

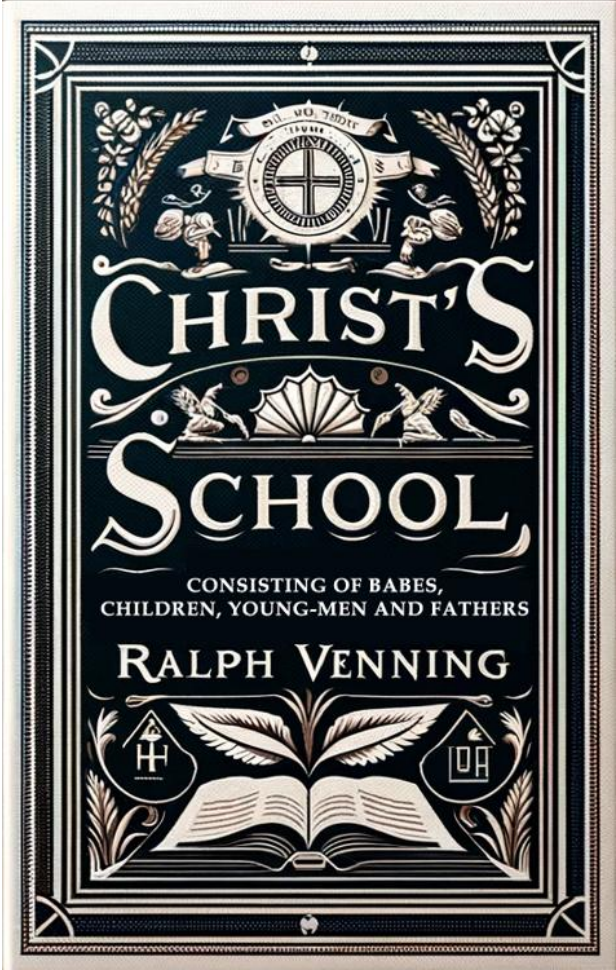


# CHRIST'S SCHOOL

CONSISTING OF BABES,  
CHILDREN, YOUNG-MEN AND FATHERS

RALPH VENNING





# CHRIST'S SCHOOL

Consisting of Four Classes of Christians,

I. Babes, II. Little Children, III. Young-men, IV. Fathers.

With Their several Characteristical differences and attainments; also  
the Doctrines proper to be taught to each of them.

Being the Substance of many Sermons Preached many Years ago in  
Southwark.

By Ralph Venning.

1 Cor. 3.1. And I Brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual,  
but as unto carnal, as unto Babes in Christ.

1 Joh. 2.13. I write unto you Fathers, because ye have known him  
that is from the beginning. I write unto you Young-men, because ye  
have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you Little Children,  
because ye have known the Father.

London, Printed for John Hancock, Senior and Junior, at the Sign of  
the three Bibles in Popes-head Alley, over against the Royal Exchange  
in Cornhill. 1675.

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Editor's Note - During the TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G> signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Because a majority of

readers are not fluent in the original languages; it was thought best to omit, instead of possibly misconstrue; since most original languages are written in antiquated script in the original facsimiles. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

## **READER.**

Though that which I here present thee with may look like a Novelty, yet I hope it will appear to be a truth of great Antiquity; for though I confess I have not met with any that have treated thus distinctly of the several Ranks and Degrees of Saints, yet I cannot say but I was led to the consideration thereof by persons both Antient and Modern of great name and worth, who have now and then hinted that in their writings, which gave me occasion to make a more full inquiry into this thing, and accordingly to Preach upon it many years ago in Southwark, and I bless God, not without good acceptance and success, as I have not a little cause to presume. As to the three first States I have spoken largely, but very little of the last, viz. of Fathers, not willing to venture beyond my line or measure, only hinting in General what may be gathered from the Scripture. Concerning them what I have said, I submit to the judgment of my Elders and betters, who I hope will find me moderate and modest in my Assertions, and that they are consonant to the analogy of Faith and agreeable to the tenor of Scripture both truths and expressions. I shall say nothing more of it, for I hope it will speak for itself, only my desires to God are that it may be blest to every Reader, for their either Conversion or Edification. Which Prayer if God please to grant, 'twill be matter of thanksgiving as to them so to me also, who am their Servant in and for Christ Jesus,

Ralph Venning.

## **EPISTLE TO THE READER.**

This Treatise as it is now published, was so left by the worthy Author when he went to his rest. The excellency and usefulness of it will evidence itself best in the perusal thereof. It hath this preeminence beyond many of the practical Discourses that have of late passed the Press; that its design is singular and not managed (at least to such an enlargement) by any before it.

The several Degrees and Estates of Christians, through which they pass up to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ, are here insisted on, and with great experience, according to the rule of Faith explicated with perspicuity.

The greatest part of the Discourse is spent upon those that make up the greatest part of true Christians, viz. the weak ones or Babes, wherein will be found things of a comfortable concernment, and conducing very much to the establishing of them; and promoting their advance to a greater degree of grace till they come to the assurance of the Love of God by the witness of the Spirit, which the Children enjoy. What is laid down in reference to the witness of the Spirit, though some may differ in their conceptions from it, yet such is the boundary and cautions here annexed to this particular by the Author against delusions, that no person will have a reasonable ground to make any exceptions.

What is performed in the handling of the temptations which attend the Young-men, such as have attained to a strength of grace (whereby they are made conformable to Christ, who was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin) will be of great encouragement to many in their present warfare.

As to the last Estate of Christians, viz. of Fathers, the Author hath discoursed very little, who though those that were acquainted with him, might judge him to have attained to that degree of Christianity, which lies in the highest experience of the mysteries of the Gospel yet he through modesty leaves that for others to supply and make up.

And so you have the first remains of that good man, who was serviceable to Christ in his Generation.

The spiritual advantage of Christians is all that is aimed at in the publication thereof, and accordingly is recommended to them by the Authors very good friends,

James Barron.

John Collins.

# CHRIST'S SCHOOL

CONSISTING OF BABES, CHILDREN, YOUNG-MEN AND  
FATHERS.

## I.

The Introduction. Where the general design and scope of the Treatise is laid down, asserted; cleared and applied.

That there are degrees of grace, and consequently that there are Believers, Christians or Saints of several sizes and degrees is granted by all; but how many sorts there are, and whether they are to be ranked into several and distinct classes, ranks, orders, forms or degrees (as different States) seems not to be so clear to some pious and learned men: which yet with submission I humbly offer, and hope to evince and demonstrate by the Scriptures light, which is the light of the Spirit by whom they were indicted.

That there are Lambs and Sheep, John 21.15, 16, 17. That there are strong and weak, Rom. 15.1. That there are spiritual and Babes, 1 Cor. 3.1. Or perfect and Babes, as 'tis Hebr. 5.13, 14. The Scriptures quoted do undeniably assert, and experience confirms it: and why there may not be more than two sorts, I can see no reason to disbelieve, but there seems to me a great deal of reason for the belief of it; The Apostle John naming three (Fathers, Young-men and

Children) and the Apostle Paul names a fourth, viz. Babes; for though they be as carnal, yet they are in Christ, 1 Cor. 3.1, but a degree below Children; as I think to make apparent in the following discourses.

To clear the way, I shall examine this Text, 1 John 2.12, 13, 14. Which whether it denote and assert distinct Classes or kinds of Saints is yet the question. But I hope to evince that these are three distinct ranks and slates of Saints, not with reference to their natural years, or the time of their standing (as to conversion and profession) but with reference to their proper and peculiar attainments, whether elder or younger for years and standing. Indeed the Scripture doth not measure them by that, but by this rule; or else there could not be any gradual Apostasy in any Saints, as there was in them of the Church of Ephesus, Revel. 2, or any standing (as 'twere) at a stay, as it seems to be with them, Heb. 5. So that their measure is to be taken by their attainments and proficiency, not by their years; (for though with the ancient there (usually) is wisdom, yet gray hairs are not always wise; which made Elihu speak as he did, Job 32.7, 9. The wise are always old, but the old are not always wise:) 'tis not how long they have stood, or how many years they have been in Christ, but their enjoyments, experiences, proficiency and fruitfulness that denominates one above another: some may be in Christ before others, who yet may be out-grown by others, that came in long after them; as most of the elder Disciples were out-grown by Paul a younger Brother, a Post-hume, one born out of due time (as he speaks of himself) who yet labored more abundantly than they all: so, many that are last shall be first. Some that are young for years, may be Fathers for experiences and attainments, when others that are old and aged as to time, may be but young and raw in knowledge and practice. Some are but children when they are old, and others may be men, when they are but young; as Timothy was, who knew



the Scriptures from (the cradle and from the breast as 'twere, or from) a child. Some are but like David, a youth and stripling, and yet of more true valor and worth than Goliath who was a man of war from his youth, that I may speak by allusion. The Apostle tells us of some that for their time (if that had been the measure) might have been Teachers of others (might have attained to a great degree) but were such Punies and Babes, that they needed to learn the A. B. C. of Religion; they were dull of hearing, had very weak stomachs and an ill digestion, Heb. 5. From whence this clearly and roundly follows, that a man, many men, may be of long standing in Christ, may be old (Fathers) for years, and yet be but Babes for understanding and ability to digest the strong meat of the Gospel: Whereas other men, that are but Babes for time, but newly-new-born, may be men in Christ, as Paul was in a little time, according to that phrase of his, 2 Cor. 12.2, if I may so apply it: and out of the mouths of such (for their time but Babes and Suckling's) there may be more perfect praise, than from elder Persons, men of many years standing.

'It is true, gray hairs found in a way of righteousness are a Crown of glory (and usually the elder the wine is, the better) and as to many of God's Saints, their works have been more at last than at first, and their latter end better than their beginning: Father Abraham, Father Job, Father Moses, Father Paul, and some others were Fathers not only for age but grace: in Act. 21.16, there is mention made of one Mnason, an old Disciple, who was (another Gaius ) an entertainer of the Apostles and Saints; but he is not called an old Disciple merely (as I suppose) for his years or age, but that he was as much a Disciple as he was old (from his new birth) his Discipleship, saith and obedience ran along and kept pace with his age, that as he grew in years, so he did in grace; he was an old Disciple, a good proficient in the School of Christ. 'Twas a great commendation to Andronicus and Junia, not only that they were in Christ before Paul, but that they

were of note, eminent, signal and of renown, viz. for their religion, Rom. 16.7. Glorious (because gracious) things are spoken of old Zechariah and Elizabeth, Luk. 1.6, 7. And 'twas the great praise of the Church of Thyatira, that her last works were more than her first. But though it were thus with some, 'twas not so with all that were of equal age and standing with these: for some were ever learning and learnt but little, ever doing yet did but little; the widows mite was more than theirs that cast in much; Philadelphia, that had but little strength did effectually do more, than Ephesus, of whom greater things are spoken, Heb. 3.8, with ch. 2.2, 3. Every man in Christ is not a man in Christ Jesus, but a child it may be, or perhaps but a Babe. In this Text of Johns, here were Children that were Fathers, Children that were Young-men, and Children that were but Children: and some others are but Babes, for under these four heads all are contained.

To clear this a little more let us consider each Verse a part and briefly: verse. 12. I write to you little Children, <H&G>, which is not the same word we render little children, Vers. 13, that is <H&G>; but this word <H&G>, ver. 12, is common to them all, to Fathers, to Young-men and to children, and so Mr. Cotton understands it, on Verse 12, and Grotius, so doth Zanchi, nominee, <H&G>, i.e., filiorum omnes veri Christiani, quod per ministerium Apostolorum regeniti sint Christo & Deo. In or under this name are comprehended all true Christians, because by the Ministry of the Apostles they were begotten (or born) again to Christ and to God; so again on Verse 13. Nom & Commune omnibus Christianis nomen, <H&G>. 'It is a name common to all Christians. So that this word notes not any distinct state as the other three do, viz. Fathers, Young-men, and <H&G>, little Children, all which words the Apostle useth but this once and that in this distribution, except <H&G> once more, Verse 18, but the other, viz. <H&G> he useth seven or eight times in common to them

all: and accordingly the privilege annexed (forgiveness of sins) is in common to them all, to the youngest as well as the eldest, to the Child and Babe as well as to the Young-man and Father-Saint; though it be not known by nor manifested to all alike.

If it should be here inquired why the Apostle useth the diminutive so often, and speaks to them as (not <H&G> Children but <H&G>) little Children; I Answer that it may be an allusion to the manner and custom of the Jewish Teachers, which was to call their Scholars Ketamin, little ones: yet withal it notes with what tenderness he loved them, and how dear they were unto him, as having begotten them by the preaching of the Gospel, as Paul did the Corinthians, whom he calls beloved Sons, 1 Cor. 4.14, 15, and the Galatians, whom he calls by this name, little Children, Gal. 4.19, and as our Savior did his Disciples, John 13.33, in conformity to whom John (who was the Beloved and loving Disciple) useth this word.

But I proceed to Verse 13, 14, where we have three distinct Classes or States of Christians, with the proper and peculiar Attainment which is the character of each of them. 1. The Fathers, who had the knowledge (the most exact and perfect knowledge) of him who was from the beginning, that is Christ Jesus, as 1 John 1.1, with John 1.1, 2. The ancient of days, the everlasting Father, as Christ is called, Dan. 7.9, 13, 22, and Isa. 9.6. Who is the same today as yesterday and will be forever, Heb. 13.8. The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is and which was and which is to come Jehovah, Rev. 1.8. 'It is q. d. you are well acquainted with his several dispensations and workings from first to last. And this is repeated, Vers. 14. Secondly, The Young-men of whom 'tis said, that they have overcome the wicked one; and Verse 14, that they were strong, that the word of God did abide in them, (viz. in strength, like Josephs bow, Gen. 49.24, and) that they had overcome the wicked one.

Thirdly, The little Children, of whom 'tis said that they have known the Father; viz. as their heavenly Father who hath loved them.

This is the sum of these Verses; which Interpreters generally understand to be spoken of all the orders of Christians, and that there are no other than what are comprehended under these three names, viz. that all Saints are either little Children, or Young-men, or Father-Saints: but with submission I conceive that there is a fourth, inferior to, or younger than the youngest of these, who are (and are called) Babes, who do not (as such and as yet) know the Father; as the little Children are said to do. Mr. Cotton doth render <H&G>, Babes, as the vulgar Latin doth, *infantes*; but saith Beza, <H&G>, *inferius quiddam significat quam <H&G>*, and saith Erasmus, *Insans a Babe is by the Greeks called <H&G> aut <H&G>*; by which last word the Babe-Saint is expressed in Scripture, again and again, and is of a lower form than the little Children, as God willing shall be made to appear hereafter, when I come to handle the Characteristical differences of each state. Of which for the present I hint only this in the General, that the Fathers are so called (whether elder or younger for years) from their great experience and wisdom, having gone through each of the inferior States; the Young-men are denominated from their strength (of faith) whereby they overcome the evil or wicked one; the little Children have their Character from knowing the Father, which notes a state of assurance; and the Babes from eating milk, the first principles, viz. repentance, saith, &c. with desires after growth; all which is evident from the several places of Scripture, where these distinct Classes and forms are mentioned, and that under these very names, all which we shall examine God willing in the following treatise.

Having thus given a general account of my intendment and design, viz. to treat of the several Classes and forms (if I may so speak) of

Saints, I shall for the present, make some general application of the whole, and speak a little first to all, and then to everyone, of these. To all. 1. Love one another without dissimulation, unfeignedly, and with a pure heart fervently, 1 Pet. 1.22, but love not the world nor the things of the world, viz. the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, 1 John 2.15, 16, to both these (that preceding, and this succeeding the Text) doth the word I write unto you, and I have written to you refer. He obligeth all of them to these two things, because their sins were forgiven them, Verse 12, and each of them by their particular privileges; viz. the Fathers, because they have known him that is from the beginning: the Young-men, because they are strong, and are Conquerors: the Children, because they have known the Father: q. d. seeing these things are so, love one another as I said before, and love not the world, which is that I now say.

2. Let none measure himself by another, nor make comparisons either for lifting up or casting down. Some of the Corinthians were apt to be puffed up because of their supposing themselves to have attained more than others, which is an ill sign; for though they were high in gifts and parts, they were low in grace, for they were but Babes; and therefore the Apostle pulls down their Plumes with this quick interrogation, Who makes thee (whoever thou be) who makes thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory (pride thyself and boast) as if thou didst not receive it? Grace gives us no leave to be proud, nor to despise undervalue others. And on the other hand there are some poor souls (and I believe there were such among the Corinthians, as I shall clear by and by) that are apt to despond, when they compare and measure themselves by others; when a Dwarf stands by a Giant, a man of low stature by a tall one, as David by Goliath, he seems comparatively to be nobody; but yet is (for kind) a man, a perfect man for all that, or notwithstanding the great and vast

difference that is between the one and the other. Many poor souls when they see how they are outstripped (in knowledge, faith, love and patience) by some that came into Christ long after themselves, are apt to think that they are no Saints, because they are not such Saints; and this seems to be the case of some of the Corinthians, as I newly hinted, which will appear from 1 Cor. 12.15, &c. There were some who were but as the foot (both in state and sense) the very lowest member of the body, and were therefore too prone and inclinable to think that they were not of the body: for thus the Apostle speaks to them, If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? No, no, you should by no means say so, 'tis a mere non sequitur. So if thou shouldst say, because I am not a Father, I am not a Child of God; it doth not follow, for thou mayest be a Young-man; if not that, yet a little Child; if not that, yet a Babe in Christ; begin lowest, do not stretch thyself beyond thy measure. Nor let any be proud if they are gone beyond others, to be puffed up and despise the weak. But,

3. Let everyone be thankful and bless God for what he hath attained, be it more or less: Are any of you, Cedars in Lebanon, when others are but Shrubs, as the Hyssop on the wall, or as the lilies of the valley? Are any of you (like Saul) taller than your Brethren by the head and shoulders? Are you crowned with the gray-hairs of wisdom and righteousness? Have ye overcome the wicked one? Have ye lain in the Fathers bosom? Give God the Glory, who gave you the Grace. Are others of you but of late admission? Or but of little and low stature? Are ye but Babes in Christ? Yet despise not the day of small things, let none of his mercies or consolations be small to you, who are less than the least of them all. 'It is great mercy to be one of Christ's, though but one of his little ones. Our Lord Jesus chose

twelve to be with him, as his family, whereof three were (e secretioribus) admitted to be his confidants, Peter, James and John, and of these three, John was the darling; he was the Disciple whom Jesus loved with a peculiar love, and was admitted to lie in his bosom: now if thou be not a John, yet thank him, if thou be a Peter or a James; if not of them, yet that thou art one of the twelve, but not Judas; if not one of the twelve to be with him, yet one of the seventy (for he afterward enlarged the number) to do him any service abroad. Bless him that thou art a member of his body, though but an ear or a foot: that thou art a star in his firmament, though not of the first magnitude, but the very least of all. David had his several Worthies, and the lowest was honorable, though he attained not to the first three, 2 Sam. 23.23, and among the thirty-seven, Uriah the Hittite was the last, Verse 39. Though thou be the last, yet 'tis mercy to be one of the thousands of Israel. Though thou do not sit at the Kings table, yet bless him if thou be a Dore-keeper to behold his goings out and comings in. Bless him that thou art one of the little flock, though thou be not the Principal, or the choice, but the least of it. If thou have learnt the A. B. C. of Godliness, the first principles and elements of the Doctrine of Christ, bless him for it; thou knowest not how soon he may teach thee to spell out, yea to read distinctly the more perfect lessons, that thy joy may be full: he takes notice of the kindness of thy Child-hood, of thy lispings and essays to speak and go, and he will perhaps take thee by the hand and teach thee to go from form to form, till thou come to be one of the uppermost in the School of Christ, and then he will remove and translate thee into the University (the holy Academy,) where the Spirits of just men made perfect will bid thee welcome and be glad of thy Company: then shalt thou be of the Society of true Christians, of them that are in Christ indeed, and shalt live with Christ forever, which is best of all. At present, if thou be not worth thousands (rich in grace) yet bless him that thou art worth anything, worthy of his calling, and

made meet to partake of the inheritance of the Saints in light, Coloss. 1.12, by being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son, Verse 13. Though he have not made thee a Father, yet bless him that he hath made thee a Son, though as yet but a Babe and under age: he that blesseth God for a little, is in the ready way to be blest with more. Therefore again,

4. Let everyone (that is not) aim to be a Father, and everyone that is (a Father) aim at being more so; for as there is a growth from one kind to another, so there is a growth from one degree to another: aim at and press forward to the highest state and utmost degree of perfection, as Saint Paul did, and thereby shows others the way, Philip. 3.12, —17. Be not content with being Babes, but grow from thence to be little Children, and from thence to be Young-men; and from thence to be Fathers; and so to be perfect men in Christ Jesus, Ephes. 4.13, —16. Go from strength to strength till ye appear before God in Zion, which is above. Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 3.18. He had said immediately before, take heed, that ye fall not from: your own steadfastness, but lest ye should think, it enough not to be Apostates, or to be steadfast, he presently and in the same breath subjoins, but grow in grace, &c. So 'tis not only be steadfast and immovable, but abound, yea be always abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. 15.58, and the Apostle Peter would not have us think that to be new-born and so to partake of a Divine nature is sufficient, but saith he, besides this add to your faith, &c. And if these things be in you (is that enough? No, but if these things be in you) and abound, then an abundant entrance shall be administered to you into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1.4, —11. Do not content yourself merely with so much grace as will bring you into heaven (the haven of happiness,) but that you may enter in with full sails, with a plerophory and full assurance.



5. Let not the weak envy (though they may emulate) the strong, nor let the strong despise the weak, but be helpers of their faith and joy. Poor Babes are apt to suffer their eye to be evil, because God is good, to grow sullen, if others speed better than themselves; but these things ought not to be so: for God may do with his own what he pleaseth, and give to everyone as he will. Many of this form are like David's Brother Eliab, who charged his inquisitive boldness upon the pride of his heart, and considered not that 'twas of the Lord, who had chosen and preferred him before himself who was the elder Brother, 1 Sam. 17.28, with 1 Sam. 16.6, 7. Which haply was (*alta mente repostum*) the very reason of the grudge and pique against his Brother David. Saul also eyed him with an evil eye, when his Victories increased, and the ten thousands were attributed to David, and but thousands to himself, 1 Sam. 18.5, —9. Thus 'tis with weak Christians, they are apt to envy their superiors and betters the very grace of God: but let envying's as well as wrath be laid aside, which the Apostles speaks to Babes, 1 Pet. 2.1, 2. On the other hand, let not the strong despise the weak, but bear with and bear their infirmities, which is to fulfil the Law of love and of Christ, Gal. 6.2, 3, with Rom. 15.1,—7, this honor is due to these weaker Vessels, for God hath bestowed it upon them, he hath so tempered the body that the hand cannot say to the eye, I have no need of thee, nor again the head ('tis strange, for the head is Christ; yet his Church is his fullness, Ephes. 1.23, much less can any of the members) say to the feet, I have no need of you, nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be most feeble, are (not only convenient, but) necessary. And not only we do, or ought to give, but God himself doth give more abundant honor to that part which lacketh, 1 Cor. 1.12.21, —24. 'It is said, Prov. 22.2. The rich and poor meet together (in the same body) and the Lord is the maker of them all: he that made him poor, and thee rich, could have made him rich and thee poor: and as 'tis now, the rich need the poor as much as the poor need the rich; therefore

despise not the poor and low. Job tells us that he despised not (nor durst to despise) the cause of his Man-servant; no, nor of his Maid-servant; no, though they contended with him; for as he saith he could not Answer it to God, who made and fashioned his Servant in the womb, as he did himself, Job 31.13, —15. Excellent arguments!

