones condition, such Lands, such Honours, I could be contented and satisfied; oh saies another, had I not such enemies, were they but cut off & overthrowne, I should have rest; this is not the temper of a Saint as a saint; But he sayes I have found that promise fulfilled? *I have the desire of my heart, my rest is in God and I cannot tell what to wish other then I have, what I have I would have; and what I would have I have: if thou art not come to this, thou hast a devided heart.*

Some men they are ready to say and bless themselves in their condition and say, I thanke God I am contented; but wherein is thy content? Thou hast a good estate, and thou hast the desire of thy heart in the creature, thou hast rare parts, or thou are honored among men, & herein thou art satisfied; and thou thinks this is a gracious content; thou dost not murmur, but blessest God for thy condition; alas, this is but sensuall, this is but nature; if thy content were right, it would not be in the creature but in God; Should God wheele thee into another condition, and wheele away these outward contents, then where will be thy comfort? And some who are gone a little higher, they can boast and say, I blesse God I am content; I am in poverty, in disgrace, in prison, &c. I am perswaded to submit to thee, because it is so and it cannot be no otherwaies; tis therefore better to bee content, then to fight against the condition, except I could help it; this is but a reasoning a mans selfe into content, this content is not a saints content; that is, to be content as seeing an excellency in this condition; as seeing beawty, and loves, and the glorious outgoings of Gods proceedings; *They have seen thy goings O God who art in the Sanctuary, therefore the Virgins love thee*; on the sparkling of pearles and diamonds this soule discovers; experiences worth all the world; *he sells all that he hath to purchase this field where these jewels are*. But he that reasons himself to rest, he is not satisfied nor content, though he saith, he is; for he sees no loves, no joyes no gatherings, no riches in these conditions, he longs to him; & the reason is, *tell him, I am sick of love*; if she have not her beloved, give her what you will, riches, honour, parts, ordinances; oh she cryes out, what means all these things, you mistake my disease, *I am sick of love*.

If you be content, what means this wishing and woulding; what means this picking and chusing your conditions? What meanes so much envy of others conditions, if you see them but before you? Does a man that has a thousand pounds, that has pearls and diamonds, envie him that has but a peny or pibble stones? 'tis never seene. Therefore we may conclude thou hast no pearles, nor treasure; thou hast not found God in health, and God in sicknesse, God in riches, and God in povert, and God in parts, and God in want of parts, and God in all.

I pray observe this; nothing contents the soule, but that which answers the soul in all conditions, in all its wants; riches, honour, beawty, &c. doe not answer the soules wants, without God be in them; it must be something sutable to the soules nature; that must be Godlike and spirituall, else it will not feed the soule; these terrene things feed but sense not saints; A child delights not to play, but with children, not with old men; so the soule delights not to play with creatures which are all below God; but it loves God, and delights in God, in the loves and inbraces of God, and God delights in the imbraces of saints, their imbraces are mutuall.

Take this as another confectory from this Doct. Is a saints rest & satisfaction in the injoying of God? Then 'tis not a sessation of any outward accommodation, can cease a saints content and satisfaction; for his joy, his rest lives, when all outward comfort dies. As *Habac. 3. 27. Although the figtree shall not blossome, neither shall fruit be in the Vine: the labour of the Olive shall faile, and the fields shall yeeld no*

meat, the flock cut off from the fold, and their should be no heard in the stalles. Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord: and joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength.

Againe, If so farre as a spirit is content and at rest, its so farre like *God*; then those that professe themselves sonnes and daughters of *God* and are not content; they are not like *God*; they are not sonnes and daughters of *God*; for those that are *Gods* sonnes, and borne of *God*, they are like *God*, hold forth *Gods* image; and so farre as we come short of this wee hold forth the Divells image; and we are no farther to account our selves the sonnes of *God*, then as wee are begotten of *God*, and so far as we are content with *God*, and *God* in all things; Else we are begotten of the will of man, and of the will of *flesh*, and not the will of *God*.

Again, does this contentation of a Saint give him abilitie to be in a gathering way in all conditions; then those that thrive not by all conditions so far they are no Saints, but they are in a scattering, undoing way; they are scatterers and losers in all conditions, because they injoy not *God*.

Contentation with *God* is our greatest gain, and the reason is; because this fixes a mans heart to his own portion, which is *God* alone; and so far as we run out from *God* alone; and so far as we run out from *God* to the creature for content, so far we run out to *strange women*, to commit adultery, and play the harlots, as Jer. 3. Shewes, *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord. Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, oh house of Israel.* All things but *God* is strange women.

Again, is he that is content with *God* free from the combustion of opposition; then we gather further; that no condition is cross to this spirit; we commonly cry out of crosses; from men, from friends, from enemies; crosses by *Kings*, and crosses by *Parliaments* and why is all this? Crosses in an *Presbyterian* way, and crosses in an *Independent* way, and why? The reason is, because our spirits are not laid level to all conditions; to see all conditions equal to him, that lives with and in *God*. Truly friends think of this seriously; our crosses are from within; we have wills of our own, which crosses; and dashes against *Gods* will in our conditions; and hence is the cross; for were my will and the conditions sutable and laid level, here would be no cross; And hence it is we are so unquiet: the working of our wills and conditions being so thwart and contrary, that they cast up foam, mire, and dirt; and hence it is that we are so unstable, we are not fixed, but carried up and down with every wind of doctrine; hence it is, that so far as we are content with any thing below *God*, we are lyable to the change and confusion of the nature of all things.

See then friends wherein a saints content and rest lies, 'tis *God* in friends, *God* in relations, *God* in all outward accommodations? You see also how great a good and benefit arises from this life; When they fail *God* stands; we are free from the combustion of opposition; that man has no cross, no condition is rough to him; ye are in a gathering way, ye shall grow rich; your heart shall be fixt and not carried away with every wind of doctrine and opinion; Lastly, this fixes your heart fast to

your own portion, which is *God* himself. And those rich enjoyments of his glorious outgoings; *they have seen thy goings o God, even the goings of my God, and my King even in the Sanctuary.*

FINIS