Well then, let not the Babe envy the Young-men, &c. In a great court many times there is a special favorite, but all the rest are apt to envy him, though they also are in the same court, because they are not favored and honored as he is: Everyone would be the only one. So too often in the Court of Heaven upon Earth, i.e., the Church, Jesus Christ the King of Saints takes one or other (as John) to be his bosom favorite, and truly the other ambitious Courtiers cannot bear this, they look upon such a person with an evil eye: as Peter did upon John, as you may read John 21. When Christ Jesus had told Peter not only what he must do, but suffer also, (in relation to which he makes sure of his love first, for one that loves not, or loves little, will not do or suffer much or willingly, yet after this being told of his sufferings) and nothing of that nature said concerning John, he seems to take it ill, and is not able to forbear asking the Question, and what shall this man do? Which was a spice of envy, for Christ takes him up for it with an angry, what is that to thee? Joh. 21.15-22. When some poor souls, Babes that they are! See Children-Saints made so much of, that they enjoy the light of God's countenance, and lie in his bosom all the day long: and others Youngmen-Saints making great conquests and obtaining victories over temptations; and when they hear Father-Saints tell long stories of their ancient acquaintance with Christ through every turn and dispensation, and what variety of experiences they have had in all conditions; and withal, how little joy, victory, experience, &c. they themselves have, they are apt to envy and regret the others enjoyments and glory. So perhaps on the other side, when the Fathers hear the younger ones speak of experiences, how they

lisp and speak but dimidiata verba, half words, and see how short they fall of their attainments; when the Young-men see how the Children are baffled and led into captivity by temptations; when the little Children see how ignorant the Babes are, and that they know not their Father: at such times the rich and strong are apt to deride, or at least to undervalue the poor and weak as unworthy of their company and converse. 'It is but too common with them that know much to know it too much; and for them that are wise and rich, though but in their own eyes so many times, to have very low thoughts, and to speak as meanly of their inferiors: but it should not be so with Saints, if it be, 'tis their infirmity, not to give it a worse name: let not therefore him that eateth strong meat, despise him that eateth milk, nor let him that eateth but milk, envy him that eateth strong meat; that I may allude something to what the Apostle speaks in another case, Rom. 14.3.

6. Seeing there are several degrees of Saints, let all be willing that each may have a share and portion at a Sermon, or in an Epistle, as here in 1 Job. 2.13, 14, or at least that some may be spoken to at one time and some at another, for we cannot speak to all at once. Some men must have patience at a Doal, for all cannot be served at one time: so it is in this case. Some when they come to a Sermon, think nothing worth the hearing, but what is spoken to their case; and truly almost so many minds as men: if it be not a discourse for humbling, saith one; for consolation, saith another; for exhortation, saith a third, 'tis nothing worth: Thus one is for Paul, another for Apollo, and a third for Cephass: some for Barnabas, and others for Boanerges: some for the Law, and others for free grace: some for Faith, and others for Works. Fathers are for antiquities; Young-men for wars; Children for love-tokens; and Babes for milk: But, my beloved, all should wait for their meat and portion in due season. And,

7. Everyone should endeavor to make the best use of what they hear and read. All Scripture is profitable, and is written for everyone's learning. Are Fathers spoken to, 'tis of use to the younger sort to provoke them to aspire and endeavor after such attainments and experiences; and therefore the Apostle resolved to go on and to treat of perfection (strong meat and doctrine) though his Hearers were but Babes, Heb. 6.1. Are the younger sort spoken to, 'tis of use to Fathers, to call to remembrance what once they were; for such were some of you: And also to stir them up to thankfulness, that God hath advanced them to a state, of which it may be said, such honor have not all the Saints: and to say as David did, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Sam. 7.18. I have heard of an eminent person, who had been with others at a Sermon, and when some complained and seemed to be offended, because the Preacher was a Boanerges, and threatened wrath and the flashes of Hell fire to sinners, he told them 'twas one of the sweetest and most comfortable Sermons that he had heard of a long time, for said he, I bless God I am delivered from it all. This is to make a good use of a Sermon. Do you that are Saints hear Sermons Preached to sinners, to show the misery of their condition? Then bless God that hath converted you. Do you that are sinners hear Sermons Preached to Saints, to show their privileges and happiness? Then pray to God to make you Saints also. Thus all and everyone may make a good use of every Sermon they hear. Do not be offended or take pet, and say, I had as good to have stayed at home, what doth this concern me? Oh let not any say so. Concern thee? There is no truth, no doctrine but doth more or less concern thee, be thou a sinner or a Saint; be thou a Father, Young-man, little Child, or Babe. And this brings me to speak particularly a few words to each.

1. To Fathers, I entreat you, (for so I am commanded to do, 1 Tim. 5.1.) I entreat you to lay aside childish things, and let it not be said of

any of you, that you were once a man but twice a child. 'It is not comely for aged persons to play the child, or to play with children. Saith the Apostle, When I was a Child, then indeed I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child: but when I became a man I put away childish things, 1 Cor. 13.11. The aged men and women should be sober and grave, teaching and giving examples to the younger sort, Tit. 2.2-4. So Paul propounds himself, Phil. 3.17, with 20. Brethren, be followers of me, and mark them that walk so, as you have us for an example, for our conversation is in Heaven. Which (it seems was written by him when he was Paul the aged) it being when he was prisoner at Rome, and then he stiles himself Paul the aged as well as a prisoner, Philem. 9. Fathers and old men love to be telling stories, so do you read Lectures of your experiences to the younger sort, and tell them (as David did his Children,) what God hath done for your soul. Tell them how God converted you, how God carried you on step by step, from Faith to Faith, and from one degree to another till you became Fathers in Israel. I might add also, disdain not to learn, for St. John writes to you Fathers also concerning brotherly love, and not loving of the world, as if you had not perfectly learnt these things. But,

2. To Young-men I say, Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the Word that abideth in you; acquit yourselves still like the good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, as Paul speaks to the young-man, 2 Tim. 2.1, 3. And entangle not yourselves with the affairs of this life (the love of the world) that you may please him who hath chosen you to be Soldiers, Ver. 4. The Fathers are for counsel, but you young-men for War; they sit at stern, but you must fight; the glory of young-men is their strength: be strong then in Faith, for thence is your victory, by which you overcome the Devil and the World, Eph. 6.16. 1 Joh. 5 4-5, and flee youthful lusts, 2 Tim. 2.22. For they war against your souls, 1 Pet. 2.11. From these 'tis no cowardice but courage

(even in young-men, who are strong and Soldiers) to run and flee away.

Take heed of Pride also to which young and strong-men soldiers are very prone; young and strong men use to vapor and boast how they can cast the Bar, Vault, Leap and do seats of activity and arms, what victories they obtain: Well, though your marrow be in your bones (the Word of God abiding in you) yet be not listed up, for Pride goeth before a fall. A man's Pride shall bring him low, how high and strong soever he be, Prov. 29.23. And the helpers of Pride or strength shall stoop under him, because of God's anger, Job 9.13. For God resisteth the proud, therefore ye younger be clothed with humility, 1 Pet. 5.5.

3. To the Children-Saints I say, be obedient to your Father, whom you know and know him to be loving, and be loving to your brethren, whom you are to love for your Fathers sake; and whom if ye love not, you love not the Father, 1 Joh. 4.20, 21. 1 Joh. 5.1, 2. The Fathers are for knowledge, the young-men for strength, but you are for love: your state and age is proper for love.

4. To the Babe-Saints I say with the Apostle, 1 Pet. 2.1, 2. As new-born Babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, seeing ye have tasted (and as yet but tasted) that the Lord is gracious. Milk is your proper food, desires your proper Acts, growth that which is set before you as their end, and tasting, i.e., experience the provoking of your appetite and desire thereunto. Desire it then that you may grow thereby to a stronger constitution and higher Stature.

## II.

Several things premised for the further clearing and understanding of this Subject, before I speak to each Classis.

Having already given a general account of my intendment, I shall for the more clear and distinct proceeding, lay down several things as Pracognita necessary to be known before I handle each Classis or form by itself and a part. As,

1. There is a vast difference between the least or lowest of Saints, and the highest of men, that are but mere men and unconverted: between the worst of Saints (viz. Babes) and the best of men, viz. Philosophers, and Moral men. Socrates and Seneca, &c. are great instances how far men may go by Natures help; and Paul (who was called Saul) before his conversion, how far a man may go by the help of the Law, Phil. 3.6. And yet the least Saint, in the School of Christ, outgoes and surpasseth all these, 1 Cor. 1.18.—31, and 1 Cor. 2.6.—10, for he is taught of God, Matth. 11.25, and though he be but a Babe, yet he is in Christ, and though as carnal, yet not a carnal man, 1 Cor. 3.1, as all are that are not in Christ Jesus, and so new-creatures; Gold though but in the Ore exceeds the best of clay and earth: so a Babe-Saint, which is but Gold in the Ore, doth yet exceed and excel all other men, which are but clay and of the earth, earthly. The Philosophers tell us that the least Fly hath more of excellency in it than the highest Heavens, because 'tis a living thing, and moves from an internal principle of life, which they have not. And the wisest of men, Solomon tells us that a living Dog is better than a dead Lion: all which imports that life is the excellency of any being, and the more life the more excellency. Now men that are not converted are dead in sins wherein they walk, as the Prodigal was, Luk. 15.32, and all were,

Ephes. 2.1, 2, 3. And 'tis said of the Gentiles again, that they were alienated from the life God, Chap. 4.18. But the least, the Babe-Saint is quickened and made alive, for behold he breaths (Prayers) as 'twas said of Paul as soon as he was new-born, Acts 9.11. These Babes have life, yea life more abundantly, for in a measure and degree they partake of a Divine nature and life.

'It is upon this account (among others and in the first place) that the righteous is better than his Neighbor, viz. that is not righteous, Prov. 12.26. The least Saint is better than the best man in the Parish that is not a Saint. As our Savior said of John, That he was among them born of women one of the greatest, yet that he who was least in the Kingdom of God was greater than he, Matth. 11.11, so in an allusive sense I may say, that the least and lowest of Saints, born of God, is greater than the greatest that is but born of a Woman. They that believe in Jesus have this honor to be called (and to be) the Sons of God, who are born not of Blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; and surely they are most highly descended who are born from above, or of God. Joh. 1.12, 13, and Jam. 1.18. Of his own will begat he us, that we should be the first-fruits (i.e., the most excellent) of his creatures: For as manis greater than all the Creation of God (Angels excepted, Psal. 8.4.—8.) so of all men, the Saints are the first-fruits, and in some respect advanced beyond the Angels, Heb. 1.14. For the Angels are their attendants and servitors, yea they learn of the Church the manifold (or much varying) wisdom of God, Ephes. 3.10, and though Christ be head over them, yet he is not their head, as he is the head of the Church which is his Body, Ephes. 1.22, 23, and 5.23. The best of men are but men at best, but grace makes men more men than they were, and more than men.

2. As there is a great difference between Saints and men, so there is disparity between Saints and Saints; they (as the Stars) differ from



one another in glory: All Saints are excellent, but they are not all alike excellent, Psal. 16.3. All of them do virtuously, but some excel the rest. In the Body of man there are some members that are far more noble than others, there are principal and vital, and there are less principal and but accidental as to life, indeed all the members of Christ's body are vital and necessary, and yet some are more so than others; and as to their functions and operations do far excel the rest: as the eye doth the ear, the hand the foot, 1 Cor. 12. And the Apostle tells us, 2 Tim. 2.20. That in a great house (such is God's Church) there are vessels of Gold, and vessels of Silver, and also of wood and earth, some to honor and some to dishonor, which refers (not only to the difference that there is between common and special grace among men and Professors, as Rom. 9.21, but) to the true members of the body, as 1 Cor. 12.23, they are called less honorable: Now no man doubts but the vessels of Silver and Gold are more excellent and honorable than them of earth and wood. There are some that are but wooden-Saints, and but earthen-Saints, in comparison of some that are Silver and others that are golden-Saints: See and consider 1 Cor. 3.12, —15. Yet this I say also, that the highest of Saints doth not so far exceed or excel the lowest, as the lowest exceeds and excels the highest of men; for the Saints compared one with another differ but ( gradu ) gradually, but Saints and men do differ ( specie ) in kind: Gold in the Oare is not so much inferior to the most refined and pure Gold, as clay and earth is inferior to Gold in the Oare; that difference is but gradual, but this is specifical.

3. There is something common to all the Saints of what degree soever they be, viz. they are all born of God, all his Children, all taught of God from the greatest to the least, Heb. 8.11, with 1 Joh. 2.20, —27, which he speaks of the (<H&G>) little Children, to whom he last of all addressed his speech, v. 18. The Babe is in Christ Jesus as well as the Father, though not so well rooted and grounded in him, 1 Cor.

3.1. Col. 2.6, 7, their sins are forgiven alike, 1 Joh. 2.12, to be gracious is common to all, though some have more grace than others; as 'tis to all men to be rational, though some are more rational than others. Truth of Grace is common to all, though growth of Grace be (in some respects) more peculiar to some. They are all brethren, and are brought forth in the Image of God, and created according to him (or his likeness) in righteousness and holiness of truth: You may espy—the Fathers Image in the Babe his eye. Though they be but newly born, yet they are new-born and new creatures. In short and fine, they are all members of the Body, the foot as well as the hand, the ear as well as the eye, 1 Cor. 12. Though the Stars differ from one another in glory, yet they agree in this, that they are all of them Stars. The Fathers, the Young-men, the little Children, and the Babes also have this in common, that they are of God's Family, and of the household of Faith, the sons of God; they are all in Christ's School, though not all of one Form.

4. As there is something common to all, so there are some things proper and peculiar to each state; something proper to the Fathers, which cannot be said of the young-men; something proper to the young-men, which cannot be said of the little Children; something proper to the little Children, which cannot be said of the Babes; as there is something proper to the Babes which cannot be said of them that are not yet new-born; though there be too much in common with Babes and carnal men, they being not yet thoroughly cleansed from their blood and pollution, but are as carnal, and walk as men. There is something in the best Saints that may be found in everyone, but there is that in some that cannot be found in all. The Apostle gives these three Classes peculiar attributes; That of Fathers is Wisdom, that of Young-men is Valor, that of little Children is Love; and St. Paul tells us that the Babes eat but milk, i.e., they repent and believe (a little faintly) &c. to which St. Peter adds desires, as was

noted before from 1 Pet. 2.2. 'It is true indeed the highest and greatest contains the less, but not the less the greater, much less the greatest. The Father knows all the four states, for he hath past from a Babe to a little Child, from a little Child to a Young-man, and from thence to a Father. The Young-man knows three states, for he past from a Babe to a little Child, and from thence to a Young-man; the little Child knows but two states, being gone no further than from a Babe to a little Child; but the Babe is acquainted with only his own state (at present) and knows not what 'tis to be anything of what is proper to the other three; only this, he is passed from death to life, from being a sinner to being a Saint, though but a weak one. Of their several attainments and proper Characters I shall treat hereafter more particularly, if God permit, Heb. 6.3.

5. The disparity or difference that is between those Saints (as such) is not in their gifts but graces; and not in common but in special grace: No, nor only in accessories and complemental, but in principal and fundamental graces, proper to each state. 'It is not in their gifts but graces, for 'tis possible for persons to be full of and rich in gifts, yet poor in grace, as the Corinthians were, they came behind in no gift, 1 Ephes. 1.7, they were full, they were rich, they reigned as Kings; they were wise, strong, and honorable (at least in their own if not others esteem) 1 Ephes. 4.8, and 10, and yet were but Babes and as carnal, 1 Ephes. 3.1. And therefore the Apostle shows them a more excellent way than that of gifts, viz. grace, and in special the grace of Love, 1 Ephes. 12.31, and 13.1, —3. Apollo was a man very eloquent, mighty in the Scriptures, and being instructed in the way of the Lord, was fervent in Spirit, and taught zealously, diligently and boldly, yet needed to have the way of God expounded to him more perfectly, Acts 18.24, —26. And this was done not only by a man, Aquila, but a woman Priscilla; Apollo was a man in parts, but a woman (it seems) was more a man in grace. The Corinthians that came behind in no

gift, yet came behind in and fell short of many a grace. So that the measure of a man's excellency is not to be taken by what gifts of knowledge and eloquence he hath, but by what grace he acts.

Again, this measure is not to be taken from common, but from special and saving grace; not from profession but practice. There is common Faith, and the Faith of God's Elect; there were foolish as well as wise Virgins; are seeming as well as truly religious persons; the stony ground hearers made a fair show in the flesh; and the thorny brought forth fruit, but not to perfection: Which is an argument that they knew not the root of the matter, or the grace of God in truth, for that brings forth ripe fruit, Col. 1.6. There were some that through the knowledge of Christ had escaped the pollutions of the world, yet licked up their vomit (and therefore their nature was not changed, but they were Dogs still) and wallowed again in the mire, and therefore though they were washed, yet were Sows still, and not really converted so as to have a saving work upon them, 2 Pet. 2.20, —22. Surely, saith the Apostle, they that went out from us, were not of us (but a bastardly brood) 1 Joh. 2.19, where he speaks of them as distinguished from the [us] which word [us] he mentions five times by way of distinction, and the word [they] six times in that one Verse.

Yet again, the measure is not to be taken from accessory graces, which conduce chiefly to the well-being, the comfort and refreshment (or if I may so speak) the recreation of Christians, as Joy, Ecstasy, Rapture, &c. but from the graces which are essential and proper to each state; as wisdom and much experience is for Fathers; strength and the Word abiding for Young-men; Love for Children; and repentance, &c. for Babes. Now as any person doth act the substantial and fundamental graces of any state, such is his

denomination; and as he passeth from one to another, such is his advance and preferment.

6. As this difference is to be measured by graces wrought and acted, so 'tis made by the grace of God working and actuating these graces in us. 'It is grace that makes the difference not only between Saints and sinners, but between Saints and Saints: that it makes it between men and men in taking one and making him a Saint, and leaving the other in his sins, is clear from Matth. 11.25. Rom. 9.13, —16, and ver. 21, —24, with many other places. And 'tis as clear that grace and the good pleasure of God makes the difference between Saints also, that the one hath more grace and improveth grace more than another, 1 Cor. 4.7, and 12.11, —18. Indeed, God worketh all things according to (no counsel but) the counsel of his Will, and who shall say to him, Why hast thou made me thus? His wind bloweth, as where, so how, it listeth; and as he showeth mercy to whom he pleaseth, so 'tis what and how much he pleaseth; the first and the after increase is of God: he gives five Talents to one, two to another, and but one to a third; and 'tis not the man but the Talent that brings in the gain, as the Apostle, when he had said, I live, corrects himself with a not I, but Christ liveth in me, and my life is by Faith, Gal. 2.20. And when he had said, He labored more abundantly than they all, he seems to recall it, and saith, Not I but the grace of God which was bestowed upon me, and was with me, viz. to assist and enable me, 1 Cor. 15.10. Luke 19.16. And 'tis observable how Paul alters his language, when he speaks of what he did in a state of nature, and what he did in a state of grace: then he attributes all to himself, I was this, and I did this, (he was always a great proficient) I profited more in the Jews religion, than many of my contemporaries that were of my standing, Gal. 1.14. But when he is converted, though he labored more than any, and outwent his Seniors, yet he is not arrogant and assuming, but modest and thankful, Not I, but the grace of God that was with

me, q.d. Though by nature I was forward and zealous, yet as to this work and labor, I have reason to attribute it and pay my gratitude's not to nature but to grace.

Well then, as 'tis of grace that one is taken and another left, so 'tis of grace that one is promoted and advanced more than another; that John lieth in his bosom; that Paul grows so fast; that he increaseth with the increase of God, is of God, and of the grace of God; that one should be a Father, and another, who is may be, was in Christ before him, should be but a Babe still, is of grace. One would think wise men should know most, yet by grace Babes are wiser, Matth. 11.25. That strong men should do most, and yet the weak do more, 1 Cor. 1.25, — 31. That the Children of the Kingdom should not enter, but Publicans and Harlots should, is a difference of graces making. And when in the Body, that this should be an Eye, that an Ear, this an Fland, that but a Foot, is because God hath set the members in the Body, everyone as it pleased him. That this is a Babe and but a Babe (and so of the rest) 'tis even so Father for it seemeth good in thy sight, 'tis thy Will and pleasure it should be so. And yet beside this,

7. God hath great and glorious ends in having people of several sizes and degrees in his Church, several members in the Body, and several Classes and Forms in the School of Christ. Though God be not bound to give an account of any of his matters, yet he is pleased to be so condescending as to vouchsafe to do it. As everything is beautiful in its season, so in its place. When God was about to erect the material temple, he made men and things fit on purpose; there were Stones and Timber as well as Gold, and Vessels of several sorts and sizes; some men wrought in Gold, some in purple and blew; some had one office and employment and some another. So when he erected a spiritual house and building (his Church, the Body of Christ) he did, and continueth to do the like, but far more gloriously, that as then so

now, everyone may speak of his glory, or (as 'tis in the Margent) every whit may utter glory, viz. to him, to whom 'tis due, Psal. 29.9. To this the Apostle alludes, when he saith, Ephes. 2.21. In whom, i.e., in Christ Jesus the whole building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy Temple in the Lord. So Col. 2.19. From the Head, viz. Christ, all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And more fully, Eph. 4.16. From whom (the head—Christ) the whole body fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body to the edifying of itself in Love. By all which we see with what curiosity and exactness of Art (may I so speak) God hath ordered every part in relation to the beauty and perfection of the whole: Here is Beauty, Harmony, Communion, Edification, all met together.

The more pieces there are in any work drawn into a union, the more admirable is that work. When the Queen of Sheba saw the House that Solomon had built, &c. there was no more spirit in her, she was wrapped with admiration, 1 King. 10.4, 5. Much more is it matter of transport to see the variety and unity of the House of God! This made the first workmanship of God so glorious, that he brought together and united so many Atoms of dust into the Body of a man; to frame such a curious piece out of dust, was worthy of a behold and wonder. And 'tis no less a beauty that's drawn by God himself, but a far greater in the second Creation; especially as to the whole Body-mystical, made up of such different Members, as Fathers, Young-men, little Children, and Babes, all united to so glorious a Head, as Christ is, and called his fullness. That in Music so many several sounds should melt into one; and in Painting so many lines and colors should conspire to make one Face, is admired even by Artists; but alas! What's Art to Nature? And what's Nature to Grace? What

Body was ever like to the Body of Christ, so fitly framed together?  
But,

In 1 Cor. 12, the Apostle gives us a more particular account of God's design herein and tells us that there is not one unnecessary member, no not the most feeble, 1 Cor. 12.22. And if these have such abundant honor bestowed upon them, what is the honor of the comely parts that have no need? Vers. 23. No need? What though they need not what the other parts do, yet have they no need of one another? Yes surely, for God hath so tempered the Body, and hath so set the Members, That the Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of thee: Nor the Head to the Feet (Oh stange!) I have no need of you, Vers. 21. There is as much need of the Foot as the Hand, of the Ear as the Eye, and of the Smelling as of Seeing and Hearing, (Vers. 15, 16, 17.) to make the Body complete, for if there were but one sort of members, it were nobody, Vers. 19. But what's the end of all this variety and disparity? 'Tis Vers. 25, 26, that there should be no schism or division in the body; but that the members should have the same care one of another (as if it were for themselves, Heb. 13.3, as if the case were your own, for so it may be) and that if one member suffer, all the members may suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the rest may rejoice with it. There is such a mutual assistance resulting from this united variety, that 'tis far better not only for the whole, but for each one, than if they were everyone for themselves (as the world is) and were to be concerned for none else. Woe to him that is alone without the Society and Sympathy of others; but what an happifying communion do the Babes desires, the little Children's love, the Young-men's strength, and the Fathers wisdom, I say what an happifying communion do these make in relation to one another! And that these may the better contribute to each other, God embodies them, as 1 Cor. 12.27, it there follows.



What alas! Should the weak do, were there not some stronger to bear their infirmities? Rom. 15.1. What should an overtaken one do, if there were not some spiritual ones to restore him, and set him in joint again with (a Ladies hand, yea with) a spirit of meekness? Gal. 6.1. And this they are obliged to do as if they were in their stead and condition, considering themselves, that either they have been, or may be tempted, and therefore should bear one another's burden. Yea, I may add also what would the elder sort do with all their strength and knowledge, if there were not others to be strengthened and taught by them, for scire tuum nihil est nisi te scire hoe sciat alter, the good of knowledge and experience is not only in being possessed of it, but in communicating it: the design of such men's having more grace than others is not only for their own salvation (less would do that) but for others edification also, as gifts so great degrees of grace are given <H&G> for a common good. As Paul was converted not merely to save him, but that he might be an example to them that should believe hereafter, 1 Tim. 1. So in his tribulations and temptations he was comforted, not only for his own support, but for the consolation and salvation of others, that he might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he was comforted of God, 2 Cor. 1.3, — 6, in which exercise he was not a little conversant, 2 Cor. 11.28, 29.

Thus then you see that this body is so compact that the communion between the members is lively, sympathizing and assistant, as if it were every one's own case. This indeed is the excellency of this great piece of God's work, that all the members are so jointed, that if you touch one all the rest feel it, and have a sense of it, as the Head also hath if any of his members be abused, Acts 9.4.5. There are many carved and other painted pieces that please the Eye to look upon them, but have no life nor sense, if you touch one part, the rest are not concerned; but in this body, they rejoyce together and suffer

together according to the good or evil any members meet withal. If but a Toe be trodden on, the Head feels it, and cries out, Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me? If Peter be in Prison, the Church is at Prayers: the members of this body are partners in joy and sorrow; if they laugh, 'tis together; if they weep, 'tis together, like twins in one. As each member contributes to the making up and edification of the whole, Ephes. 4.16. So each partakers of the enjoyments or sufferings of the whole or any part. And to this purpose God hath framed (thus harmoniously and admirably) this body, made up of these members, Babes, little Children, Young-men and Fathers, all of whom are necessary and assistant to the edification and perfection of the whole Structure.

### III.

A further continuation of the Praecognita, things to be premised.

8. ALL these ranks and states, and each of them have a measure to which they are appointed and a degree wherein they are fixed. The Foot is fixed to its place and measure, so are the rest of the members; so 'tis in this body (though with this difference that some, who yet are Babes, may be little Children and so go on from degree to degree, yet) there is constantly these fixed states of Babes, Children, &c. so that they who are appointed to be but Babes, go no higher; and so of Children, that come not to be Young-men; and Young-men that come not to be Fathers. Though I cannot say, this or that person is fixed to be a Babe, a little Child, &c. and shall be no other; yet I can say that the state of a Babe, &c. is fixed, and that they who are appointed

thereunto proceed no further. Some die young, as Jeroboams Son, who run his race as soon as he could go almost. The Thief on the Cross died almost in the moment (or hour) wherein he was new born, and yet might have more grace (and be of a higher degree) than some that were converted before him, and lived longer after it. God saith in this case as to the Sea, Thus far shalt thou go and no further: As he appoints the times and habitations, so their estates and riches to, which (as 'tis said of their days) they cannot pass. There is the measure of every part, Ephes. 4.16, and the measure of the Stature, Vers. 12, and of the gift of Christ, Vers. 7, of Faith, Rom. 2.3. And as God hath appointed who shall be members, so also what growth each of these members shall attain to, for they increase with the increase of God, viz. of his appointment as well as blessing and production, Col. 2.19, as all Christ's members were written in God's Book, so the growth of them to; they are not to be all of the same stature, but according to the measure, that is allotted to them: some live and die Babes, &c.

9. Everyone shall have grace suitable and sufficient to his state and degree: The Father for his, the Young-man for his, and so of the rest. God will seed them all with the food of their allowance, or food convenient for them, to allude to that of Agur, Prov 30.8. A Babe shall have Babes grace, Babes food and raiment. Babes allowance and portion, and so shall all the rest have what is suitable to and sufficient for them. That which will fit and suffice one, will not another, but the God of all grace (of all sorts and degrees) will sit and furnish them all. As our Fathers according to the flesh dispose of and to their Children according to their age and capacity, so doth the Father of spirits his Children.

As to Talents, The Lord gave to every man according to his ability, or faculty, as Erasmus, or as Dr. Hammond in his Paraphrase, what was

competent for that employment, place, office, exigence of business entrusted to him, and agreeable to his capacity. In case of temptation, he will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, 1 Cor. 10.13. In case of duties, he lays on them nothing but what is necessary (to their state and condition) Act. 15.28. Our Savior would not put new Wine into old Bottles, i.e. he would not put his Disciples on Fasting, which was at that time a duty too hard for them, Matth 9.15, —17. He would not lay men's duties on Babes or Children; no, he hath a special tenderness for his little ones, he (as Jacob did his) drives them gently, as they can go, as he doth also them that are with young, and if his Lambs saint, he takes them into his bosom, Isa. 40.11. He doth not (as the Pharisees) bind heavy burdens, or if he do, he will put to his helping hand. God keeps a good Table, he hath several Dishes; Milk for Babes, and strong meat for grown persons: And in the first place he takes care that Peter feed his Lambs, and then his Sheep, Joh. 21. The Mother forgets not her sucking Child to be sure, though she doth not neglect the rest; the weak little ones shall be made much of, and have the breast or the spoon often, because they cannot digest much at a time; that I may allude to that in Isa. 28.9, 10. Precept shall be upon Precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. God will give all their portion in due season, and divide his Word aright among them, they shall have suitable dividends. He will give the tongue of the learned to one or other, that he shall know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary (Matth. 17.28.) and to others also, as John did to Fathers, Young-men and Children. He will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, but support that and cherish this; he will not cocker the wantons, but use the Rod, as well as rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the Faith. Still as their case and condition is, such is the administration to them.

Our Savior would not say more to his Disciples than they could bear, Joh. 16.12, and so he hath taught his Apostles to tread in his steps; when Paul found the Corinthians to be but Babes, he speaks to and treats them accordingly, 1 Cor. 3.1, 2. And so he did the Hebrews, Chap. 5, who were dull of hearing. 'It is to do hurt and not good, to Preach to persons otherwise than their capacities are. There is a time for all things, Non omnibus omnia, nec omnibus horis, everything is beautiful in its season; sometimes new and sometimes old things must be brought out of the treasury; sometimes promises, other times threatening's; that is best which is fittest and most agreeable: We must not study what we can best Preach, but what the people can best bear; we must not teach a Babe, as we would a Child or a Young-man; A word fitly spoken is like Apples of God in Pictures of Silver, i.e. both inviting and taking, being lovely and desirable, because both pleasing and profitable.

Whatever we do, to be sure God doth feed his people with food convenient for them, giving everyone their portion suitably, which is the beauty of it. He knows what everyone needs, and will supply it: The grace that Paul had already received might have been sufficient for others, yea for himself perhaps in another case, but being buffered by Satan he needed more; and accordingly God told him, My grace shall be sufficient for thee, q.d. I will give thee more strength than thou yet hast; for so Paul understands it, 1 Cor. 12.9, 10, and accordingly rejoiceth at it. If thou be a Babe he will feed thee (though it be but with Milk) and thou shalt not lack what's fittest for thee: if thou be a little Child he will smile on thee and show thee his love: if thou be a Young-man he will strengthen thee, and thou shalt overcome the wicked one; if thou be a Father, he will rub up thy memory, and cause thee to remember, and tell others the stories of what acquaintance thou hast had with him that is from the beginning. If thy work be great, and temptations strong, he will not

be an Egyptian task-master to thee, but will enable thee with strength in thy Soul. If thou be but a weakling, yet he will uphold and succor thee: whatever thy state be, his grace shall be sufficient for thee.

10. 'It is seldom that any of these (unless the Fathers) be eminent in the exercise of all graces, at least all alike: Though every grace be seminally and radically in everyone, yet they do not spring up and grow in all alike. 'It is certain the Classis of Babes is not eminent in any grace, no not in them which are their proper Acts, and by which they are denominated; their repentance, desire, and saith is imperfect and weak, though true: The little Children are for Love, and live the less by Faith, because they live by a sensible knowledge of (the love of) the Father. The Young-men are strong, viz. in Faith: The Fathers have gone through all these and are filled with assurance and the riches of its joy.

There have been some persons eminent in some special graces, as Abraham for Faith, Job for patience, Moses for meekness, but few that have been eminent in all grace, which argues that there are but few in the uppermost Form (the Classis of Fathers) in the School of Christ, All have grace in some degree, but few have all grace in an high degree. As 'tis in gifts, 'tis in graces also many times, 1 Cor. 12.8, —18, —28. Some excel in one thing and some in another: The highest estate is the Fathers; the next the Young-men, and so downward; now the lower the Form, the less and lower is the grace: and I fear that many who pretend high (perhaps so high as to be above all Forms) will be found to be as low as Babes, and that they need to learn their very Alphabet again. But,

11. Some (viz. such as are appointed to pass and proceed from one state to another) grow up faster than others: some that shall be

Children, Young-men, &c. are not so, so soon as others. 'It is not here as in our University degrees, where at such a time, after such a standing persons may Commence, though not of equal learning and proficiency, and be called Masters of Arts, though they be Master of none, and Doctor of Divinity, though they be yet to learn it: No, 'tis not so here, God gives not his grace as men do. Some grow up suddenly, per soltum. Others by degrees and more leisurely, Paul starts up in a trice, and is so great a proficient, that he hath the right hand given him by James, Cephas, and John, to do more than allude to Gal. 2.9, the Thessalonians grew exceedingly, beyond expectation, 2 Thes. 1.3, 4, Others come on more slowly (like some Gram) first the Blade, then the Ear, then the full Corn in the Ear, Mark 4.18. As some are long in travail, and have hard labor ere they be delivered: so some are long at the breast before they are weaned, and 'tis a great while before they can go or speak. Time is required to the most, as the Apostle hints, Heb. 5.12. But some shoot up and become men in a far less time than others do.

The reason of this in general is from the distinguishing grace of God, who causes the increase of some to be more expeditious than others: all increase and fruit is from him; but some he blesseth more abundantly, waters them every moment, pours out much of his Spirit upon them at the very beginning, more than others have all their life long, as was the case of Paul, who had a huge stock bestowed upon him at the very first. So he that had five Talents at the first had more, than he that had sour by improvement after a long time; such get the start so much at first that others cannot overtake them by all their industry. God gives what and how much he pleaseth. Yet usually he doth this when such men are appointed to great undertakings and sufferings as Paul was, what was told him at his first Conversion, and as the reason why he was so filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts 9.15, 16, 17, which was accordingly done and forthwith to the amazement of

them that heard him, Vers. 20, 21, and on a sudden he increased the more in strength. Vers. 12, or else, when such persons have not only much work to do, but a little time to do it in (being newly called & converted) as they that came late into the Vineyard, but, (it seems) wrought as much as, and it may be better than, them that came in before them. And perhaps it was so with the Thies on the Cross, for he acted a great deal of grace in that little time, and had not only hopes but assurance too of being with Christ in Paradise. So when great things do suffer, God fills them full, as 'twere, at first, as Stephen was, Act. 6.5, who suffered death in a little time after, chap. 7.

12. But though some upon these accounts grow faster than others, and are Fathers sooner than others that were born before them, yet each of them shall sooner or later grow up to that measure of the stature of Christ to which they are appointed. The Babe that is to be a Child by appointment, shall be so by attainment, and so of the rest. No Saint shall die till he have attained the utmost of what he was designed to. As none of God's Elect (I speak de adultis of them come to years) die before they are converted, so no converted ones die till they come to their maturity and be ripe (like a shock of Corn) for the Garner of God. God gathers none but ripe fruit, though some be riper sooner than other, and as I may say, some be Summer and others Winter fruit, some die young and others old, yet there shall not be an Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not fulfilled his years, but everyone shall attain to his full stature, Isa. 65.20. Our Savior could not, as he told that Fox, be perfected till he had finished his work; and then his hour came, Luk. 13.32, 33. When any of the Saints (like him) have glorified God on Earth by finishing the work God hath given him to do (and everyone hath his task set him, and his work cut out to his hands, Eccl. 9.10) then shall he go to be glorified, as Christ



did, Joh. 17.4, 5, as he could not die till then, so he then would not but die.

David was a man of a public spirit, and served his Generation according to the Will of God; and what then? Why then he fell asleep; when his work was done he went to bed, to rest in the bosom of God, Acts 13.36, though his body saw corruption, which Christ's Body (who was without sin) did not see. Indeed David thought to have done more work (viz. to build the Temple) but that was reserved for another, and therefore having done his devoir, he fell asleep. So it was with Paul, when the time of his departure was at hand, he was ready to be offered, for saith he, 2 Tim. 4.6, —8. I have finished my course, I have run to the end of my race, I have nothing to do but to die. So the reverend good old man (Simeon) could not die till he had seen (and could not but die when he had seen) the Salvation of God, This then is the thing in hand, that God (having begun a good work) will finish it before he take any of his converted ones out of this world: he will bring them to their appointed stature: it may be some may die in the good old age of Fathers; others while Young-men in their prime, their marrow in their bones, after great and glorious achievements and victories; others in their Child-hood, while their love is fervent and strong; and others in their Babe-state with the milk in their mouth: but everyone (before the time of his departure come) shall finish that work which was appointed for him to do.

13. 'It is necessary (to avoid scruples and objections) that I premise this also; these states are not so constantly fixed and immutable, but that sometimes for a season there may be a variation: A Babe may have a Spring-tide now and then, but he ebbs again quickly, and comes to low water mark again. The Child of Light and Love may walk in darkness; God may so hide his face, that the Child may not know his Father. The Young-man conqueror may be buffeted again,

and perhaps led captive and made a prisoner to a temptation; a fit of forgetfulness or sickness may befall a Father, and make him forgetful, that he may seem to be a Child again; but these intermissions (rising of the low, and fallings of the high) do not alter their state: No, God measures none by particular acts or cases, but according to the tenor and constant course of their frames and exercises. The Corinthians made a great show, kept a great deal ado, yet were Babes: Paul himself was buffeted, because apt to be puffed up, prayed thrice before he had any Answer, and yet he was a Father, even at that time. There may be some unevenness in the high and low and yet no alteration of their states.

The Church of Ephesus, her love and works were more at first, than when our Savior sent her that Epistle; and the Church of Thyatira her works more at last than at first; yet we cannot conclude from the partial decay of the former, or advance of the latter, which was best at last, for that might repent, and this not hold fast, which were the duties called for; that from Ephesus, and this from Thyatira; but this we may clearly see, that great beginning; of zeal may be intermitted and decay; and on the other hand that small beginnings may increase to more and more godliness. Some persons run without weariness, and walk without faintness, grow without intermission, they meet with no rubs nor lets, they are not nipped in the bud, and put back by a hard season, as some others are. 'It is said of the Colossians, that from the very day they heard of the Gospel and knew the grace of God in truth, that they brought forth fruit, Col. 1.6, there was no decay but a growth; but the Hebrews they (like the idle servant) stood still at a stay, and were but Babes for a long time; and indeed they met with many a stumbling block in their way, which the Apostle endeavored to remove in that Epistle, that they (if yet at last) might go on to perfection. There is a great variety in these things, the first last, and the last first very often; the younger born is the elder

grown in grace. No man can conclude infallibly as to particular persons, what their estate is at present, or shall be for the future: which brings me to a

14. Premise, seeing no man knows nor any man can tell him what he is appointed to, everyone should aim at and propound to himself to attain the highest state; as many a common Soldier doth to be a Captain; many a young Student to be a Master; and many an Apprentice to be not only a free-man, or Common-council man, but an Alderman. This I speak that none may be idle or negligent, but pursue after perfection: Great things have been attempted upon a peradventure, and an it may be. If thou be but a Babe at present, and hast been so for many years, yet who knows but thou mayest be a Father at last? Let none therefore say, I have heard, prayed and waited so long, and yet I see no more comes than did at first, therefore I will take up with this stint which I have; On let none say so, for who knows but that after you have been planted in the House of the Lord and become well rooted & grounded, you may flourish as the Palm-tree, & grow up as the Cedars in Lebanon, you may be fat and flourishing, and shall bring forth more fruit in your old age than you did in your youth, Psal. 92.12, —14. If God water thee with the dew of his blessing, thou wilt not only blossom as the Lily, but cast forth thy roots as Lebanon, thy branches and beauty shall spread and be as the Olive-tree, Hos. 14.5.6. The cloud that was at first but as a hand-breadth did at last cover the face of the Heavens, and there was an abundance of rain, 1 King. 18.44 45. The water that was at first but to the ankles, ascended to the Knees, and thence upward to the Loins, at last it was a river to swim in and not sortable, it rose so high, Ezck. 47.3,—5. The Mustard-seed is but little, yet grows to a great Tree: So are the workings of Grace in many a Soul growing up more and more to perfection. Many a man that began with little, yet being faithful and industrious hath become master of a great estate.

Do not despond because great things are difficult and thou art but little in Israel, who knows what he may come to? Therefore press forward. Our degrees (like times and seasons) are in the Fathers power, and are hid from us but to make us the more watchful and industrious. If thou have a mind to know the way and means of growing rich, then,

15. And lastly, I premise this, that God usually builds us up by that which he brought us in by, viz. his Word and Spirit. *Nutrimur ex iisdem e quibus constituimur*. While we behold the glory of the Lord in the Gospel glass, we are transformed into its Image from glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3.18. The same Spirit that convinceth of sin, doth convince of righteousness yea of judgment and victory too, Joh. 16.8. The gifts given to Pastors and Teachers as well as those given to Apostles, &c. are for the perfecting of the Saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to a perfect man, i.e., to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephes. 4.13. Now that every part of the Body hath a several measure is clear, Vers. 16. But the Gospel and the gifts of Ministers are lest to carry on this measure and perfect it in everyone, till all come to make up the whole body complete, which body is the fullness of Christ, who filleth all in all, i.e., supplies what every part hath, Ephes. 1.23. The Apostle tells Timothy how useful the Word is to make every man of God perfect, for 'tis profitable for four things, which haply may refer to these four states, for surely 'twas not only to make the Preaching, but the hearing men of God perfect, 2 Tim. 3.16, 17. 'It is profitable for Doctrine, to teach even Fathers themselves; for reproof of Young-men if rash and proud; for correction of little Children if wanton; for instruction in righteousness, which refers to Babes, of whom it is expressly said, that they are unskillful in the word of righteousness, Heb. 5.13. We are born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for

ever; and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you, 1 Pet. 1.23, —25, and it follows, Chap 2. 1, 2. Wherefore laying aside &c. As new-born Babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby. God brings us in and builds us up by his Word. And this I hint that the Preaching of the Gospel may not be despicable in any of your eyes, as if when a man were once converted or had attained to some degree of Grace, he were past hearing; Oh no, you see plainly that that by which he begets us, he brings us up by, we grow by the Word as well as we are begotten by it: and 'tis not till one or two, but till we all come (everyone) to our perfect stature, so that the whole body and every member is perfect and entire lacking nothing, as to its proper complement.

Having thus endeavored to clear my way I shall now, God willing and enabling, proceed to treat of the several Classes and Forms in their order, from the several scriptures which are to be sound speaking on these Subjects; of which sort I hope to find more than are ordinarily thought of, this being a Subject that I never yet met with handled distinctly, or conjunctly by any person.

# THE FIRST CLASSIS OR FORM OF BABES.

From 1 Cor. 3.1, 2, and Heb. 5.11, —13, &c.

In relation to these I shall proceed in this Method, and show first that there is such a Classis, Form (or state of Saints) as this of Babes, below that of (<H&G>) little Children. 2. I shall show what their attainments (and therein what their characters) are. 3. Wherein they are (as carnal, and) defective, more than any of the other sorts are. And 4. What use is to be made of this in relation to them without and them within.

I. That there is such a state.

1. The word Babe is used sometimes in a natural, and other times in a Metaphorical sense: in a Natural sense, and thus, 1. A Child in the Womb is called (<H&G>) a Babe, as Luke 1.44. The Babe leapt in my Womb for joy. 2. A Child new-born is called a Babe, as was our Savior once, Luke 2.12, and 16. Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. 3. 'It is used also to denote children grown up (as I may say) to Boys and Girls, so in Matth. 21.16. Out of the mouths of Babes and suckling's, thou hast perfected praise: and though the word there used for Babes be (<H&G>, which Etymologists derive from <H&G>, a non fando, because they cannot speak,) a word that often signifies one that cannot speak, and is joined with Suckling's which are usually such; yet these were speaking and praising Babes, for they cried Hosannah to the Son of David, and are called (<H&G>) Children, Vers. 15. Lastly, 'It is used indefinitely for Children (of any underage) that survive their Parents (Psal. 17.14, they leave the rest to their Babes) such as we call Orphans.

2. The word Babe is used (when applied to Morals) in a Metaphorical sense, and that first by way of commendation, and excellency, as 1 Cor. 14.20. Brethren, be not Children in understanding, but in malice (or in evil) be ye Children (<H&G>) be ye Babes, but in understanding be men (<H&G>) perfect. Thus to be Babes, as to unacquaintedness with evil, were an excellency worthy of our ambition. Secondly, Babe is used by way of diminution, derogation and disparagement, to set out the defectiveness of persons in understanding and other attainments, Isa 3.4, opposed to them in Vers. 2.3, so 'tis opposed to men, or being perfect in understanding, 1 Cor. 13.11, and 14.20, and joined with foolish, Rom. 2.20. 'It is all one as to be (a Servant) in bondage to the rudiments of the world, opposed to the adoption of Sons, or having the spirit of Sons, Gal. 4.1, —6, it notes unsteadiness and instability, such are tossed to and fro, Eph. 4.14. In which places the word should be translated Babes and not Children, as sometimes 'tis. It notes an ignorance or unskillfulness, Heb. 5.13, opposed to them who have their senses exercised to distinguish and discern things, and consequently to approve of what is best.

'It is in this last Metaphorical and Moral sense that I am to speak of Babes, and by the way 'tis, perhaps, not unworthy of observation, that in the Metaphorical sense <H&G> is but once used (as I remember) and that by St. Peter, 1 Ephes. 2.2, but <H&G> is the word so frequently used by St. Paul; though by both they mean the same state of persons, as appears by the Milk which both mention when they speak of these Babes. Now that these metaphorical Babes (be they young or old for years) are a sort of professors inferior to, and of a lower rank than, the <H&G>, little Children which St. John speaks to, I evince not only from the different words used, and that so frequently (which is not inconsiderable) but from the characters and proper attainments of the one and the other state, which is the

best proof, and indeed, such as is undeniable and cannot be gain-said.

The word (<H&G>) which in John is rendered little Children, is once used by Paul to denote want or weakness of understanding, 1 Cor. 14.20. My Brethren, be not Children in understanding; that therefore it cannot be meant in that place of these little Children which John speaks of is clear as the Sun, for this is the excellency which John attributes to them, that they know the Father, they are called little Children from knowledge, which notes an understanding that amounts to assurance; but Babes (considered in nature or in grace) know not their Father: so that from this very character 'tis apparent that the state or rank of Babes is below that of little Children, these are Sons and know it, but Babes (though they be, yet) know not, i.e. have not the assurance that they are so: though they have the things that do assure, yet they have not (for want of light) either the assurance of the things, or assurance by them: but are in this sense <H&G>, not reprobates (as we read it) but without proof, as the Apostle speaks to the Corinthian Babes, 2 Cor. 13.5. They sought a proof of Paul 's Apostleship, and he requires a proof of their Conversion, but they were less able to prove this, than he was able to prove that, as Vers. 6. He was not (<H&G>) but they were (<H&G>) without proof. So that though they had grace, yet it was so weak in its actings & operations that it afforded them no assurance, as strong and vigorous grace useth to do.

The Star-light of their grace is not clear enough in Babes to discern their conversation by it, and many times 'tis clouded too, that the Stars do not appear: and though grace live in their hearts, yet the light and comfort of it may be wanting; for though every man having the power of reflecting upon his own actions, can discern what thoughts are in him and what affections, and can tell what he loves,



what he fears and grieves for, and the like; yet he may still be questioning and doubting whether this his love, sear, grief, &c. be gracious, spiritual, and truly holy acting's or not: whereof the reason is this, because though the Spirit which is in a man knows the things of a man, 1 Cor. 2.11. Yet what is the true worth of these things which are in him, and whether given him of God, and wrought in him by God unto Salvation, this we cannot know but by a supervening light of the Spirit, who is not only the worker of Grace in us, but is given us to discover and enlighten it to us, Vers. 12. Now without this light or Testimony of the Spirit (which the little Children have, but Babes have not) 'tis with them as with the natural man, who knows not the things of the Spirit, Vers. 14. Whereas the spiritual man judgeth all things wrought in him by the Spirit by the light thereof: Now Babes not being spiritual (but as carnal) 1 Cor. 3.1, the Apostle could not write of such things as he did to the spiritual, chap. 2.13, but was said to feed them with milk (like Babes as they were) for they were not able (as the spiritual were) to bear meat, viz. strong meat, having weak stomachs, chap. 3.2. They like the Hebrews could hear of and believe in Christ, in some kind, but to take him as Christ crucified, as the great high Priest, as their righteousness, they were yet in great part to learn and to digest; which was the case both of the Corinthian and Hebrew Babes, as will appear more anon by comparing 1 Cor. 3.2, with Heb. 5.10, 11. &c. for then by these distinct attainments and characters 'tis (as I hope) made plain that there is a Classis and Form of Babes in Christ, who are a degree below the little Children: and of this state of Babes I shall treat first, because they are the beginning of the new Creation of God; and I am apt to believe that the Kingdom of God and of Christ, in Heaven and in Earth, is made up and filled up more of these than of any other sort, not to say than of all the other sorts: that is to say, that there are more Babes in Christ, than there are Children or Young-men or Fathers: to which peradventure that saying of our Savior may bear a Testimony, in a fuller sense than 'tis

commonly understood, though I doubt not but the <H&G> little Children there spoken of be meant in a natural and literal sense. The place is Mark 10.14. Suffer the little Children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God: Of Infants or Babes (for so <H&G> must there signify, Christ taking them into his arms, Vers. 16.) I say of Infants (both in a natural and spiritual sense) doth the Kingdom of Heaven consist, as well as, if not more than, of others.

## II. Of their Attainments.

2. The Second thing I am to treat of, is, their Attainments and Characters, in relation to which I shall consider and compare 1 Cor. 3.1, 2, with Heb. 5.10, to the end, and chap. 6.1, 2, 3, in both which the Apostle useth the same words and things concerning them, and the explanation of the Milk and Meat in the Corinthians is clear and full in the Hebrews, for he speaks plainly and without a Parable. He having spoken much of the Spirit, spiritual things and spiritual men in the second Chapter to the Corinthians, and of the wisdom of God to them that were perfect, Vers. 6, i.e., to them that were spiritual and could judge of and discern spiritual things, Vers. 15, he doth in the beginning of the third Chapter obviate an objection that might be made by the Corinthians, thus, Why then do ye not Preach such things to us? To which he Answers, That he would gladly and with all his heart do it, but that they being not spiritual, but as carnal, being Babes, they were not heretofore nor at present in a capacity to receive them, q.d. If you will needs know the true reason, why I Preach not to you the deep mysteries of Godliness, or the wisdom of God in a mystery, or the hidden wisdom of God, chap. 2, verse. 7, 'tis not that I cannot or would not Preach it, but that you cannot bear it;

you would say that to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, and live by it, were a hard saying, as ye did when Christ himself said so, Joh. 6. 53, 60, and if you can hardly hear this, but be offended, what would you be if I should Preach of his Ascension, and the executing of the other part of his Priestly office now in heaven, which is yet a higher Doctrine and strong meat (as 'tis called in the Hebrews on this very occasion) if that offend you as it did those Babes, Joh. 6.60, —62, how much more would this, as our Savior there intimates? For this reason my Brethren, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, and to feed you with Milk (the very Alphabet of Christ his Doctrine) Repentance, &c. I am fain to Preach to you as to sinners and carnal unconverted persons, the very same Doctrine that I did at first.

Let us in the next place see how pat and parallel to this, that other Text in the fifth of the Hebrews is. The Author having told them, Vers. 9. That Christ Jesus being made perfect, i.e., glorified, was become the Author or meritorious and procuring cause of Salvation to them that (believe in and) obey him, called of God a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Vers. 10. Of whom, saith he, Vers. 11, we have many things to say: why do ye not say on and speak out then? Why, because they are hard to be uttered, which doth not imply any defect or inability in the Apostle to utter them, as if he wanted either knowledge or utterance, but an incapacity in them to entertain them, because they were dull of hearing; for though as to their standing they might have been teachers, yet as to their understanding they needed to learn, and con over again the first principles, and lay the first foundation: They had need of Milk (as the Corinthians had) i.e. to be taught to repent and believe as if they were scarce converted, but as carnal. Thus both these places concur in the same subjects and attributes. Before I come to speak of their attainments and characters particularly, I shall briefly touch a few

observations from these two Texts, which will make our way the more plain and smooth. As,

1. There are some Christians or persons in Christ which are not men in Christ, but only Babes: They have the Spirit of Christ (in a measure) or else they could not be his, Rom. 8.9. Yet though they have the Spirit, they are not spiritual (in any high degree). Though in Christ Jesus, (for else they were not new-born, or new creatures, 2 Cor. 5.17,) yet they are but Babes in Christ, and as (the very next degree to) carnal: they cry rather than speak, their voice is inarticulate and not distinct, 1 Cor. 13.11. They have the Image of God upon them, but not perfectly stamped and visible to every eye: 'It is but (as I may say) God manifest in the Flesh, under a veil and darkly; Christ is not (perfectly) formed in them, Gal. 4.19. You may see some Prints and similitudes, but the several features are not clearly discernible. They are translated from death to life, they are no Abortives; nor are they still-born: they have the beginning of life, and they do but begin to live. There is joy in Heaven that this Manchild is born, though he be not yet grown up, no nor thoroughly washed and cleansed from his pollution. He is yet but in swaddling clothes and in a Manger, if I may allude to what was said of Christ, when he was a Babe. As the life, so the image is imperfect; you can say there's the Image of a man, but who 'tis like (whether like its Father) you can hardly tell; yet this you can say 'tis not the Devils or the Sinners image; and God knows that 'tis his Image: and Christ knows it to be the Fathers Image, for 'tis born not of the Flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the Will of God. They should not have the name of Babes, if they had not the Fathers Image, though it be not so legible to standers by, as that of the spiritual man is. The Babe is a Christian in the smallest Print, but the spiritual man is one in Capital and Golden Letters.

2. Some persons may be but Babes for a long time, Heb. 5.12. Yea, though they live under the best Preaching in the world: as some were under Christ his own Ministry, Mat. 11.25. The Disciples (many of them) were no better, till Christ ascended, and the Spirit descended. The Corinthians had heard three of the best Preachers on Earth; Paul, Apollo, and Cephas, 1 Ephes. 1.12, and chap. 3.4, —6, yet were but Babes. The Hebrews had sat under the like Ministry, and yet were but Babes for many years. Paul it seems had begotten (or planted) the Corinthians, he was their Father, 1 Cor. 4.14, 15. Apollo was their nursing Fathers, he had watered them, 1 Cor. 3.6. Paul continued among them a year and a half teaching the Word of God among them, as Acts 18.1, —11, you have the whole story. After Paul's departure Apollo came to Corinth (and watered them, whom Paul had planted) Acts 18.27, with 19.1, yet from that time to the day of the date of this Epistle, they continued Babes. Philip, who (it seems) was called by Christ Jesus in the first year of his Ministry, and in the beginning of that year, for he was called before the first Miracle that Christ wrought at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee, which was the first he did to confirm his Ministerial office, Joh. 1.43, with 2.11. Yet this Philip who had lived with Christ all the time of his Ministry, was yet, when Christ was about to leave the world, but a Babe, for he knew not the Father (as the little Children do) which made Christ speak upbraidingly to him, Joh. 14.9. Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, show us the Father? Alas! Of how many Hearers, may many a Preacher say, have I been so long with you, and yet ye know not the Father! You have not the knowledge of God, be it spoken to your shame, 1 Cor. 15.34. You are yet in a babish state, and not grown or advanced in Faith, Knowledge, Love, &c.

3. These Babes can eat milk, though nothing but milk; they sucked a year and a half and were not weaned from the breast, but were Babes and Suckling's still. They could eat but milk, their stomachs were not able to bear (though their appetite might desire) strong meat. When Christ Jesus was telling his Disciples the offices of the Spirit, he makes a stop and tells them, I have yet many things (more) to say unto you, but you cannot bear them yet (which is the character of these Babes Joh. 16.12, q.d. I could tell you what great things there are in mine and my Fathers heart and purpose concerning you, but you are not in a condition to receive them, till you have received the Spirit, and grown up to another (higher) state than yet you are in. Babes cannot bear the Mathematical and Metaphysical demonstrations, they cannot understand them, but they are for similitudes, illustrations and Parables, and so Christ taught them, Mark 4.33. To tell them that there is joy in Heaven at the conversion of a sinner will not down with them, unless it be taught by the Parable of a lost and afterward found Sheep, &c. Babes are for living by sense more than by Faith. The Hebrews understood but little of the Priest-hood of Christ and his Office, which is the strong meat, no though the Apostle illustrated it by their own (shadowy) Priest-hood, which they had under the Law. So the Apostle Peter speaking of the state of renovation (the new Heavens, and the new Earth) of which his beloved brother Paul had also written in his Epistles; of which (not Epistles, for there is a change of the gender, and 'tis <H&G>, and refers to the these things ) of which or among which things some are hard to be understood, by whom? Viz. by the unlearned and unstable, and therefore he) presseth them not only to steadfastness but growth in grace, without which they will not attain to know the things hard to be understood, 2 Pet. 3.13, —17. But they cannot eat strong meat, yet they can eat milk; though but milk, yet milk; which implies that they were not only alive, but had some (a very little) strength, and took in some nourishment, and had some experience of

the working of grace in them, though 'twere weak and faint. Saith the Apostle, I have fed you with milk, which notes that he did not only give it them, but that though they did not thrive much, yet it kept life and Soul together (as we use to say) it kept them alive in their present state, which was low and weak. What this milk is, I am to show anon.

4. These Babes are owned for Brethren as well as the spiritual ones, by the Apostle; though they had not the right yet they had the left-hand of fellowship. And I Brethren, saith he, though you be but weak, yet you and I are Brethren: the spiritual Paul, and (as carnal) Corinthian Babes were Brethren: yea not only Paul, but Christ himself (the first born among the many Brethren) is not ashamed to call the Babes, as well as others, Brethren, Heb. 2.11, which takes in all the Children, Vers. 13.14. For Christ took the whole seed of Abraham, Vers. 16. And if any are Christ's (as these Babes are, for they are in him, saith our Text) then are they Abraham's seed and heirs according to promise, Gal. 3.29. The whole brother-hood have fellowship one with another, as all the members of the body have from head to foot.

This then is the sum of all that we have said; that these Babes have truth of Grace, the root of the matter is in them, God hath put truth in their inward parts, and written the truth of Repentance, Faith and Love in their hearts: They are true born, and not Bastards, as the distinction is, Heb. 12. 'It is true also that their grace is weak; 'tis grace and but grace in a low degree; beside also 'tis mixed with much corruption (strong corruptions are arguments of weak grace) they are as carnal: of all Saints the Babe-Saint hath the least grace and the most corruption. And (which is to be noted of all the rest also) these Babes have not their denomination, nor are so called merely from their being but newly born, but from their continuance in such a

state. No state is measured by one or two acts, but from the tenor, frame and course of their hearts and lives for such a time and duration. We call no man a dunce or a bad Scholar from one days dullness, or for one miscarriage in an exercise, but when he is constantly dull and blockish, as the Hebrews were, who were Babes for a long time. 'It is the habit that gives the denomination to this and every Classis or Form. And now I shall proceed to show the attainment of these Babes, which in both Texts is expressed by;

Their Feeding on Milk.

Where, what is meant by Milk, and how they Feed on this Milk, is discovered, 1. More generally. 2. More Particularly.

Milk we see is the Food of Babes: and therefore 'tis necessary that we come to know what this Milk is, for the better discovery of their state and attainment. In the general, all the Word of God (the Gospel) is called Milk, 1 Pet. 2.2. As new-born Babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby; This Milk is for growth; the word is not only for begetting, as chap. 1.23, and 25, but 'tis for nourishing and bringing up also, even to a perfect stature, Ephes. 4.11, —16. 'It is observable, that Peter doth not speak merely of the Word written in the Bible, but of the Word Preached, chap. 1.25. But then this Word Preached must be sincere milk of the Word, not mixed and corrupted with and by the devices, inventions, glosses and comments of Jews or Gentiles; this the Apostle Paul disclaims and declaims against, 2 Cor. 2.17. We are not as many, who corrupt, or deal deceitfully with the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ, which he also hath again, chap 4.2. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty (or shame) not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God



deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. We are no hucksters like them mentioned, 2 Pet. 2.1, —3. As this word must not be mixed with and corrupted by false Doctrine and base ends, so this milk must not be made luscious and fulsome with the Sugar and Honey of men's wisdom and eloquence, for this doth the Apostle no less disown and disallow, as may be seen, 1 Cor. 2.4. My speech and my Preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom (I was not as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, I did not use feigned and made words to show wit and learning; I came not with that wisdom which lies in words, with witticisms, chap. 1.17.) but in demonstration of the Spirit and power. So then 'tis not a sound of words, but sound and sincere doctrine or Milk of the Word by which we grow and thrive.

But more particularly (as to our Subject) milk is used to denote weak nourishment, and is opposed to strong meat; and thus Milk notes the first principles of the Oracles of God, the Alphabet of Christian Religion, of this the Babes have their mouth and belly full, but are weak and puny things notwithstanding. That Milk therefore, in these Texts, is put for the principles (the first Elements of the Doctrine of Christ) or as 'tis in the Margent, the word of the beginning of Christ, Heb. 5.12, with 6.1. The very foundation of Repentance, &c. which is, that the Kingdom of God (the Messiah dispensation) was at hand, Mark. 1.15; so that Milk notes preparation doctrine, and the very first dements of the beginning of the Oracles of God, as the words are, Heb. 5.12, the initiating Doctrine, wherein (saith Jac. Cappel) the Jews and Christians did agree, as a foundation to build upon: Now what this Doctrine was, is expressed under several heads, chap. 6.1, 2, viz. Repentance from dead works, Faith towards God, &c.

But (it may be) some will object, here is no mention of Faith in Christ, and can they be Christians in any degree (though but Babes) who believe not in Christ? To this I answer, That these Principles or Foundation Doctrines, are called the Word or Doctrine of the beginning of Christ, Vers. 1, and therefore this Repentance and Faith is not without respect to Christ; and when the Apostle mentions these two elsewhere, he speaks of Christ as the object of Faith, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 20.21, and this the Apostle taught the Corinthians at first, 1 Cor. 15.2, 3, which opens the meaning of that speech of his, 1 Cor. 2.2. Beside, in calling this foundation Doctrine, Christ must needs be taken in, for other foundation can no man lay, 1 Cor. 3.11, because God hath laid him and no other, Acts 4.11, 12, and 'tis by him that we believe in God, as the Apostle hath it, 1 Pet. 1.21. Withall we must remember that these were but Babes, and were unskillful in the word of righteousness, though not without some confused notions of it.

Indeed both God and Christ are the objects of Faith; and though God be the ultimate object of Faith, for Christ's design is to bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3.18. Yet Christ is the more immediate object of it; but nature teaching us to look to God, and revelation of grace only to look to Christ, many persons (especially Babes) are apt to have more recourse to God than to Christ: For the Faith of Babes is of no higher an elevation, than theirs generally was under the Old Testament, who had not such distinct notions of Christ Jesus as we under the Gospel have or ought to have, he being now manifested to manage all affairs for us between the Father and us; and therefore our Savior bids his Disciples not only to believe in God, but in him also, Joh. 14.1, and accordingly all along afterward, the Apostles in their Preaching, direct men to believe in Christ Jesus; and this is the excellency of knowing (or the excellent knowledge of) Christ Jesus, to

know him so as to be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the Law (which Babes too much look after) but that which is by Faith in Christ, Phil. 3.8.9. And this is that which the Apostle directs the Corinthians to, 1 Cor. 1.30, and 3.10, 11. And so the Hebrews, in setting him forth to them as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the King of righteousness, and the Lord our righteousness.

Hence then I conclude, that their eating of Milk is the receiving and practicing these Principles, or Elements, the beginning of the Doctrine of Christ, viz. Repentance, Faith, &c. which in the general takes in such things as these, a sight and sense of sin, together with sorrow for and Repentance from it, as also Prayer for pardon: a secret relying on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, which gives them hope: An obedience to Ordinances, as Baptism, &c. A believing of the Resurrection, and of eternal Judgment. But there are sealings of the Spirit, joys in the Holy Ghost, &c. which the Babes are not acquainted with: they attain to what is necessary, and but what is necessary to Salvation, Heb. 6.9. They have enough to keep them out of Hell, and to land them safe in Heaven; but as to the well-being of a Saint, viz. an assurance of the Fathers Love, which the little Children have; strength of Faith to overcome temptations, which the Youngmen have; great wisdom from long or much experience, which the Fathers have: of these they know nothing. They are God's building indeed, 1 Cor. 3.9, but only of the first Floor, or story, just laid upon the foundation, yet so that they also are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth but almost indiscernibly in them, 1 Cor. 3.16, they will, I say, have an entrance into Heaven, because these things are in them, but not an abundant entrance because these things do not abound in them, as Peter intimates, 2 Pet. 1.8,—11, and all this is spoken of a state wherein they may live and die and not reach beyond it.

Quest. Before I proceed 'tis necessary to clear up one scruple that may arise from hence, which is this: Seeing growth of grace is necessary to prove the truth of grace, how can these be said to grow, if they may continue in this state all their days?

Answ. You may remember how I premised that none can tell but he may be built up a Story (or more) higher, and therefore none should take up with this stint, but press forward; yet seeing there is such a state (which is to abide so) the question is of these, and to it I answer, first by concession that growth of grace is required of all as the evidence of its truth; but then I say there are several kinds of growth, and all of them are not necessary to this state: as the state is, such is the growth required. There is a growth by addition, and a growth of continuation and perseverance and going on to the end; that growth is required of and is necessary to the other states, but this only is necessary unto this state of Babes; the others growth is by addition, 2 Pet. 1.5, —11, but Growth of these is by abiding in grace: they but con the same lesson over and over, when others take out new ones, and turn over leaf. Or as a Tree that grows in a continuance of bringing forth the fruit of its kind, Gen. 1.11, but if a graft or scion of a nobler sort be ingrafted on or into it, then it brings forth other and better fruit. So that growth in these is not a superaddition of new grace, but a renewing of and abounding in their first grace. This must be the growth of the Corinthians and Hebrews, or else there was none at all, for they were the same after a long time that they were before. And therefore Paul puts the Corinthians only to prove (for the present) that they were in the Faith, and that Christ was in them, 2 Cor. 13.5, and though he put the Hebrews upon giving diligence to a full assurance, chap. 6.11, yet on supposition they should not attain it, he often calls upon them to hold fast and not to apostatize, concluding that if they did not advance, yet they might be saved by abiding in the present state, though they were but Babes,

chap. 3.6,—12, 13, 14, and 10.23,—35, and tells them that the just shall live by Faith (that which they had) that is, they should continue believing to the end, and not draw back to perdition, Vers. 36.—39.

To seek out this and clear it too, let us consider some other places, which show that a going on and continuing in the same grace, or an holding fast of what they have is that only which is required of some Christians, as Rev. 2.24, 25. 'It is said to them of Thyatira, who kept free from Jezebels doctrine, I will put upon you none other burden, but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come, keep your ground; so again, Rev. 3.11. 'tis said to Philadelphia, who had but a little strength, Vers. 8. Hold fast that which thou hast, and to him that overcometh, &c. So that perseverance in the little strength that any have, hath the promise of Salvation (and is all some Saints growth) He that continueth to the end shall be saved; and this is called overcoming, which hath the notion of some kind of growth in it. And therefore it seems clear, that the gain of Babes is in not losing, and their growth in not decreasing and declining: or if you had rather express it so, the Babes growth is in reiterated acts of the same kind, or in abounding in acts (which is a growing in degrees of the same kind) as also in desires after higher attainments (as I shall show anon) eating more and more Milk, repenting more and more, and believing more and more, even unto the end, increasing in these things to their fullness, and not in passing into another state. I speak still of one appointed to this state alone.

And on this occasion before I close up this Chapter, it will not be amiss to take notice (in relation hereunto) of the Covenant of God made with all Saints, and the promises of God made but to some Saints; the promises of growth (by addition) I humbly conceive are not made to Saints, as such; but to Saints under such a qualification, and acting such and such graces and duties in such and such degrees;

as for instance, Psal. 1.3, there is a promise of growth; 'tis not every Saint shall, but he shall: who is that he? Viz. he that delights in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth meditate day and night: this meditation shall be to him, as the watering of the River is to a Tree. But now the Covenant (as it gives, so it secures grace) it is made to and with the lowest Saint, and warrantiseth it against falling away only, Jer. 32.40. I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: As Christ prayed for Peter that his Faith might not (totally and utterly) fail, Luk. 22.32. And this I speak for the encouragement of poor Babes, that they may not stumble at this, that they do not grow as others do; I tell them and would have them bless God for it, that they grow with a growth suitable to their state, i.e. they rely and cleave close, they Apostatize not, but hold fast, they persevere in eating milk till death them do part; they attain to the extent of the Covenant, perseverance, and to the end of their Faith, the saving of their Souls. And this much of the Attainment of Babes in the general.

The more particular attainments of Babes, as Repentance, Faith, &c.

From Heb. 6.1, 2.

The Apostle doth not in this place put the Babes upon laying aside these things, but speaks his own intendment to lay them aside (as to his present further discourse concerning them) and to go on to treat of other and higher matters, more perfect doctrine, i.e. such as belongs to perfect and grown Saints: he calls these Doctrines Foundations, and therefore doubtless would not have them digged up, but would have them build on these other and higher stories, even to the laying of the top stone. At present he only names them to show what these Babes had attained to.

These six principles are (as I may call them) six portions of Milk, which the Babes did eat and were nourished by: the two first, viz. Repentance and Faith are internal graces wrought and working in them; the other four are proofs of this internal work: the two first of the four, viz. their submission to the ordinances of Baptism and laying on of hands, are proofs of their Conversion, in the fight of men; the two latter of the four, viz. their practical belief of the Resurrection, and eternal Judgment, are proofs of their Conversion, Repentance, and Faith in the sight of God: and these should not be separated: for submitting to Ordinances, without believing the Resurrection and eternal Judgment thereupon, are no proofs of Repentance and Faith; No, for without this Faith, the other is in vain and men are yet in their sins as our Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 15.12.17. And else what shall they do that are Baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then Baptized for the dead? q.d. Baptism is in vain submitted to, if there be no Resurrection. When the very notion and design of Baptism is to denote the Resurrection from death, Rom. 6.3, —5. Col. 2.12, 13. So on the other hand, to believe the Resurrection and Judgment (as the Jews did) is no proof of Conversion, without submitting to Ordinances of Baptism, &c. Therefore when our Savior bid his Disciples Preach the Gospel, 'tis thus, he that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved, Mark 16.16. Well then, all these principles conjunctly are the discoveries of the Babes attainment: of all which I shall now proceed to speak in order as they lie in the Text.

Of their Repentance from dead Works.

Repentance is the first Milk which they suck, take in and best of all digest; they repent not only for but from dead Works, i.e., such works

as they do who are dead in sins, Ephes 2.1, 2, 3. They escape the gross pollutions which are in the world through lust. The other portion of Milk, viz. Faith, is of more hard digestion with them, and stays long in their mouth, before they let it down; For, saith the Text, 'tis but Faith towards God, it is but in motion and tendency, rather in fieri than in esse, in acting than acted: and this not so much and properly towards Christ, as towards God: not excluding Christ, but that they have less still in exercising Faith towards Christ, than towards God. But as to Repentance they are better skilled and able to act it at a better rate than Faith. In relation to this, there are three things which I shall do, 1. Show that this is the first Milk that Babes eat. And 2. That they are better at eating this, viz. Repentance, than Faith. 3. The nature of Repentance, and how Babes act it.

1. That this is the first Milk they eat: which will the better appear, by considering who have been and are accounted Babes (throughout the whole Scripture) as 1. The most and generality of the people of God under the Old Testament: There were indeed some Fathers, as Abraham, &c. but as I may say there was but one of a sort, as Abraham the Father of the faithful, Job of the patient, Moses of the meek, &c. There were also some Young-men, who were strong and overcame the evil one, as Joshua and Caleb, who followed God fully, the Word of God did abide in them; but there were Babes in abundance, as the Apostle tells us, Gal. 4.3, 4. When we were Children (the word is, Babes) i.e., Vers. 4, when we were under the Law, we were in a state of bondage, rather as servants, than Children, Vers. 7. And accordingly the milk given these to eat was the doctrine of Repentance (for Christ Jesus was under a veil, and represented to them mostly in types and shadows, and their Faith was but towards God and Christ.) 2. The people of God in John Baptist's time were but Babes generally, and therefore he also fed them with milk, the doctrine of Repentance, yet still directing their Faith to Christ who



was to come after him: his doctrine and Baptism was that of Repentance. 3. In Christ's time, while in the world, most of Disciples were but Babes (as was hinted heretofore.) And Christ himself gave them Milk for their first feeding, yet mixed with Faith, as Mark 1.15. Repent and believe the Gospel, which he (in Vers. 1.) calls the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, as 'tis called in the Text before us, Heb. 6.1. They did also believe in God; and our Savior calls upon them to believe in him also, as an advance of their Faith, Joh. 14.1. Again, 4. All at first Conversion are Babes, and to all these is Repentance better known than Faith, for some time (more or less) and the first doctrine Preached to the first Converts, was Repentance, Acts 2.38, and they that are appointed to be no more than Babes, feed on this Milk all their days.

2. I am to show that Babes digest this and are better at it, than at Faith, Love, &c. They are best at Repentance, 'tis their excellency, or the chief of their attainments: not that they are better at it than the Saints of higher Forms, but that as they have more need of it, so they are more Artists at it (it being their trade and calling) than they are at other graces. The best of the generality of the Jewish Saints under the Old Testament lay in repenting and returning (a word in great use under that dispensation) in weeping and mourning, all which belong to Repentance: So in John's time, the fruits were to be such as were worthy of, or agreeable and suitable to Repentance, as their highest pitch; in Christ's own time, not only Peters weeping bitterly, but other such like Acts were found among the Disciples, as the best of what they had attained to: So in the Hebrews, this leads the Van, that they repented from dead works; who yet were unskillful as to the word of righteousness. The Corinthians, among whom were so many Babes, were famous for repenting, as may be seen, 2 Cor. 7.10, 11.

Having cleared these two things, I come now to show briefly,

3. The nature of Repentance, and how the Babes do act it. As to the nature of it, I shall proceed gradually and discover it by several steps. The;

1. Whereof is, a sight and sense of sin: The first work of the Spirit is to convince of sin, which is not only to let men see it, but to make them feel it; that they may be sensible what an evil thing it is to be a sinner.

There are indeed some common Principles (like seeds) scattered here and there in the hearts of men that live under the sound of the Gospel, before this powerful conviction come upon them, and by which way is made for Conversion. As, not only that there is a God, and that he ought to be worshipped (which the Heathen also have) but that the Will of God is the rule of worship, and that this Will and rule is revealed in the Scripture, from whence we learn what the good is which we ought to do, and the evil which we ought to leave undone: that he who transgresseth this Law doth sin; that whoever sins, deserves the wages of sin; that all are sinners; that every sinner stands in need of a Redeemer and Mediator; that Jesus Christ, Immanuel, the Son of God and the Virgin Mary, is this Redeemer and Mediator; and that the benefit (as to Salvation) which accrues to us from this Christ, is by Faith in him.

But though these Principles be owned by men, and God makes use of them to work on men, yet they amount not to a powerful and converting conviction, without a particular application and setting of them home by the Spirit of God. How many have this common notion that they are sinners, yea that they are such and such sinners, as Swearers, Drunkards, unclean, &c. yet are far enough from seeing the ugliness and feeling the burden of sin, so as to repent of it. Therefore the conviction I speak of is accompanied with a sense,

which is called pricking at heart, made by a special application of sin, and usually (if not always) in the first place of one or other particular sin: For not only common reason tells us, that generals are known by the particulars wherein they exist, but experience also tells us, that you shall scarce find any man, that is convinced of a bad nature, but by a bad life, The tree is known by its fruit. Hazael would not believe the Prophet that he had such a dogged nature; No nor Peter that he had so treacherous an heart, till sad experience made the conviction by its own breaking out. 'It is by a particular conviction of sin, either that of omission or commission, that men come to believe the more general corruption of their nature. When it comes to a Thou art the man, 'tis effectual indeed. And I think that the instances of converted ones (such excepted as have been as 'twere sanctified from the Womb) will evince this, that the first conviction is from being guilty of a particular sin; and accordingly their confession and reformation begins there.

This then is the sight and sense of sin which Babes have leading them to Repentance, viz. of one or other particular sin; of sin in the fruit, more than in the root; of sinful lives more than of sinful hearts; though this also come on by degrees afterward. The deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart was a thing that the many were not much convinced of, Jer. 17.9. No, nor the Disciples in Christ's own time, for our Savior tells them that they were without understanding in this point, Matth. 15.15, —20. And the Apostle cautions the Hebrew -Babes to take heed lest there be an evil heart of unbelief or any root of bitterness in them, more than they were aware of: Few Babes know what's latent in their hearts. Peter tells Christ upon occasion that he was a sinner, yet would not believe that his heart was so sinful, as Christ told him he would find it to be. They are generally (as carnal and) like other men in this, who know they sin, yet scarce know whence it comes (<H&G> ;) and therefore

commonly charge it more upon the Devil than upon themselves, and upon his temptations, rather than their own corrupt natures, if not on God himself, see Jam. 1.13, 14, 15.

2. The second step or degree of Repentance is confession of and sorrow for sin, (I put them both into one, because they go together) without which there is no true Repentance: 'It is godly sorrow that leads to a full Repentance, and this sorrow cannot be kept in ('tis as coals of fire in the bosom) it breaks out in confessions, lamentations and self-aborrency. As there must be a sight and sense, so there will be sighs and groans in true penitents; a woman may as well be delivered in a dream and without pain, as a soul repent without sorrow: and where this sorrow is, it is attended with confessions and complaints to God.

How these things are in and are expressed by Babes, I am now to declare, and 'tis thus: The thing which pincheth most and consequently comes first out in confession is the particular sin they were convinced of. Take a new Convert at Prayers, and I warrant you, that you will hear him telling God sad stories of what he was convinced of, be it good omitted, or evil committed, be it what sin soever: For I take it to be an infallible rule that according to the sight and sense, such is the sorrow and complaint; and that being of particular sin, this also is of the same. It is with these souls, as 'tis with children playing in the dust, they are not so much concerned for all the rest, as for that which falls into their eyes, they brush off the rest without much ado, but at that in their eyes they fall a crying. 'It is said of Paul (as soon as converted) Behold he prays, and had you over-heard him, doubtless you would have heard sad bemoaning's of his persecuting the Saints, a thing which stuck close to him, as a thorn in his flesh, all his days.

Beside this 'tis to be observed, that there is a great deal of legal bondage cleaving (as dross to Gold) unto their sorrow, for as yet they mourn more for sin as against them and a burden to themselves, than as 'tis against and a burden to God: more as it stands in the way of their peace and Salvation, than the glory of God; though that also have a little place. Woe unto us, we have rewarded evil to our own Souls, say they in the Old Testament: A grown Saint doth not leave out the consideration of the evil it hath done to himself, when he sorrows for sin, and God allows it should be so, yet this goes most to his heart, as it did to David's, Psal. 51. That against thee, against thee I have sinned; he could better bear his broken bones, his own shame and pain, than the sense of this, that he hath grieved and dishonored his God: But this is the weakness of poor Babes (to which yet God will be merciful) that whereas they fetch a sigh now and then for God's sake, they fetch many for their own. They are best at that to which nature is assistant and helpful, as 'tis to sorrow for sin, because they have wronged themselves; but Faith and Hope are altogether supernatural and therefore are more faintly acted by them.

Again, you may observe in them, that as the sight and sense of a particular sin did first awaken them, so it still startles them, and they think that scarce any other, or all the other are such a cloud between God and them as that one sin; and they scarce mind so much a general pardon, as the pardon of that one sin: Indeed they sometimes cry out in general, Wretch that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? But their most common complaint is of such particular sins; and of such in which Satan generally hath an hand; but as for the secret lurking's of lust, the stealing's away of the heart from God, private correspondencies with pride and worldly love, &c. these things (which are the great trials and exercises of grown Saints) are little taken notice of, or minded by the Babes.

Where they do sorrow, 'tis true they do sorrow greatly, and sometimes like Rachel refuse to be comforted, and are in danger to be swallowed up with over much sorrow, i.e. with despair; of which there are these reasons, 1. Because they have a sense of sin but not of forgiveness, they are convinced of sin but not of righteousness: Now though the sense of a pardon do not take away all sorrow for sin, yet it takes away the excess of it, as also the legality, but this being not fully attained by Babes, they sorrow many times as men without hope: and this continues the more violent, because, 2. They find their corruption yet strong and unmortified: and because 'tis not done, they think it shall not be done, but they shall one day perish by the hand of Saul. The taste and tang of their former sins is (many times by Satan) kept fresh and strong, though they have repented, and therefore they fear and mourn desperately, but this sorrow needs sorrowing for, it being so drossy and mercenary, for they even think to make God amend this way, and to compound with God, so much sorrow for so much sin, without eying Jesus Christ (the Propitiation and the Advocate) as they ought. All this (beside the confirmation that is from experience of young converts) will be evinced by the story of the Prodigal, Luke 15, of whom 'tis said in the first place, that (after being long dead in sin) he came to himself, i.e. was convinced of his wicked living, and therewithal of his own lost undone and perishing condition, which is the very hinge upon which he turns about to go to his Father: The first sense is not of sin as against God (though that came in afterward) but as against himself: whereupon he takes up a resolution to go and complain of sin, and withal that he will indent with God, to serve him for wages as an hired servant: but as soon as the Father had kissed him, and assured him of his Love, though he goes on to confess his sin, yet not a word more of being an hired Servant. So these poor Babes they come to God with a composition, and indent like hirelings, they are afraid of being damned, and rather than so, they will serve God with Prayers and

Tears day and night; but after God hath kissed them with the kisses of his mouth, they abide in the house as Sons that serve him, and not as Servants. The grown Saints then, we see, do much in a little; when Babes (at and while such) do but a little (though they keep much ado) in all they do. Love and Faith do more in a day, than Fear will be able to do in many days, or years. But,

3. To come to the highest step and degree of Repentance, 'tis not only for but from dead works; there is a reformation and fruits worthy of, proper and suitable to, this their Repentance. Men that repent do not only say, What have I done? And mourn for that, but what? Lord! What wilt thou have me to do? And so fall into a way of obedience. When John the Baptist called for fruits worthy of Repentance; 'tis very observable, that Luke 3.7, —14, the people asked, What shall we do? Vers. 10, and the Publicans, What shall we do? Vers 12, and the Soldiers, What shall we do? Vers. 14. To all whom he gives directions to leave their former (particular) sins, and to lead new lives directly contrary to their former lives; which is the proper fruit of Penitents. When they were pricked at heart, Acts 2.37, they cried out, What shall we do? And the Jailor, Acts 16. Sirs, what must I do? And Paul himself, Acts 9. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? True Penitents are not only for humiliation, but reformation: they repent not only for, but from dead works, yea the Babes do so. How? Or in what sense? Thus,

Dead works are properly such sins as they lived in before conviction and conversion, such as are the course of the world and of men acted by the Devil, as is clear by Eph. 2.1, 2, 3. There are other sins which are deadly workings (for to be carnally minded is death, Rom. 8.6.) which yet cannot in a strict sense be called dead works, which are the sins of men dead in trespasses and sins. So that though grown Saints do mortify, not only the flesh, but the lusts and affections too, yet

Babes scarce go further than leaving the works of the flesh, the sins in which they lived before conversion; thus did the Prodigal, he spent no more of his time and substance upon Harlots and riotous living. Zacheus begins with mercy and restitution as to any wrongs he had done to any, Luke 19.8. So Paul to Preach the Christ and the way which he had persecuted, Acts 9. The Jailor from making wounds, turns Surgeon and binds up the wounds which he had made, Acts 16. Throughout the Scripture you will find, that babes became clean contrary to themselves, you shall not find them retaining the sins which they were first convinced as guilty of, and this is their Repentance from dead works. And this shall suffice to have been spoken concerning the Explication of the first attainment of Babes, or their eating the first portion of Gospel-milk, viz. Repentance from dead works.

The Application follows.

I. With reference to them that have not Repented, and so are not Babes. 2. To them who are Babes, and have repented from dead works.

1. With reference to them who have not repented, and are not yet Babes, not new-born. Alas! There are but too many who live under the Preaching and Profession of the Gospel, & are called Christians, who have not received into themselves this first spoonful of Milk, nor learnt the first principle of Repentance from dead works. Though men take up the common Principles (which I named above but newly) yet they have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, so as to understand with their heart, to be converted and healed. Their hearing and seeing doth not affect their hearts, they are still without a sense and feeling of sin. How many that know Drunkenness,



Uncleanness, &c. to be sins, and that they live in such sins, yet are not pricked at heart? They never yet so saw sin as to feel it; nor so felt it, as to confess and be sorry for it; or never so complained or sorrowed as to repent from dead works; to cry out, What have I done! Or, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do! They have done more than enough to undo themselves; have been told the way of recovering and saving themselves; and yet these things are but to them as idle tales, and we are to them (as Let to his Sons in Law) like them that mock; that flatter them with promises, or scare them with threatening's, as if we were not in good earnest. But that they may yet at last be awakened, and if peradventure God may give them Repentance, I shall entreat them to consider these things.

1. Consider this, that all the common principles which thou hast received from the light of Nature, Law, or Gospel will not be sufficient to justify, but they will to condemn thee, as Rom. 1.18.—21, &c. and chap. 2.14, —27. Our Lord Jesus Christ will one day sit in Judgment upon men, and he will then convince and condemn them from their own Principles: Men's Consciences will be one of the Books that shall then be opened, and they will be self-condemned. As for example, suppose Christ Jesus to ask these Questions, Did not you believe and know that there was a God? Yes Lord, we did, Why then did you not serve him? Did not you believe that his Word declared his Will? Yes Lord, saith Conscience, Why then did ye not obey his Word? &c. Men will be speechless and silent, having nothing to say for themselves, as he that came without a wedding garment. If thy Principles do not convince thee now, they will condemn thee hereafter, and thou wilt cry out when 'tis too late, my perdition is of myself, even I being Judge, I have rewarded evil to mine own soul.

2. Confider, how many times God hath been knocking at thy door, and how long waiting to be gracious unto thee: How many times hast

thou been smitten at a Sermon, and trembled like Felix; how often thou hast been almost persuaded (as Agrippa ) to be a Christian; how many times thou hast purposed and promised to sin no more; and yet after all this thou hast given up thyself to sin, and even like another Ahab, sold thyself to work wickedness: How thou hast eaten, drunk, played and slept away the convictions that have been upon thee: How thou hast forgotten, or smothered and put off these things thus; 'tis true sin is an ugly thing, but it hath its pleasure for the present; 'tis time enough and I intend to repent hereafter; others are as bad as I and yet we scape well enough; only a qualm and gripe comes over us now and then, but it goes off again; Ministers must have leave (because 'tis their place) to reprove sin; but God is merciful, &c. Thus do many put off all convictions, and though they have been gashed and wounded, yet (like Dogs) they lick themselves whole again, as they think. Yet after all this it pleaseth God to take more pains with thee, this day he calls on thee once more, to hear his voice lest thou be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, and by thy impenitency and hardness of heart shouldst heap up wrath against the day of wrath. Oh what goodness is this! Despise it not at thy peril, see Rom. 2.4, 5. For,

3. Consider and know assuredly, if thou die impenitent and in thy sins, thou art damned (forever) irrecoverably. If thou harden thy heart, God may harden it too; if thou give up thyself, God may give thee up too, and then thou art in the Suburbs of Hell, and dost but fill up thy measure, and heat the Furnace seven times hotter while thou art adding sin to sin. The tokens of Death are upon thee, the very Plague sore, for such is a hard heart: and I have nothing to say but the Lord have mercy upon thee; which if he have not, thou wilt howl and cry and roar in Hell; Oh wretch that I was, that for a little sinful pleasure, and worldly pelf (which was but for a little time) I have undone, undone my Soul and that forever, forever (woe and alas)

forever. But now if God bless this to awaken thee, that thou do in earnest say, What shall I do to be saved? If thou be a-thirst, then hear God's Proclamation, Isa. 55. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come and buy Wine and Milk, without money and without price (take the waters of Life freely, Rev. 22.17.) Incline your ear and come, hear and your Souls shall live, &c. Dost thou not hear him calling? Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matth. 11.28, behold he calleth thee.

2. The second branch of this use is to you Babes who have repented from dead work. And 'tis to bespeak you not to despise the day of small things, but bless God that hath brought you hitherto; God hath laid a foundation and he will lay the top-stone in due time, that I may allude to what is said, Zach. 4.9, 10. In this Text that we are upon, this Doctrine is called a Foundation, and surely 'tis not laid in vain. We come sometime to a place where some great person is about to build a great House, and when we see only the groundwork laid, and a great deal of rubbish lying about it, we think little of it; but if we stay a while till it be built upon, we haply admire the design and structure too: God brought a goodly world out of the Chaos which was first made; and so he doth in the new Creation: the first work seems to be a confused business; I but if we stay till the six days be over, and God have finished his work, we shall then say, Behold it is good exceedingly. When the Jews began to build, the Heathen laughed them to scorn, What will these feeble Jews do? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish? If the Fox go up he shall break down this stone wall, Nehem. 4.2, 3. But for all this, the head stone thereof was brought forth with shouting, Grace, grace unto it: And so shall it be with thee O Babe, thou shalt attain to thy perfect stature, therefore do not look on this small beginning as a thing of naught. God will carry thee from Repentance to Faith, and from thence to obedience, thou shalt have food convenient for thee to

bring thee up: Bless God then that thou hast learned the first letter of his Name ( The Lord gracious, for so thou hast tasted him, 1 Pet. 2.2, 3.) that thou hast learnt the first lesson in the School of Christ, and till thou learn more, consider these things that follow, as well as those that have been already spoken.

1. Think what a mercy 'tis that God hath put a stop to thine issue of blood, and to that fountain of uncleanness which did run over into thy conversation: Consider what thou wert doing, wert thou not committing iniquity with both hands greedily, drinking it down as water, and doing wickedly as thou couldest, to thy utmost? And hath God stopped thee in thy career? Oh think what mercy 'tis: How many thousand actual sins more mightest thou have been guilty of, if God had not put this hook into thy nostrils, and bit into thy Jaws, and so kept thee from rushing like the Horse into the battle. Had not God hedged thy way with these pricking thorns and grieving briars of conviction and Repentance; thou wouldst have followed thy Lovers to death and hell; and is it nothing that he hath prevented thee? Bless God (as David did for Abigails coming) who kept thee from sinning this day. It may be thou wert resolved (like Saul, though 't were madness in thee as in him) to go on in being injurious, a persecutor and blasphemers; to be as proud, covetous, unclean, &c. as thou couldst, to gratify the lust of the eye, the flesh and pride of life to the utmost; hath God diverted, yea converted thee? Bless him for it. 'It is a great thing to have a stop put to sin, though it be but newly done, or little else done: as the Apostle tells the Corinthian Babes, Such were some of you (viz. such as were incapable of Heaven, and fit for Hell) but ye are washed, &c. 1 Cor. 6.9, —11, and yet the work of grace was but very imperfect in them.

2. Consider how many there are yet in the world, and it may be many of thine own relations, Bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh, and

some that have sat in the same Pew and heard the same Gospel that thou hast, and yet are not come so far as Repentance from, nor conviction of their dead works: they are yet dead in sins and trespasses, fast asleep in their security, without any sense of sin and sorrow for it; and hath God awakened thee to righteousness? Oh despise not the buddings of grace, but bless him that thou art so far quickened, that thou canst eat a little milk, though as yet but one portion. When so many sit and walk in darkness the way to Hell, that thine eyes should be opened to see the danger, and cry out, What shall I do to be saved, is a mercy not to be undervalued, but to be prized by thee, and God to be praised for it. 'It is great mercy that the foundation is laid, that the work is begun.

3. Consider this, that though thou be not yet clothed like the Sons of Nobles, and richly dressed like them, yet that the plain clothe, the country russet with which thou art clad will preserve thee. 'It is with God's Children as 'tis with the children of men in this respect; you come to a poor man's House, he hath a child newly born, 'tis dressed too, I but in very plain clouts; when in the rich man's House, the new-born child is dressed up gorgeously, with fine linen, scarlet mantle and Gold lace, and is as fine as hands and money can make it. Though God be the Father of all new-born Babes, yet some he dresseth like the children of the poor, others like the children of rich men: as to some, he doth but cover their nakedness, that it may not appear; but others he adorns, as 'tis expressed in Ezek. 16. When the Prodigal came home he put on the best robe, and the Ring ('twas sealing time very early) and the Shoes of the preparation of the Gospel on his feet, and Bread and Flesh, strong meat to feed him; when others it may be, though God have compassion on them and take them into his Family, and give them Milk to keep them from perishing with hunger, yet they have not a Ring given them all their days, nor anything but Milk to eat; and though they be clothed with

the same righteousness for kind, yet 'tis not so embroidered, and set forth to the eye, as the others was. The Church or Spouses garment is of diverse colors. 'It is a time of Love, but God doth not tell them of it, as he doth some as soon as he washeth them from their blood: The Father loves them, though he do not kiss them yet, as he doth some others of his Children. Well, however bless him that he covers thy nakedness; though thou see not the riches of his grace laid out upon thee, yet that he forgives thee.

4. Consider this, that God is better pleased with that little grace, than he is displeased with that much corruption which is in thee (only do not like thy corruption the more, but love and praise thy God the better) Though thou be but as Gold in the Ore, God hath more regard to thee, than to throw away the Gold because of the Ore; On no, he will lose no Gold: The Disciples were little better than this, and yet he would not lose one of them, nor the least grain of grace that appeared in them; but made much of the willingness of their spirit when the bodily flesh was weak, and the corrupt flesh strong: Though they were but as bruised Reeds and smoking Flax, yet he had not a little value for them; though there were more smoke than fire, yet he would not quench but cherish it. Though thy grace be little and thy corruption much, yet he will prize thee.

5. Think of this also, though thou have not assurance, yet thou hast that which will secure thee, and doth ensure thy Soul. Every grace is assuring in its nature and degree, though thou have not the evidence and comfort of it: and is it nothing to be safe? Thou art upon the Foundation and shalt stand and not fall, for thou art in a state of blessedness; Eternal life is begun, and there is no falling from Eternal life, This day is Salvation come unto thee (as it did to Zacheus) and it will never depart from thee. This state is blessed, for so are they that mourn, and in due time they shall be comforted,

Matth. 5.3, 4. The beginnings of grace (though but poor and therefore mourners) is blessed, and it shall be blessed, as old Isaac said of Jacob. Poor weeping soul, thou little knowest what Joy there is in Heaven at thy weeping on earth, see Luke 15.7, and again Vers. 10, and Vers. 32. Thy sighs make Angels sing: The crying of the Babe makes the Father laugh, as our saying is, and 'tis true of the heavenly Father; and all this is spoken of this first attainment of Babes, viz. Repentance. Paul rejoiced that he made the Corinthian Babes sorrowful, because they sorrowed to Repentance, which was to salvation, and never to be repented of, 2 Cor. 7.9, 10, yea Jesus Christ seeing the travail of his soul safely delivered, rejoiceth that a man or woman child is born, though it be not yet any more than new-born: thy sorrow makes him forget his sorrow. Our Savior after his Resurrection appeared to Peter before he did to the twelve, 1 Cor. 15.5, and the Angel sent the first tidings of his Resurrection to Peter, Mark 16.7, for he was repenting and weeping bitterly, which was as another Conversion to him, as our Savior hinted to him before, Luke 22.32. When the Incestuous person repented, Paul takes care that he may be comforted, lest he should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow, 2 Cor. 2.7. Thus are we given to understand how precious the tears of Penitents are, and yet withal that God would not that they sorrow over-much. Though he love to see them swim in tears, yet he takes care that they may not be drowned (as the word notes) in tears: though he love a broken, i.e. a contrite heart, yet he would not that such should break their hearts, or despair and mourn as them that are without hope.

In Cant. 2.14, the Spouse was fallen to the ground (for grief and sorrow, as I take it) and hid herself in the clefts of the rock and the secret places of the stairs, and the little Foxes (Satan's temptations and wiles) did endeavor to spoil the Vine that had but tender grapes; but the Bride-groom, seeing her in this disconsolate condition,

bespeaks her thus, Rise up my Love, my fair one and come away, Vers. 10, and again Vers. 13. Let me see thy countenance and hear thy voice; Mine O Lord, alas I dare not look up, I am so black; as 'tis said of the poor Publican, Luke 18.13, that he stood afar off, and would not lift up his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast and said, God be merciful to me a sinner: My countenance, O Lord, 'tis not worth looking on, saith this poor soul, these blubbered checks of mine and eyes standing full of tears will not give me leave to look up: But saith he, Let me see thy Face for it is comely; I love it now the tears run down, I love to see it beset with these Diamonds, and silver drops of tears, 'tis a precious sight in my eyes; and therefore let me see thy face; yea and let me hear thy voice; My voice Lord, alas, I can but chatter as the Crane, and mourn as the Dove; Oh let me hear this voice of thine, thy sighs and groans are music and make melody in mine ears, let me therefore hear it, For sweet is thy voice and thy countenance comely; Rise up my Love, my Dove, my fair one and come away: for lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land; The Fig-tree puts forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grapes give a good smell; I will take the Foxes that spoil the Vines, and preserve the tender Grapes. Thus may the dear and loving Jesus (and oh that he would thus) speak to thee, poor soul; that after thy April of showers, thou mayest have a month of May with all its flowers, and be able to conclude as the Spouse did, Vers. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his. In the meantime, if thou hear not this joyful sound, if thou have not Wine to drink, nor meat to eat, yet go thy way and eat thy milk with as merry a heart as thou canst, for God accepteth thy work (even thy Repentance from dead works) to allude to that, Eccl. 9.7, only take not up here, but go on and believe too. And this brings me to speak to the second attainment of Babes, Faith towards God, which is another portion of the Milk they eat.



## II. Of their Faith towards God.

The second Principle of the beginning of Christ, which he calls Milk (and yet a foundation too) is faith towards God. The Object is God, the Act is Faith, the manner and power of its working is towards, and but towards, God: and how happily our translation hath used this word (<H&G>) is scarce used again (in relation to Faith) in all the Scripture, with an accusative case, and it denotes a tendency, and is therefore very well Englished, Faith towards God; and so this preposition (<H&G>) is used, Luke 10.9. The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you, or hath approached towards you, 'tis at hand; so this Faith is an approach, a coming towards God: it hath not attained its perfection and termination, but is in motion and tendency; these Babes, I speak of the lowest and weakest of Babes, cannot be so properly said to have closed, as to be closing with God; they are nigh and at hand, they are not so much said to be come, as to be coming; it notes a gradual, and but a gradual attainment; 'tis not a complete and perfect act, but a begun and reaching Act; yet such as shall be completed in its time, and is accepted for the present: for 'tis said, Joh. 6.37. He that is coming to me (so the Greek) I will in no wise cast out.

The Object of this Faith (you see) is God, viz. the Father, not in opposition to, yet in distinction from the Son; for these Judaizing Christians, who were generally Babes, kept to the Old Testament Spirit, which was a Faith towards God, not without a respect to the Messiah; for as the Father and the Son act in the Soul (no man coming unto the Father but by the Son, nor any man coming to the Son, unless the Father draw him) so the Soul acts towards the Father

and the Son, but yet mostly to the Father, as looking on him to be the person mostly offended, and with whom it stands in most need of reconciliator, and therefore makes its principal address to the Father, yet by Christ, or for the Lord's sake, as Daniel speaks, chap. 9.17. And upon this account the distinction is (and better known to grown Saints) that Repentance is towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20.21, or (<H&G>) unto God and unto Christ, as the words are. But the Babes being in great part ignorant of the union between the Father and the Son, in this work of grace to Salvation, as 'tis hinted to Philip, &c. Joh. 14.8.—11, and not considering that they are to honor the Son as they honor the Father, Joh. 5.23, they usually let their Faith and its motions to be most towards God, without such distinct considerations of Christ, as united to and in conjunction with the Father, as the Object of Faith.

The soul being awakened (as I have formerly touched) and made sensible that it hath displeased God by sin, and wronged itself, and that therefore it is unworthy to be accepted, and welcomed upon its own account, and withal that (being without, strength and righteousness) it is unable to make its peace with God, and that if its peace be not made, it is undone, it makes addresses to him, upon a kind of common Faith that he is merciful, yet (if a Jewish Babe as of old) under the notion of a God that must be atoned by Sacrifices, (the types of Christ) and if a Gentile converted Babe, then in the name of Christ, though too much without the notion of him as the Lord our righteousness (for they are unskillful in that word) or being sound in him having the righteousness which is by Faith, and so to rejoice in Christ Jesus and to have no confidence in the flesh, either their birth privileges, or own graces and duties and actual righteousness, such as 'tis: but they make toward him as well as they can. And therefore by the way, that act of Faith, which we call reliance, adherence, and recumbency, cannot be the first saving act that Babes put forth

(which yet they afterward do) but being convinced by the teachings of God, Joh. 6.45, concerning themselves (what was said newly) and that unless they believe in Christ Jesus they cannot be saved; and concerning Christ Jesus that there is Salvation to be had by him and no other, Acts 4.12, and that he came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1.15, and that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting Life, Joh. 3.16. I say, being thus convinced, they do in some measure receive this report and witness of God (made in and by the Gospel) and consequently in like measure receive Christ Jesus, and also come unto him; for by these two words (receiving and coming) is the first workings of Faith most usually expressed, Joh. 1.12, 13, with Joh. 6.35, 37, 44, 45, 47, compared. This is the beginning of their Faith, and (from this receiving, coming or addressing grows up in time reliance upon and trusting in him, though without an assurance that Christ is theirs and they are his) this I say, is saving Faith.

Seeing therefore the work of grace is (as experience generally shows) a confused thing (a kind of Chaos) at first, and many things are jumbled together without distinct considerations, and they go puttering on in a dark way; I shall therefore endeavor to show the several workings of it, which it may be these souls will be better able to assent to, hearing it from others, and calling to mind what they have observed, than they will be able (otherwise) to discover and declare it themselves.

We see there are two persons that this Faith of Babes hath to do with, viz. God and Christ, though God especially and in the first place; now how it acts towards God and then towards Christ I shall endeavor to make plain and evident: and 1. How this their Faith acts towards God, viz. thus: 1. That God is and is a rewarder of them that seek him out; for as without this 'tis impossible to please God, so to come to

God in a seeking and addressing way, Heb. 11.6. There is a Faith called coming, and there is a Faith preceding this coming, which is a believing that God is (for none would look after a non-entity or that which is not, or is not believed to be) and a believing that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; that they shall not seek in vain, if they seek in truth; now the Babe believes this in general, though it cannot yet see its coming and seeking to be such as shall be welcome and rewarded. As was the case of the woman of Canaan, and the Prodigal at first. 2. Babes believe this (as to God) that he can turn them, and save them if he please; and this believing his power (though not his will, as grown Saints do) is owned and accepted with great respect. When Ephraim was bemoaning himself, he says, Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; and God presently says, Ephraim is my dear Son, a pleasant child. I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord. Jer. 31.18, —20. So the Prodigal believed that his Father could (though he had spent all) yet set him up again, and that he might be a new-made-man. The Babe speaks like the Leper, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, and it proved so. Yet believes there is grace and bread enough in God's house; if he have but will, he hath power enough to pardon: the Question is not about his power but about his Will. Yet throughout the Scripture this is owned and accepted. We read of one poor man that came to Christ distrusting his power, but Christ-puts him on believing that before he would do anything for him; and when he did that, Christ did what he came for, Mark 9.22. &c. 3. Babes look further, even to the promises of God, they find many invitations and promises also, and they have recourse to these, but do not so much mind Christ, in whom all the promises of God are, yea and Amen, so that they do as 'twere rest upon the Ark, but do not come into it: whereas grown Saints, see Christ Jesus as the foundation and fullness of every promise, and do not take up with the Cabinet without the Jewel, or with the Field, without the Pearl hid in it. The Promises indeed are encouraging

means to Faith, but are not the Rest of the soul: Forgiveness of sins is not from the promise without Faith in Christ, Acts 26.18, nor eternal life itself, 2 Tim. 1.1, nor righteousness, Phil. 3. Of this also the Babes have a general notion, and so they make toward Christ, not with full sails, but with a side-wind as 'twere; and this I am now to show, how

2. The Faith of Babes acts toward Christ Jesus. And that 1. As the Son of the living God, to whom the Father hath given and committed all things, and this is one of the things which is revealed unto Babes, as is clear by comparing Mat. 16.16, 17, with Mat. 11.25, 27. When Peter confessed Christ to be the Son of the living God, our Savior calls him blessed, and tells him that not flesh and blood but his Father had revealed it to him: and in the other place blesseth his Father who had hid this (as other things) from the wise and prudent, but had revealed them unto Babes. 2. Babes believe that God sent his Son into the world to save sinners; and 'tis a degree of Faith that Jesus Christ accepts, and commends, Joh. 17.8. Christ tells his Father of it by way of commendation, that his Disciples (as yet but Babes) had believed that he had sent him, viz. to be the Messiah to restore and redeem Israel, which though some of them understood (for a while) but carnally, yet they had it seems now a better notion of it, and in Joh. 16.27, he tells them that his Father loved them, because they loved him and believed that he came out from God, viz. to repair the world. And though they have not yet such distinct notions of the Priest-hood of Christ, of his becoming sin for them that they might be made the righteousness of God in him (both which are by imputation) yet this general Faith carries them towards Christ Jesus: this assent leads them to an addressing Faith, as appears in these following discoveries of it.

1. This Faith which they have (as to both God and Christ) puts itself forth in purposes and resolutions to go to God, though it be but on a

probability or possibility (such as that of the Lepers, 2 Kings 7.) uncertain hope is preferred before certain danger and death: No sooner did the Prodigal believe that in his Fathers house there was bread enough, but (on this very account, though he knew not how he should speed) he would venture to go, rather than perish with hunger: and this was first in a purpose, I will arise go, &c. Well, saith the soul, I see this, if I live in my sins I must die, (sin and death keep company) but there is mercy with the Lord, he can forgive me, if it so please him; and 'tis a faithful saying and worthy to be received that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and though I cannot say God will be merciful to me, yet I will arise and go, I will adventure, and see what he will do with my poor Soul. And truly God takes this kindly (as 'twas said of David about building the Temple, that 'twas in his heart to arise and go:) these first motions are very acceptable to God.

2. The Faith of Babes (toward God and Christ) puts itself forth in Prayers; this Babe not only breaths but cries: as 'tis said of Paul, Behold be prayeth, Acts 9.11. This Faith goes with a petition in its mouth, as the Prodigal did, I will not only arise and go, but I will say too, I will confess my sin, beg pardon, and withal a place in the house, though but that of a Servant. So the poor Publican, (yet afar off, as the Prodigal was) Lord be merciful to me a sinner; and this much upon the general account of mercy (for hitherto (saith Christ of his Babes) ye have asked little or nothing in my name) and he went home justified, Luke 18. So that God picked out Faith there, for by Faith (not by Prayer or Repentance) are we justified. This Faith puts purposes into Prayers, and Prayers into practice, for the Prodigal arose and came; and was welcome.

3. Therefore this Faith puts itself in obedience, and in submitting to ordinances, as Baptism, &c. as soon as any were new-born, I speak

de adultis, did believe in Christ, they were initiated by Baptism into the mysteries of Christian Religion; and submission to this was (as to men) a proof of their Faith: and that this was the constant course appears not only by instances, but the Apostles conjoining the doctrine of Faith with that of Baptisms, &c. Thus by degrees doth the Faith of Babes creep and go towards God and Christ. But there are yet some more inward things, which these souls (some of them, for they are not acted all alike) do find in themselves, though they can hardly express them distinctly, or tell what to make of them. As,

1. If there be, (for they, some of them, are full of its and doubting's, fearing that there is no work, or that they are but Hypocrites) but say they, if there be any true work in us, and wrought by us, 'tis of God; we are wholly beholden to him for it. We cannot justify and warrant our Repentance and Faith for sound and good; but if there be any such thing, 'tis wrought by God himself, for we are not sufficient of ourselves to think one good thought, in us there dwelleth no good thing. If we are accepted, surely 'tis of grace in the beloved: From their Prayers for mercy I conclude that they attribute all to mercy, and say, Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, as Paul did, Rom. 7. 'It is, saith the poor Soul, 'tis the Lord's mercy that I am not in Hell, and if ever I go to Heaven, I will admire grace and mercy.

2. There is this also in them, that they have a great value for Christ Jesus, though they cannot say that he is theirs, or that they are his: they think him the chiefest of ten thousand, and worthy to be beloved and believed in, though they have not attained him, so as to lie in his bosom, as John did and many others do. If they had ten thousand worlds, they would give it for him (for as yet they are for buying and purchasing, more than for believing) if he would but smile upon them, and kiss them with the kisses of his mouth, oh how would they love him! Higher Christians are rich in experiences, but these are

rich only in wishes, desires and breathings. They so long after him, that they would be content to be (though but as hired Servants) anything, in any condition, if he will but receive them; yea, if they may but gather the crumbs that fall under his Table, though they should not have the children's bread bestowed upon them. If he would but let them know that they shall come to Canaan at last, or but open a door of hope for them, they would willingly go through the Wilderness and the Valley of Achor too, and lay their mouth in the dust, if there may be but hope. If they may not have a full meal of joy in the Holy Ghost, nor rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, yet they will be thankful for some crumbs of comfort, and good hope through grace.

3. If these longings of theirs may not be satisfied, yet this they have fixed and rooted in them, that they would walk in this darkness and pain all their days, rather than go back again to their old condition of living in sin. They will rather wait and beg at his doors to the death, rather than dwell in the tents or the most pleasant courts of wickedness. They will rather be God's hired servants, than the Devils children, and live with the Swine of this world, that wallow in the mire and filth of sin and iniquity, as you may read in the returning Prodigal. No, no, they will not go back to Drunkenness and uncleanness, to impenitency and hardness of heart; but if they must perish, they will perish repenting and praying, &c. if they must starve, be it so; at God's door they will lie and beg, come of them what will: they will not go anywhere else for Salvation. Though he kill them, they will trust in him, and rely upon him.

4. Besides all this, you will find that these Babes will confess, that now and then they have some secret soul-supporting in-comes, but say they, We know not what to make of them, nor whence they come, for they quickly depart again, and our fears return upon us



notwithstanding. Sometime a word hath come and saluted them, but it passed by and went away. They will tell you, that they had such a (bath col) whisper in their Souls, my grace is sufficient for thee, or I have prayed that thy Faith fail not, &c. whence it came or whither it went they cannot tell, but alas this they can tell, that it vanished like an Echo. The Disciples had many a support at times, yet ever and anon were carking, fearing and doubting again, like (<H&G>) them of little Faith: So these poor Souls, though they have now and then a secret cordial given them, yet it doth but keep them alive, they are hungry, weak and faint still. Many such things as these are with them, and they are (to a grown and knowing Saint, who hath gone through them) very promising things concerning the future well-being of these Babes, though they themselves scarce gather hope or not more from them. Thus have I shewn how the Faith of Babes doth act, and after what manner they, some of them, the lowest and weakest Babes, eat this second portion of Milk, Faith towards God: before I show the rest, I think it necessary to say something (as to this) by way of

Application.

1. To such as are not Babes and have not Faith towards God.

2. To such as are Babes and have Faith towards God.

1. To such as are not Babes, and have not Faith towards God; Without breach of Charity it may be feared that there are yet more than many, who though they profess Faith, do not believe; The bleating of the Sheep, and lowing of the Oxen (to speak in Samuel's language to Saul) their living in sins doth witness against them. Surely he must be very prodigal of his Faith, and have a Creed very

large and contradictory to that of the Apostles, who can believe unsanctified persons to be Believers, when the very natural operation and effect of Faith is sanctification, Act. 26.18, to such therefore would I speak in Christ his own words, Repent and believe the Gospel; take in therefore this Milk of the Word, that you may live and grow thereby.

Consider I beseech thee, 1. That not believing is an Argument of thy not being yet convinced of the sinfulness of sin, that thou art not yet awakened out of that dead sleep, not come to thyself; for then undoubtedly thou wouldst resolve with the Prodigal to arise and go by Faith towards God, and confess thy sin, and beg as the Publican, Lord be merciful to me a sinner. If thou canst sin and sleep in sin, if thou canst lie contentedly in a perishing and damnable condition, and not cry out for Salvation, surely thou art in a most dangerous case, notwithstanding thy name of Christian; for what will it avail thee to have a name to live and yet be dead? If thou tell me thou hast repented from dead works, I can Answer thee it cannot be so while thou art dead in sins and walkest in them (for they are dead in sin, who live in it) Ephes. 2.1, 2, 3. But beside, if that were true that thou hadst repented, yet know this, that righteousness is not by Repentance but by Faith; so that if thou repent and do not believe, though thou be not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, yet thou art never the near, for the one thing necessary is wanting; and though thou seem too good to go to Hell, yet thou art not good enough to go to Heaven.

2. Consider this too that thou hast had and long had the means of Faith, viz. the Preaching and Hearing of the Gospel by which Faith comes: now what a sad thing is it to hear of Faith and not feel it, to be a hearer and not a Believer? Have ye not heard? Yes the Gossipel hath sounded loud and long in your ears. 'It is sad when the Gospel

comes to thee, and thou dost not come to God! When it comes in word and not in power! It had been better for thee thou hadst never heard, than to have heard and not believe. Better thou hadst never known the way of righteousness, than knowing it not to walk in it. 'Twill be more easy for Turks than for thee, according as 'twill for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for Capernaum, as our Savior speaks, Matth. 11. These things are said (as the Gospel is written) that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name, Joh. 20.31. And truly if you believe not the Gospel, neither would you believe if one should come from the dead: the more means of Faith, the greater condemnation if men do not believe, and greater means than that of God's appointing there can be none. And then,

3. Consider this, that Christ may take his Gospel and be gone, & then the things of thy peace may be hid from thine eyes, thou mayest die in thy sins and be damned forever: today therefore, while 'tis called today (now or never, i.e. now or it may never be) hear his voice who calls thee to repent and believe the Gospel that thou mayest be saved; which if thou do not, the same Gospel saith, He that believeth not shall be damned. Canst have patience to think of going to Hell? If not, believe. It were better thou hadst never been born, than to die without being new-born: 'tis sad to be dead in sins, but to die in sins, Oh who but them in Hell can tell how sad it is! Hear therefore and believe that thy soul may live.

2. I am now to address myself to the Babes, especially such of them as lie under despondencies of Spirit; and to you I say as before, 1. Despise not the day of small things: who knows to how great a tree this grain of Mustard-seed may grow? How great a fire this little spark may kindle? To how tall a stature a poor Babe may grow? Though thou canst eat but Milk, thou mayest grow thereby. Thou

hast got down one portion of Milk more already, and art not only one that repentest from dead works, but hast Faith also towards God. Though thou have no Wine, to make thine heart glad, nor oil to make thy face to shine, nor bread to strengthen thine heart, yet bless God that thou art alive and hast milk to eat. For,

1. Consider that thou art gone farther than thou art aware of, thou art nearer Heaven than thou thinkest for, in having Faith towards God: though thou be a great way off, yet thou art within thy Fathers ken and view, as 'tis said concerning the Prodigal while he was yet afar off (but a coming, but beginning to come) his Father saw him, had compassion of him, &c. the Father saw him before he saw the Father, and though he were but coming, yet 'tis said he was come; he arose and came, i.e. was a coming, for as yet he was afar off, and yet 'tis said he arose and came; his coming was looked on as if he were come; as Abraham is said to offer his Son in that he did purpose and was about to do it, so the Prodigal and the Babe is said to be come, though as yet but coming towards God. It's something to be on thy legs, that thy journey is begun (*dimidium facti qui bene coepit habet*) thou art on thy way, and thy Father sees it and hath compassion on thee, and as to Christ Jesus, he will never cast thee off, no by no means, see John 6.37, —39.

2. If thou never go further than to be a Babe all thy days, (suppose that) yet thou art gone far enough to be saved: by Faith we are saved, as safe as if we were saved. There is a blessing for this Faith, as before, Matth. 16.17, and Justification for this Faith, as before, Luke 18.14, and God loves such Believers, as before from John 16.27. 'It is not a little remarkable, that blessedness is annexed to the lowest as well as to the highest Form in the School of Christ, as in the Beatitudes, Mat. 5, and to these Hebrew Babes the Apostle saith, I hope better things of you (than of some that had been enlightened,

&c.) and things that accompany or contain salvation (though you be but Babes) Heb. 6.9, 10. Salvation is not annexed to degrees (as such) but to truth of grace (as such) in the lowest degree, John 6.37, him that is but coming.

3. As weak as thy Faith is, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, thou shalt be kept through this Faith by the power of God unto Salvation, 1 Pet. 1.5. This poor Soul is apt to scruple and say, Alas, my Faith is but small (if any) and I fear what will become of me in an hour of temptation, my strength is so small that I shall faint in the day of affliction. But the Lord saith to thee, Fear not, for though thou have but a little strength, yet because thou dost not deny his name, God will keep thee from the hour of temptation, or from the temptation of the hour, as it may be read, Rev. 3.8, —10. Though Saul pursue thee and hunt thee, yet the house of Saul shall grow weaker and weaker, and the house of David shall grow stronger and stronger, and the weak shall be as David, who notwithstanding his fear did not perish by the hand of Saul. Though thy enemies be strong and thy grace weak, yet thy weak grace shall be too strong for thy strongest enemies: Though the Sons of Zeruiah be strong, and in thine eyes too strong for thee, yet shalt thou die in peace. Maugre all the malice and power of Satan, the gates of Hell shall not prevail against thee, as Christ promised Peter, who believed as thou dost, that Christ is the Son of the living God: nor did it fail when Satan sifted him, for though he denied that he knew the man, he yet still believed that Christ was the Son of God, which was the Faith that Christ prayed might not fail. Let the rain descend, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat (all together) upon thee, yet thy house shall stand, for 'tis founded (like Mount Zion) on a rock that cannot be moved, Matth. 7.24, 25. Indeed if thy Faith alone were to buckle with Satan, 'twere impar congressus an unequal match, but thou art kept by the power of God, and the Prayer of Christ, so that there is

more power for thee, than there is against thee, though it be all the power of Hell.

4. These experiences which thou hast at present are such as none but a true Saint ever had or can have; the most exquisite hypocrite that ever was, never attained to what thou hast, viz. to be new-born and to be a Babe in Christ. To which of the Saints wilt thou turn? Ask them one by one whether ever any that cast themselves upon the grace of God in Christ Jesus (as thou dost) did ever perish, or that their hope was ashamed? No, no, the hypocrites hope shall perish, though he have gained a great name and repute, but thine shall not, though thou be but poor in Israel, and one of the least of many thousands. If thou canst but Seal to the workings of Faith (before spoken of) and I know thou canst if in Christ Jesus, though but a Babe in him, I then say, 'tis more than the exactest, most studied and polished hypocrite ever did or can attain to. A hypocrite may be gilded over, but thou art Gold; he may be enlightened, but thou art light in the Lord; he may grow up as the grass, but thou as a tree planted and rooted in Christ Jesus; he may seem to be, but thou art a Christian: whatever may be counterfeited, the new-birth cannot be counterfeited. When the conceitedly rich Laodiceans shall be found poor, thou who art as Smyrna, poor in thine own eyes, wilt be owned for rich by God himself, Rev. 2.9. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 5.3. 'twas the first blessing that ever Christ pronounced with his mouth, that we read of, and 'twas spoken of such as thou art.

5. Whatever thou think of it, yet 'tis a joy to good men and Ministers as 'twas to John (the bridegroom's friend) that thou and such as thou do hear the bridegrooms voice, and come unto him, Joh. 3.26, 30. Yea our Savior rejoined in Spirit and thanked his Father too, that such things were revealed to Babes, Luke 10.21, yea there is joy in

Heaven at the return of the Prodigal, though he were but newly come home, just alive, just found and no more, yet behold what joy there is at his coming, Luke 15, the joy is not delayed and put off till he be grown up, but there's a feast for his birth-day, and joy that the man-child was born. His Fathers heart leapt for joy, when as yet he had not the robe, not the ring put on, which followed afterward. Do not then reckon that small, which God makes so much of.

6. Thou wantest but the knowledge of thy happiness to make thee almost as happy as Angels: Thou art a Son, and if thou didst but know it, 'twere to be almost in Heaven. In Christ thou dost live, move, and hast thy being, and if thou didst but know this, what a well-being wouldst thou have? Paul in Gal. 4.9, speaking of Babes, says they are rather known of God than know God: Indeed, what God is now a doing they know not, but they shall know hereafter, as Christ told Peter, Joh. 13 7, and when thou shalt come to know as thou art known, thou wilt be filled with admirations and raptures; in the meantime wait with patience: yet so, as,

2. Remember to press forward, that thou mayest apprehend that for which thou art apprehended of Christ Jesus, Phil. 3.12. Seeing thou art in the way, keep on and mend thy pace; be not slothful (saith the Apostle to the Hebrew Babes) but followers of them (whose conversation is in Heaven, Phil. 3.17, and 20.) Who through Faith and Patience inherit the promises, Heb. 6.12. Grow in grace, not only by adding new acts of the same, and so persevering to the end, but add Faith to Faith, for the righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith, Rom. 1.17. Go on then from a Faith of address to a Faith of reliance, and so on to the full assurance of Faith and Hope, as the Apostle speaks to his Babes to do, Heb. 6.11. Ye believe in God believe in me also, saith our Savior to his, Joh. 14.1. If thou wilt grow in grace it must be by growing in the knowledge of our Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ, as Peter tells his new-born Babes, 2 Pet. 3.18. 'tis by being skillful in the Word of righteousness, and having thy senses exercised to discern between not only good and evil, but good and better. Pitch on Christ more immediately and perfectly, and not only through the intervention and mediation of thine own graces: let not his attendants be so much in thine eye as the King of Glory himself; in thy graces thou mayest see something of him by reflection, but in him thou wilt see perfect beauty, righteousness and strength.

Till thou come to this (or if thou shouldst never come to it) know for thy comfort, that 'tis no small thing to be known of God and accepted of him: God expreseth the privileges of the old Israel by this, You have I known above all people: God's knowledge is not like ours; we know this and that man, and he is little the better for it, it makes no alteration in him, but God's knowledge is operative and efficacious: 'twas God's consolation, that though he could not know the way of God, yet God knew the way that he took, and when God had thoroughly tried him, he should come out like Gold, see Job 23.9, 10. This world is thy Furnace and Purgatory, and though thou know not what God is a doing, yet he knows that he is now purifying thee from thy dross, that thou mayest be the pure and fine Gold. Yea though thou lie down in the dust of the grave in this state, yet he will raise thee up in glory, and when thou awakest thou shalt be filled with his Image. If in the meantime thou know not what to do, let thine eyes be to him, who is never at a loss nor out of his way, but is still carrying on his work to perfection, though it be in the dark to thee.

### III. Of their submission to Baptism, &c.

The two next things (of the six) which follow, are to show not only the Doctrine which was taught to Babes, but also their submission



thereunto, and are proofs (before men) of their conversion. As to the things themselves (Baptismes and laying on of hands) there is some difference, if not Controversy among Interpreters. Of the Doctrine of Baptism, (gr. Baptismes) some say this, That it refers to the several washings used by the Jews, one of which was with reference to the admission of Proselytes, to which Baptism succeeded; others, that it refers to both the outward and inward Baptism, that of water, and this of the Spirit. Of the Doctrine of laying on of hands; some say, that it refers to confirmation; others, to absolution; others, to ordination, &c. It seems to be the practice of Christ's Apostles after they had Baptized persons (sooner or later) to lay hands on them, by which gifts were conferred, Acts 8.17, and 19.4, —6, with many other places: Now, whether the Doctrine of Baptismes may not refer to the Baptizing of Gentiles as well as Jews; and laying on of hands also refer to both (a thing which the Jews could hardly bear) I submit to the consideration of others. As to our present purpose (not to meddle with Controversies) I do conceive that by these two things is noted in general, how Babes do submit and give up themselves to the obedience of such institutions, duties and ordinances as they are capable and convinced of: And further than this I shall not handle the Doctrine of Baptisms, and laying on of hands: and this all agree in.

Babes do submit to such ordinances, and duties, as (I say) they are capable and convinced of, for of all they are not, nor are they required at their hands, till in a capacity: Whatever Doctrine comes under the name of strong meat, they cannot bear. Our Savior would not put meat into Babes mouths, no more than men would put new Wine into old Bottles; and therefore they were not put upon fasting, (for want whereof in part they could not cast out one kind of Devils, Mat. 17.19, —21.) till Christ's departure and the descent of the Spirit, Mat. 9.14, —17. This duty of fasting (how formally soever used by the

Pharisees) is a duty too strong for Babes to be put much upon. Our Savior had many things (more) to say, which they could not bear till the Spirit came upon them, Joh. 16.12, 13, they could hardly endure the doctrine of Christ's death, Matth. 16.21, 22, they understood it not, Luke 9.44, 45, nor the doctrine of his Resurrection, Mark 9.9, 10, nor that of his Ascension to the Father and Intercession for them, Joh. 16.16, —18, which are the strong meat that grown Believers feed upon (as they also afterward did) Rom. 8.34, they were, while Babes, exceeding sorry at these things, Matth. 17.22, 23, which yet were to turn to their greatest joy after they came to a riper understanding of his Love and design herein, as Christ told them it should, Joh. 16.19, —28, and so strong Believers find it, Rom. 8.34, —39, he had some things also to tell them by way of Command, as that they should go and Preach to the Gentiles, Baptize and lay hands on them also, which as yet they could not bear: and while they were under this weakness, their first Commission was but for the Cities of Judea. Yea after Christ's Ascension, Peter himself was not convinced but by a Vision, that they might go to the Gentles; and 'twas a matter of great admiration to the Jewish Converts (who generally were but Babes) that to the Gentiles God had granted Repentance to life, Acts 11.18, and as they were Babes in point of gifts (for they were to do greater things after Christ's Ascension than they could before, Joh. 14.12, viz. such as we read of, Mark 16.15, —20, which was much beyond (both for the persons to be Preached to, and things to be done by them in) the first Commission, Matth. 10.1.) so were they Babes in grace also, (they were but of little Faith, Matth. 6.30.) they were very carnal in their apprehensions of Christ's Kingdom, as if it had been of this world; they were very dull of hearing the Doctrine of his death, &c. as was touched even now; there was much strife and envy among them; and a wrathful spirit calling for fire from Heaven; they were forward to promise, but not so to perform, for they could not watch with him

one hour, &c. by which it appears they were as carnal and but Babes, not capable of strong meat for Doctrine or duty.

What they (Babes) are, and what they are not capable of or able to bear, I shall not undertake to determine, only this I am sure of, that they are not to be received to doubtful disputations (if that be the meaning of the place) Rom. 14.1, of which I think the Margent gives a better account. But now, what they are capable of and convinced of, that they submit to and act accordingly, Acts 19. There were Disciples that had not heard whether there were a Holy Ghost or no, but as soon as they were convinced they submitted. The Disciples were not convinced of the Messiahs Offices, but in the general notion (without distinct apprehensions of the manner and way) of restoring the world; and therefore till after his Ascension, which proved theirs too, they had asked nothing in his name, Joh. 16.24, —26. Christ indeed had declared his Fathers name (The Lord gracious) and taught them to Pray, Our Father, and tells God that they had kept his Word, and believed that he came out from him, as sent by him, Joh. 17.6, —8, but a more particular Faith in him, and praying in his name (was to be taught by the Spirit, and) were things they were not yet convinced of.

The great thing I have now to do is to show, how and after what manner these Babes attend upon Ordinances and do their duties: which, alas, is in a very poor low way, the weaknesses whereof God overlooks, and accepts their will for the deed (and better than that) many times.

1. They are more at duty than in it, and use Ordinances much, but make little use of them, and (if I may so speak) are very full of duties, but little dutiful; very little comes of all their attendance upon and addresses unto God, they are where and as they were still, little

earnings do they make, God knows. They drive a great trade at hearing and praying, &c. hear precept upon precept, and line upon line; heap duty upon duty, but are very bunglers at it, and unprofitable after it. Like young children that make many meals, eat all the day long, and spoil as much as they eat, they mangle and crumble what is set before them, and dwindle away their time without feeding. Thus it was with the Hebrew -Babes, they did eat and eat, yet were always in need of milk, they do not, cannot walk in the strength of their meat (as the Prophet did) but are hungry again presently; the Word profits them little because not mixed with Faith, they have a bad digestion, and as ill a concoction; so that though they eat much, they are lean from day today. The Disciples who heard Christ Jesus Preach so often were yet (like the Hebrews) dull of hearing, and ever and anon were to know the meaning of this and that very plain and easy Similitude and Parable with which Christ taught them, and understood not this and the other saying. They were so unacquainted with praying, that they must needs have a Form of Prayer, or a Directory set before them. Though the Jews fasted often, yet to God not at all or very little; they abound in performances, and keep on the road and round of duties, yet make no riddance nor work of it; there is little Faith in their believing, little love in their loving, little obedience in their obeying: there is much of quantity, but little of quality; there is a great bulk of duties, but little of Spirit and life in them: their much is little.

2. They are very apt to place Religion in and to confine it to some certain duties, and say, 'It is good to be here (as Peter did) not knowing what they say. They are apt to think that nothing is duty (and that they must scarce do anything else) but to hear and pray: if I may allude to what is said of the Pharisees, Matth. 23.23, they are exact and punctual at positives, but defective in morals, they too much neglect the weightier things, as Faith and Love, &c. whereas a

grown Christian sees that the great part of his duty is in a faithful discharge of his particular calling, in buying and selling, eating and drinking, and doing all he doth (from the highest to the lowest duty) to the glory of God. The Babes are, as I may say, hearing and praying Christians, and so are the grown Christians also, but withal they are doing and practicing Christians which the Babes are but a little acquainted with. When Jesus Christ had cast a Devil out of a man, he that had been possessed prayed that he might be with him, but Christ had other work for him to do, Mark 5.18, 19, so these Babes cry to be with him (for so they call being at Sermons and Prayers) little considering that they may serve him better in being elsewhere many times: these things ought ye to do, and not to leave the other undone, say I to the Babes, as Christ did to the Pharisees. Constant walking with God, and finishing the work he hath given us to do, is the best being with him, and therein properly is our communion with him (to which hearing and praying is but relative, as means and helps to such an end) 1 Joh. 1.6, 7. Oh that Babes would learn this. For young beginners think they must lay almost all aside in comparison of hearing and praying, as if following their callings, and doing the work of their places were nothing to this, but (as Spira thought at the beginning) that they must lay aside all and live upon providence: whereas the excellency of a grown Saint is much in this that he divides his work aright, and gives everyone its portion in due season, for then 'tis beautiful; and so is he (in this sense alluding to 2 Tim. 2.15.) approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

3. They are apt to place more in Ordinances and duties, and to look for more from them, than God hath placed and put in them. They go to them as Rachel to Jacob, Give me Children or I die; but they may Answer (as he did her) Am I in God's stead? If God shut who can open? Poor Babes, if they have not what they have a mind to, they take pet, are sullen and discontented; what should I hear, pray and

wait for? They did look for joy, but none came; they went to hear the joyful sound, but heard it not; they went to the Lord's Feast, as to a sealing ordinance, but found no impressions of its Seal: and therefore are apt to complain, why should I go anymore? But let me tell you this is your Babishness: as that King said to the Woman who came to him for help, so may Ordinances say to you, how can we help if God do not help? God hath not called Ordinances and duties your comforters, but his holy Spirit is the comforter; the partaking of the Lord's Feast doth not Seal, 'tis the Spirits office: God never intended that you should make God's and Savior's of his Ordinances, but that you should look through them and above them, while you use them; grown Saints do so: they go to (and also go from) a duty and ordinance to God himself: They know 'tis not the man that speaks the word, nor the word that man speaks, but God that works. They go to them as to God's Wells and Conduit pipes, which they know have no water but from the Fountain, in whom all their fresh Springs are, and from whom all their fruit and increase is, 1 Cor. 3.6, 7. Paul's planting, and Apollo 's watering comes to nothing, if God do not give the increase by his blessing.

4. Babes (some of them) are too prone to think that they deserve something at God's hand by what they do (being yet under the bondage of hired Servants, and an Old Testament legal frame) they do not so much work righteousness, but they as much work for righteousness: they think to pray and weep themselves into the Love of God, and are as carnal men, who think to be heard for their much and long speaking, they are much for vows and Covenants, they set tasks on themselves; so many Chapters, so long at Prayers, &c. But if they fail of their expectation, then they are apt to say, What profit is there if we keep his Ordinances? And what gain if we draw nigh unto him, and have hands laid on us? And why have we afflicted our Souls, &c. like them in Isa. 58.2, 3. If they do anything with

enlargedness, and as they think better than ordinary, they then conclude (as Leah did, Gen. 30.20.) God hath endowed me with a good Dowry, now will he dwell with me, for I have born him Six Sons; and they call their duties Zebulun's, i.e., dwellings. If they find some enlargement in duty and bring forth such things plentifully, then say they, shall we have something from Heaven today, a smile or a token for good, because we have prayed with sighs and tears as well as groans today, and attended upon Ordinances with longings today; now we shall be God's darlings, surely he will make much of us: they being ignorant of God's (word of) righteousness, go about to establish their own, and look for acceptance and manifestations of love from their humbling's and Prayers (which is to be had in, by and through Christ only) and so they attain it not, because they seek it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law, Rom. 9.31, 32, with 10.2.3, 4. Their hopes of Heaven, and thoughts of God's love do flow and ebb, are higher or lower, according to the workings of their heart in their duties: They rejoice in these things as the Disciples did at the subjection of Devils, more than (as grown Saints do) that their names are written in Heaven, Luke 10.17,—20.

They promise themselves great matters from their performances, and submission to Ordinances, as if *opus operatum* the work done did deserve something: My beloved I speak not these things to shame you, but (as Paul did to his Corinthian -Babes) as my beloved ones to warn and instruct you, 1 Cor. 4.14, and therefore to clear this a little more, I entreat you to observe, that when Christ had told the Young-man that if he would leave all and follow him, he should have treasure in Heaven, Matth. 19.21, almost immediately thereupon, Peter said unto him, Vers. 27. Behold we have left all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? This was a Babish expression, as if they had deserved some great matter: pray what was this all he talks of? 'Twas a great all indeed! A poor little Fisher Boat, and an old

Net, &c. and was not this worthy to be ushered in with a behold? And concluded with a what shall we have therefore? Alas poor Babes, they thought themselves very profitable servants, as our Savior intimates to them, Luke 17.7, &c. to what purpose doth Christ tell them this story, but to let them know that he owes them no thanks, that they are servants to whom he is not beholden, for they had done but what was (and not all that was) their duty to do, and therefore makes the Application, verse. 10, so likewise ye, when ye have done all things commanded ye to do, say (sit down and write at the end of your accounts) we are unprofitable Servants. Thus he reproveth them for expecting a reward as due; Christ will reward them, not as debt, but by the gift of grace.

Take now a grown Saint, and he looks upon his all to be so little, and his best so bad, that he knows himself in debt to God, and not God in debt to him: he gives God but his own, what he first received, and which is still God's due, and never thinks that he merits by paying his debts and doing what is his duty to do. When such an one hath done anything for God, he is so far from demanding a reward of debt, that he looks for it only as a gift, as Paul did, 2 Tim. 4.7, 8, and doth not attribute the reward only to gift and grace, but all the duty and work which he hath done, and thanks God for it too, 1 Cor. 15.10, he looks on himself as needing Christ Jesus for his acceptance, not only after his ill doing, but after his well doing, and would not be found in any righteousness but that which is by Faith for all the world, Phil. 3.9, when he hath done all his duty, he looks upon himself as an unprofitable servant, as well as he doth when he falls short of doing all his duty, or as if he had not done anything at all, as they Matth. 25.37.

5. They too often value Ordinances according to the dispenser and administrator of them. Some of the Corinthian Babes gloried that



they were Baptized by Paul, others that it was by Apollo, others that 'twas by Cephas, 1 Cor. 1.12, —16. So as to Preaching, they are apt to confine God to such a man or such a sort of men; and like the same truth better if one man deliver it, than if another; and had rather receive the Sacrament (as 'tis called) from such a man, than from such a man: thus Babishly partial are these poor Babes. 'It is true indeed God may make one man's Ministry more useful than another's, and that doth much endear the man and his Ministry to such persons as have sat under it and felt it: but when people are divided by this and puffed up for one against another, 'tis then (as carnal) as I shall show hereafter, and the Apostle chides them for it, as for a Babish trick, 1 Cor. 3.4, and 1 Cor. 4.6. When men are not taken with the Ordinance as God's, but as man's, 'tis Babish; as 'tis noble indeed to receive the Word not as man's but God's, 1 Thes. 2.13, to overvalue one and undervalue another, or to value the Word of God for the man's sake, is a foolish and Babish thing. Take a grown spiritual Christian, and so he be built up in the holy Faith, and taught the way of God more perfectly, teach him Paul, or teach him Apollo, or Cephas, 'tis all one to him, yea though it be Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18.24.—26. Babes cannot say so, they must hear their Paul, Apollo, Cephas, or nobody: so if they be to join in Prayer, they are dull and dead if such or such an one do not pray and be their mouth to God: whereas an intelligent Saint it may be finds more, much more of God's Spirit breathing in one, that these Babes cannot have the patience to hear. Many more such things are with you, poor Babes, but as yet I spare you.

6. These Babes are sometimes sensible of their weakness and inability as to outward performances, but are not so much observant and sensible of their inward defects, as secret pride and confidence in what they seem to do well at any time: they say, as the Disciples, Why could not we cast him out? Matth. 17.19, they were aware that

there was a defect of power, for they attempted to do it, but could not: yet when at other times the Devils were subject to them, there was a spice and tang of pride attended their rejoicing at it, Luke 10.17.21, and though Christ thanked his Father for what they had received, yet he calls them Babes, Vers. 21, this word us, the Devils are subject to us, seems to take away a share from Christ, though they say, through thy name. And you shall find that after they had received the Spirit and were grown to a more spiritual condition, that they wholly lay the us aside and give all the glory to God in Christ, Acts 3.12, 13, why gaze ye on, as if we by our power, &c. God hath glorified his Son Jesus. Now you see the us is laid aside, and they do not run shares with Christ as they did before. So 'tis with Babes as to ordinances and duties, they find a weakness, they cannot do what they endeavor to do, to will is present but to do they have not power, this they are aware of; but now, when they meet with any power and stirrings and enlargements, they are apt to be lifted up, and if not to rest in them, yet to divide the glory between God and themselves; till they grow up, and then they say, Not I but Christ liveth; not I but the grace of God; and not to us, not to us, but to thy name be all the glory. But I pass from hence to speak a little to these Babes by way of;

#### Application.

These things being so (which you cannot well deny, poor Babes) let me bespeak you and exhort you,

1. To Consider not only what you ought to do, but how you ought to do it, not only the matter but the manner of all duties; and to measure your obedience more by the quality than the quantity, the weight than number of it, together with what ends you have in it: 'tis

not the bigness or juiciness of the fruit, but the relish that gives the commendation, and that is the end you have in doing your duties. If thy obedience have not a good relish (*ad gustum Dei*) if it do not taste well, though thy duties be never so many and well colored and full of enlarged affections, they are not acceptable to God, nor a sweet smelling savor to him. The usual question that Babes make is about the what of duty, what shall we do? Say they, Acts 2, what must I do, saith the Jailor? Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Saith Paul. They mind the matter of duty and ask often about the what: but as we should mind what to hear and do, so how to hear and do. We should not only receive the Lord's Supper, but so as to discern the Lord's Body; not only pray, but pray according to his Will; not only submit to Baptism, &c. but mind the how and why, as Rom. 6.3, —5. Col. 2.11, —13. God doth not look so much to the hand as to the heart, to the action as to the Spirit by which, and the end for which 'tis done. The rich men threw in much more for quantity than the Widow, yet her Mite was more than their abundance: there may be more of prayer in a short Ejaculation, than a long prayer of many words. God is taken more with a little well done, than with much good done: *Deus magis delectatur adverbiiis quam nominibus*; adverbs set out God best, as all that he did was good exceedingly, and Jesus Christ is not only true, but (<H&G>) truly bread: so adverbs set out our best, when we do what we do, truly, sincerely, faithfully, &c. for these express the Spirit and end of duties.

A little Gold refined is more worth than much in the Oar, and one Diamond hath more of value in it than a heap of common stones. A contracted Prayer may have more in it than a long one; not that I speak against the enlargedness of any persons affections in duty, for if God opens who can shut? But that none should place the excellency of a duty in length, or merely in fervency, for many things may occasion it, when it may not be fervency of spirit wrought by the

Spirit of God. 'It is not how much but how well, not how affectionate but how spiritual, that God minds: many Lads when they begin to write, strive to write much, but saith their Master, write me two lines well and I will take it better, than if you scribble and scrawl a side of Paper: Sat' & sat' cito si sat' been. 'It is not worshipping at Jerusalem but in spirit and truth that God minds; and as 'tis to place, 'tis to bulk, To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? 'It is a broken heart that I will not despise. The Apostle doth not take care only to pray or sing, but to do it with understanding and his Spirit also, 1 Cor. 14.15, spiritual things should be done spiritually; we should not only do the things which are pleasing to God, but do them so that the doing of them may be pleasing to him; his Will according to his Will.

2. Consider what is the true state, condition and design of Ordinances and Duties; they are not your food, but the dishes in which your food is set before you; not the water of Life, but the Conduit pipes through which 'tis conveyed to you; 'It is not the end of Ordinances and duties that you should make them your end; no, they are but means to an end: would you take up with food or Physic without health? Why then with Ordinances without the power, blessing and effects of them? Though I speak not this to take you off from Ordinances and Duties, yet that you may not look for that there which God hath not placed there, not have that value for them and trust in them which is due to the God of Ordinances: live not without Ordinances, but live above them while you use them.

3. Be more universal in your obedience and do not confine Religion to certain days and duties: God is the universal good, and we are most like him, when we are universally so: Then shall we not be ashamed, when we have respect to all his Commandments, Psal. 119.6. 'Twas the great commendation of Zacharias and Elizabeth,

that they walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of God without blame. They did not pick and choose some, make ifs and ands as to others; but were indeed lovers of all. And here is love that we keep his commands, viz. all of them, and they (not any of them) are not grievous, 1 Joh. 5.3. Every creature is good in one or other respect, they are particular goods, this or that; but God (as I said) is all good, and doth good to all: all his commands also are holy, just and good, and we should study to know, & do all the good and acceptable and perfect Will of God, Rom. 12.2, to be as like God, and to do all that God likes, as much as possible.

4. Observe the proper season of Ordinances and Duties, of Hearing and Praying, &c. everything is beautiful in its season: 'It is the glory of the Tree planted by Preaching, watered by Baptism, blessed with the laying on of hands, to bring forth fruit in season; for as it follows ( Heb. 6.7.) the earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it (precept on precept, and line on line) and bringing forth herbs meet (suitable and seasonable) for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; which refers to the Parable of the good ground hearers, as what follows, Vers. 8, refers to the thorny ground. There is a time for all things, and because man knoweth not his time, his sorrows are great upon him: 'tis unseemly for a man to mourn in a time of joy, as 'tis to rejoice in a time of mourning. To speak more to Babes, 'tis not beautiful because not seasonable to be praying in a time that calls for another duty, or to be hearing when it may be some duty in your calling or Family calls upon you to be then and there to mind that. Babes are too apt to rob Peter to clothe Paul, to take from one duty and give to another, therefore I speak thus unto them.

5. Do what you do more out of ingenuity than fear, and more out of thankfulness and gratitude than custom or constraint. Many carnal

ones come as the people cometh, company, custom, and the Bell, more than Conscience, tolls them to Ordinances; and too often Babes in Christ are in this as carnal, that sometimes they do not so properly come as are driven and forced to Ordinances and duties: There is a thing called Conscience which when 'tis awakened keeps a great deal of do; and when men are convinced of sin they will do almost anything for ease and quiet sake; and when they have been used to hear and pray and have found some relief by it, they are under a kind of bondage and dare not omit it (though perhaps it be not a season) for fear Conscience should fly in their face, they are afraid 'twill chide and whip them; and therefore to prevent this they will to hear and pray, &c. Yea, but if thou wilt do anything well, do it from a better nature, from ingenuity, and a childlike spirit, as one sensible what obligations lie upon thee not to sin and to be dutiful, though there were no threatening's nor terrors that attended the omission of good nor commission of evil.

6. Go on to attend upon and address to God in the way of his Ordinances and your Duties, though you should not meet with all that encouragement which you look and long for: commit yourselves to God in all ways of well-doing, though you have not such joys and ravishments as some have and you desire. Do not serve God merely for incomes and Revenues, be more generous and noble, and think it a great honor that thou canst serve him and do thy duty. 'It is true, God hath made all our duties privileges, and in as well as after keeping his Commands there is great reward, his service is not only a means but a part of our happiness; yet we serve him best when we do our duty, more as duty which refers to God, than as privilege which refers to us: and a generous soul will serve God and thank him that it may, and more that it can, though it have not a penny for its pains and labor, though it should bear the burden and heat of the day. 'It is

not an ingenuous child that will not be obedient longer than it is allured and bribed by fine things.

'It is a greater honor to us that we serve God, than 'tis to him that we do serve him; as 'twas to Solomon 's servants more an honor that they waited on him, than 'twas to him to be waited on by them: Blessed are thy Servants, said the Queen of Sheba. 'It is a blessing to be dutiful, beside the blessing that is to come after we have been dutiful. Take you care for duty, and God will take care for your comfort: Only, mark that only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel, take care for nothing but that, Phil. 1.27. 'tis said of Christ, Isa. 49.3, 4, 5. Thou art my Servant O Israel, by whom I will be glorified; Now, though he labored in vain (as to the Jews) in great part, yet his judgment, work and reward was with the Lord; as the Apostles also were a sweet favor unto God, though some perished, 2 Cor. 2.15. Comfort thyself with this (if thou receive no other comfort) that thou art doing thy duty, the work that God hath given thee to do. Thou hast been often at Ordinances and duties, and thou hast said, Oh that I might see God as well as seek him, and yet he hath not lifted up the light of his countenance upon thee; well, yet be glad that he hath kept thee in way of duty: thou hast need of more patience yet (it may be) that after thou hast done the Will of God thou mayest enjoy the Promise. However do thou go on to serve him, and make it appear that thou does it not out of constraint or for lucre's sake, but of a ready, and generous mind, to allude to that, 1 Pet. 5.2, and if thou find any duty too hard for thee, pray as the Disciples did, when Christ bid them forgive seven times (a hard duty) Lord increase my Faith, Luk. 17.9 much and great Faith will help thee to do much and great work.

7. And lastly, look to Jesus Christ and roll thyself on him notwithstanding thou do all things well. We need not only a Christ

for the doing of duty, without whom we can do nothing, Joh. 15.5, and through whom we can do all things, Phil. 4.13. But we need a Christ for the acceptance of what we do; even our fruits of righteousness are not acceptable, but by him (in whom we are accepted) our most spiritual sacrifices must be offered on this Altar and by it sanctified, 1 Pet. 2.5. Rev. 8.3. We need a Christ not only to bring us to God at first, but always and forever. As our sin is pardoned, so our duties are accepted for Christ his sake. Christ is all and in all. Do all thou canst as if there were no Christ, and after that rely on Christ as if thou hadst done nothing, as well as thou didst or shouldst at first when thou hadst done nothing. In him and with whom, and what's in him, is God well pleased.

The second Use is for consolation to these Babes: though I have in this part showed your lowness and weakness, yet I have a word two or three of Consolation for you. As,

1. God will separate the precious from the vile, the Gold from the dross, he will pick out the best and make much of it, though it be but little: and for what thou judgest thyself, thou shalt not be judged of the Lord, as the Apostle tells his Babes, in 1 Cor. 11.31, in relation to their odd and ill way of attending upon that great Ordinance of the Lord's Feast, or Supper, as we tender it. He will put thy tears into his Bottle, he will remember thy thinking on his name, when others said, It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is there that we have kept his Ordinances, Mal. 3.14, —18. Thou hast toiled all day and caught nothing, yet at his command thou hast cast in thy Net again, and hast caught a great draught, but some are good and some are bad; why, though it be so, yet God will separate the good from the bad, he will gather the good into his Vessels, and cast the bad away, that I may allude to the story of Peter 's Fishing, joined with what is said, Matth. 13.47, 48. In the story of Sarah, Gen. 18.12, —15, what grace could



you find there? And yet God doth, and 'tis recorded, 1 Pet. 3.6, that Sarah called her Husband Lord, which she did at that time, when the Angel chide her both for unbelief and telling a lie too. When the Disciples failed of their duty and promise to Christ, he yet picks out this, that their spirit was willing, Matth. 26.41. He takes it ill that they did not watch, yet takes it well that 'twas in their heart, and they were willing to watch: and though they had often miscarried, yet our Savior puts a better interpretation upon them, than they (or anybody else) could, and tells his Father, They have kept thy Word, Joh. 17.6. When David prayed God to hear his voice, Psal. 130.2, he brings in that which (at first view) seems to be a strange Argument, Vers. 3. If thou shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand? He tells God of his iniquities which might stand as a cloud between God and him, But 'tis an excellent way to confess our sins when we make our Prayer, and then they shall not hinder good things from us, because God will not mark them, when we do, for Vers. 4, there is forgiveness with him that he may be feared: and for this reason and in this way, he doth, Vers. 7, exhort Israel also to hope in God, for with him is mercy, yea plenty of it. And so he says, Psal. 103.8, and infers from thence that God will not always chide, Vers. 9. Yea that as a Father pitieth his (poor, weak and defective) children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, for he knows their frame as well as their frailty, Vers. 13,14.

2. I tell thee this for thy comfort, that though thou sin in falling so short of righteousness, yet thou hast an Advocate with the Father (both his and thine) Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for thy sin, 1 Joh. 2.1, 2. The first design of writing this, is, that you may not sin, but if any man of you that come under the name of (<H&G>) Sons, though he be but a Babe, if any of you sin, We (from the highest to the lowest) have an Advocate, who is the Lord our righteousness, and by whose righteousness our sins shall be

taken away; for he will never give over making intercession till he have saved to the utmost, which he is able to do, because he ever lives to make intercession for all that come to God by him. And therefore when the Apostle had said in Rom. 8.34. Who shall condemn? He doth not barely say, It is Christ that died, or rather that is risen again, or moreover that he sits at the right hand of God, but also that he maketh Intercession for us: this secures all the rest, 'tis the utmost completing Act of our High Priest, and whereby he saves to all intents and purposes, perfectly or to the utmost.

3. Take this word of Consolation also, there is a Resurrection and Eternal Judgment to come, after which though thou shalt not rest day or night from serving God in a way of Praise, Rev. 4.8, yet thou shalt rest from thy labor, and serve him no more in a way of pain as now thou dost, Rev. 14.13. And in the meantime, though thy soul lie under the Altar, yet it shall not sleep, though it be at rest, but it shall be clad with white and glorious robes, Rev. 6.9, —11. And the God of all Grace after the sufferings of the brother-hood (as the word is) shall be accomplished, this same God of all Grace, who hath called you into, will instate you in his Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, and perfect all that concerns you, 1 Pet. 5.9, 10. Then shalt thou keep an everlasting Sabbath or rest with God, and that without interruption or distraction; and sing Songs with Moses and the Lamb forever: Comfort yourselves and one another with these words, 1 Thes. 4.18. The Resurrection and Eternal Judgment shall come and will not tarry. And this brings me to the next things mentioned as foundation doctrine, and some of the Milk which Babes suck in, viz.

#### IV. The Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment.

This these Babes do believe with an operative Faith, which hath an influence upon their practice and Conversation, and so denotes a further attainment of theirs; they do not only submit to Ordinances for a time, the time of their Life, but they believe another Life after this is over, and that time is but a forerunner of and Prophet for Eternity. Faith is for Eternity: The belief of a Resurrection supposeth dying, and Eternal Judgment supposeth that man is to be accountable for his living here in time, and that as he Soves he shall Reap: He believes and is Baptized to no purpose that doth not believe an after and Eternal state, as the Apostle concludes, 1 Cor. 15. So then the Babes in Christ do not only repent from dead works, or only act Faith towards God, or submit to Ordinances and do duties, but they also believe the Resurrection of the Dead, and Eternal Judgment, and they that do no not believe this are not new-born; nor are or can be called Babes in Christ. The Faith of and in Jesus is for Eternity, and not only for this Life, for then were true Christians of all men most miserable, as the Apostle speaks.

I intend not any large or long Discourse about the Resurrection and Judgment to come, but only so much as serves to our present purpose, viz. to show the attainment of Babes, in relation to which I shall briefly inquire, 1. What Resurrection and Judgment is here meant. And 2, how the belief of this doth influence Babes, and what that attainment is which results from it.

1. What Resurrection, &c. is here meant. We may in the first place here understand the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead, by which we are begotten again to a lively hope, or hope of life, 1 Pet. 1.3. And when the Apostle reckons up the grounds of our rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as being by him freed from condemnation, he puts a rather upon his Resurrection, Rom. 8.34. And when he writes to the Corinthian -Babes about the Resurrection, he begins with this as the

foundation of all, that Christ died and rose again, 1 Cor. 15.3, 4, and thence proves the general Resurrection, Vers. 12, &c. Agreeably and in a correspondent sense to this, by the Eternal Judgment, we may understand that the Judgment concerning men's Eternal conditions is committed to Christ: that he (who is raised and is the Resurrection) will raise the dead, and Judge the dead to their Eternal states after he hath raised them; see Acts 10.41, 42, and 17.31 2 Tim. 4.1. But for fear (and indeed I do fear) that Babes may not have so distinct and exact a knowledge of this, as other Saints have, I shall pitch upon another sense and fix in it. 'It is this,

That Babes do in the general believe that there shall be a Resurrection of all persons unto Judgment, and a Judgment of all persons to an Eternal (good or evil) state, (and therefore 'tis called an Eternal Judgment) according to Joh. 5.28, 29. The time is coming in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his (the Son of man's) voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation (see Matth. 25.31, —46. Rom. 2.6, —16. 2 Cor. 5, —10.) They shall come forth, there is the Resurrection; to life or damnation, there is the Eternal Judgment. There are many special things about the Resurrection, &c. which the Babes are not very capable of, and of which I shall say nothing now, but this, they do believe in the general that such a thing there will infallibly be as a future Eternal state of happiness or misery to men, according to what they have done in this life: and they that believe not this are but falsely called Christians, or by the favor of a Synecdoche, which puts a part for the whole. A Saint not believing a life to come, is no less than a contradiction.

Object. But perhaps 'twill be objected that a man may be in Christ though but a Babe and as carnal, and yet not believe this doctrine of

the Resurrection, for among these Corinthian -Babes some it seems did not own it, 1 Cor. 15.12.

Answ. To this I Answer, That by the same among you may not be meant the Corinthians themselves (for 'tis not said some of you) but false teachers that came among them; who were (it may be) worse and more infidels than Hymenaeus and Philetus, who said the Resurrection was past already, 2 Tim. 2.18. For these said there was none at all; which indeed was to deny Christ to be risen, and he that doth so, cannot be a Christian, not a Babe in Christ; but in this Faith that Christ was risen the Corinthians did stand, 1 Cor. 15.1, 4, therefore I conceive they were some among them, but not of them, as 1 Joh. 2.19 (however the foundation of God standeth sure, 2 Tim. 2.19, which is spoken upon a resembling occasion) and the Apostle doth not speak this so much by way of charge as caution, of accusation as warning, Vers. 34. I speak this <H&G> to your warning, that you may fear and beware of such Sadducees who have not the knowledge of God nor Scripture, Matth. 22.29, and whose evil words and Epicurean language is apt to beget ill manners. So that notwithstanding this Objection 'tis clear enough, that he cannot be a true Christian, no, not of the lowest Form, who believes not the Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment. I shall therefore pass on to show how the belief of this doth influence Babes and what attainment results from it.

2. The Attainment of Babes from this belief, is, that they tremble at this Word of God, which is a blessed frame, Isa. 66.2. If the hearing of it make wicked men many times to tremble as it did Felix, Acts 24.25. If the sense of an after state make men pray, as Balaam did, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my afterward (so the Hebrew) be as theirs, Numb. 13.10. How much better influence hath it on Babes in Christ? This trembling of theirs is of great use to the

working out their Salvation, Phil. 2.12, it makes them wary and cautious not to run with others to the same excess of riot, &c. 1 Pet. 4.3.—5, it hath an influence as to dissuade from sin, so to persuade to duty; Knowing the terror of the Lord (with reference to Judgment) we persuade men, 2 Cor. 5.10, 11. The consideration of a future Judgment awes the most eminent Saints, as it did Job. Chap. 1.14, and 23, and David, Psal. 119.120, but it makes Babes especially to tremble; because they are yet without assurance of Eternal welfare: Perfect Love casteth out fear and hath boldness in the day of Judgment, 1 Joh. 4.17, 18, but poor Babes are all their life long, subject to more or less bondage by the fear of death and Judgment, Heb. 2.14, 15. And this though Christ have died, for want of particular application of it to themselves; which grown Saints have attained to and can therefore challenge and brave death itself, as Paul did, Rom. 8.34, —39. 1 Cor. 15.55, 57, and can desire rather than fear to die, Phil. 1.23. Heb. 11.35. 2 Cor. 4.16, —18. But,

Babes are fearful; yet God makes use of this fear and trembling to many and great uses for their good and his glory: it lays a great restraint upon them as to sin, and (as love doth others) it constrains them to obedience. Therefore our Savior speaks to their own Principle, Fear him that can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell, Matth. 10.28. And saith Paul, 2 Cor. 5.10, 11, we persuade men, even poor Babes, who walk as men, and are got but a little beyond natural men; terror persuades with natural men, put them in fear that they may know they are but men, Psal. 9.20, and they scarce know God or acknowledge him but by the Judgments which he executes, Vers. 16. Now that which is of most use to persuade men, is of most use to persuade Babes, who are as carnal, and walk as men, 1 Cor. 3.1, 3. 'It is worth our while to take notice what and how many things are backed by this Argument of judgment to come and the terror of the Lord. I will but touch them.

1. 'It is an Argument to provoke to Repentance, Acts 17.30, 31. And this is Babes milk, which they are persuaded to take by this Argument, that there will be a Judgment Day.

2. 'It is an Argument for Faith and Baptism too, as they are conjoined here, and Mark 16.16. He that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned: the fear of this dreadful after-clap of damnation drives many in to Faith and Baptism. It persuades men to fear God and keep his commands, Eccl 12.13, this persuades men to be moderate in the use of worldly enjoyments, which belong to the sensual and animal life, Eccl. 11.9, 10. Luke 21.34, —36. It persuades men to embrace and improve Gospel opportunities and the means of grace, as our Savior hints, Matth. 11.20, —24. It persuades men not to censure, judge, despise and revile one another (which Babes are apt to do, 1 Cor. 3.3. 1 Pet. 2.1, 2.) I say it persuades them not to do such things, Jam. 4.11, 12. Rom. 14.10. 1 Cor. 4.3, —5. 1 Pet. 4.4, 5, with Jude 15. It persuades to patience, Jam. 5.8. It persuades to abide in Christ Jesus, and not to Apostatize, 1 Joh. 2.28. It persuades men to watch and be ready, Mat. 24, and 1 Thes. 5.1, —7. In a word 'tis a very powerful Argument to engage to every duty and to serve God acceptably, 2 Cor. 5 9, 10. 2 Tim. 4.1, 2. Heb. 12.28, 29.

Thus we see of what huge use it is to believe the doctrine of the Resurrection and Eternal Judgment, as Babes do; and do it with fear and trembling. 'It is true indeed that love (which acts the more grown Saints) is the more generous and noble principle, yet fear is of great use too, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, as love is the fulfilling of the Law; and under the Old Testament (when men were generally Babes) Religion is as much expressed by and called fear, as under the New Testament 'tis by Faith and Love: which two Babes are not wholly destitute of, though they be acted most by fear.

The Babes Faith is a fearful Faith, which argues its imperfection; but the grown Saints fear is full of Faith which is an Argument of its perfection: for it loves to please the God it fears, and fears to offend the God it loves. Self-preservation is natural to men, and fear hath is great influence on men to avoid what will hurt them, as love hath to do what will preserve them. 'It is true, fear hath torment (which perfect love casts out) but yet it tends to the escaping of a greater torment, and is therefore not a little useful to the state of Babes. This then is that which Babes attain to by believing the Resurrection and Eternal Judgment, that they tremble at God's Word of threatening, and work out their Salvation with fear and trembling. But lest they should fear and tremble more than need, I shall speak to them a little by way of

#### Application.

Come poor Babes, you that tremble at the Word of God, and serve him though it be with fear, hear this for your Consolation, that the high and lofty one who dwelleth in the high and holy place, doth not despise such a trembling soul but will dwell with it, Isa. 66.2. Be not afraid of the Resurrection nor of Judgment, 'twill be a happy day for thee, read it they self what is said, 1 Thes. 4.13, —18, and 5.1, —11, thou hast a friend in the Court of Heaven, Jesus Christ thine Advocate, and he 'tis that shall be thy Judge, who to be sure will not condemn any that are in him, although they be but Babes. He will remember thy labor of little love, Heb. 6.9, 10, as thou mayest see him telling thee aforehand, Matth. 25.34, —37, where thou hast that he remember what thou hast forgotten, and placeth that to account, which it may be thou were afraid was worth nothing. He is so gracious that thy sins he will remember no more, but he is so



righteous that he will not forget thy labor of love, no nor thy fear; for he hath a Book of remembrance written for them that feared the Lord and thought (mark that) that did think (and it may be could do little more than) think upon his name, Mal. 3.16.

Well then as the wicked should rejoice with trembling, Psal. 2, do thou tremble with rejoicing. Abide in him, keep close to him whom thou hast chosen for thy Savior, and thou shalt not be ashamed before him at his coming, 1 Joh. 2.28. Be steadfast and immovable, yea abound always in the work of the Lord, for thy labor shall not be in vain (at the Resurrection) 1 Cor. 15.58. In the meantime live as one that looks for and hastens to the coming of the Lord, 2 Pet. 3.11, 12, and seeing he will come (without sin) a Savior, and change thy vile body, and make it like to his most glorious Body, let not only thine affections, but conversation be in Heaven, Col. 3.1, —4. Phil. 3.20, 21, which no man is or can be that doth not believe the Resurrection and Eternal Judgment. Be glad therefore and bless God who hath given thee this Milk, and taught thee to take it in, for else thou hadst been still without God (<H&G>) in the world: yea, and in the world to come; which will be a world of happiness to thee and all Saints, who have not their portion of good in this life (as the wicked have) but 'tis reserved for them to be theirs, at the Resurrection and Eternal Judgment. So much for the attainments of Babes from this Text.

V. Of their tasting that the Lord is gracious, and their desiring the sincere Milk of the Word to grow thereby, From 1 Pet. 2.1, —3.

The Apostle Peter had to do with Babes, as well as Paul (for such were the Jewish Converts generally) and having told them, Chap. 1.23, that they were born again, he doth in this Text exhort them to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all

evil speaking (to which they being yet as carnal, were too prone, as was noted before) and as new born Babes to desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby, if so be (or seeing and because) they have tasted that the Lord is gracious. This tasting is their coming to Christ and believing in him as the chief corner-stone, v. 4.6, and their growth is their being built up on him a spiritual House, &c. Vers. 5, which notes both the nature and inclination of these Babes, viz. to come to and believe in Christ, and withal to grow up in and to be built on him; that as he is precious or an honor to them, Vers. 7, so they may be precious or an honor to him, and show forth the virtues (and thereby the praises of him) who hath called them out of their darkness into his marvelous light, Vers. 9.

But of their Faith I have spoken before; I shall now speak of some of their experience, which I conceive is couched in this word of tasting: The perfect Christian hath many senses exercised, he is full of many and rich experiences, Heb. 5.14. But the Babe hath the exercise of this one Sense (Tasting) especially: which begets in him a desire and longing after the Word for growth, that he may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of Consolations, that he may milk out and be satisfied with the abundance of glory. To allude to Isa. 66.11. The Babe hath a taste as soon as he is born, and hath Milk given him to eat, in which he tastes a sweetness, and from which he finds so much nourishment and strength as holds his soul in life: If he were not alive he could not taste, and if he did not taste, he could not live. Experience is often expressed by tasting, which is a thing beyond Hearing, and is joined with Seeing, Psal. 34.8. Oh Taste and See that the Lord is good; Now, as Seeing, so Tasting affects the heart, and quickens the Appetite, and therefore, saith he, desire the Milk; which doth not only express the duty, but the nature and inclination of Babes, and that grounded on Tasting, Seeing or because they have

Tasted that the Lord is gracious: several experiences (as Tastes) they have had of this. As,

1. That the Lord will admit them to Repentance, this is of his grace: when man had sinned the Law was inexorable, a man's Repentance could find no place there for re-acceptance though it had been sought with tears. God might have chosen whether he would have admitted man to repent; but now he hath, it favors of grace: and by this the Babes Taste that he is gracious.

2. They Taste that the Lord is gracious in that he hath provided a new and living way wherein to come to him, that they may be saved at another's cost and charges: that he sent his Son into the world to save sinners, that through him they might believe in God, and that thence they might have hope in God, 1 Pet. 1.21.

3. They Taste grace in this, That God calls for no greater things at their hand than to eat Milk, to Repent and Believe the Gospel, and doth not put them to do penance in Hell for thousands of years, or do some extraordinary tasks of duty in this world: and weeping out their eyes, wearing out their knees, &c.

4. They Taste his grace in that he not only commands, but invites and entreats them to come, to Repent and Believe that they may live; That God should condescend so far as to beseech and go a begging to them (as the word is) that they would be reconciled, gives them a Taste that the Lord is gracious, 2 Cor. 5.19, 20.

5. They Taste it in this, That God encourageth them to come by many great and precious promises, Isa. 55.1, 2, 3. Matth. 11.28, —30, &c. Yea he swears to them as he lives that he delights not in the death of a sinner, but that he should return and live.

6. That God hath knocked so often and waited so long to lead them by his goodness, patience, and long suffering to Repentance, that though they have not answered unless it were surlily and sinfully, we will not come; that though they have put his patience to it, yet that he should knock and wait, this gives them a further Taste, that the Lord is gracious.

7. That they have been at last convinced of the necessity of Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are come to themselves to see their dead, lost and undone condition, 'tis of grace; for who could have opened their eyes and wrought on their hearts, or would have done it but a gracious God? And in this they Taste his grace.

8. That they have been enabled (with the Prodigal) to prosecute this conviction, to arise and go, to repent from dead works, and to make toward God by Faith, they Taste his grace in it, for Repentance and Faith are both the gifts of a gracious God to them, Act. 5.31. Ephes. 2.1, —8.

9. They Taste that the Lord is gracious in giving them a Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, that they can bow their knees and beg not only the pardon of their sins, but the sanctifying of their Souls. In this they Taste his grace.

10. They have a Taste of his being gracious in that they are bid welcome when they come, and that not only his Saints receive them into the brotherhood and fellowship to be free of their company, but that now and then God smiles on them too, and is pleased to kiss them with the kisses of his mouth, and to vouchsafe them some fellowship with himself.

11. They Taste that the Lord is gracious in that he sits on a Throne of grace and gives them leave to come with boldness for more mercy and grace, for their seasonable relief: and that he doth allow them sincere Milk to grow thereby.

12. They Taste his grace in this also, that they can discern the difference between their former and present state, how desperate and damnable that was, but how hopeful this is: that they had rather die than be dead in sins again.

13. What present peace they have, and whatever hopes of more, even to everlasting Consolation, 'tis from the grace of God; and in it they Taste that he is gracious, 2 Thes. 2.16.

These are some (among others) of the experiences that Babes have, or Tastes of the Lord's being gracious; I have not set them out at large, because I would give you them (as they have them) viz. for Tastes: and though they are but such, yet these Tastes beget desires and longings after the sincere Milk that they may grow thereby. By this Taste of theirs they can a little distinguish between sincere and falsified Milk, between pure and impure Milk, between good and evil doctrine, though not so well as grown Saints: Their ear trieth words, whether it be a form of sound words; and their Taste trieth milk-meat, whether it be wholesome and nourishing or not, to allude to that in Job 12.11, and 34.3, and therefore though they be full of appetite and desire, yet 'tis to sincere milk, for they cannot thrive nor live by any other. Now though their desires after higher attainments be (at present) their (almost) highest attainment, yet desires are not despicable things, but of value. The desire of a man is his kindness, and a poor man is better than a Liar, Prov. 19.22, though they be but poor as to attainments, yet they are rich in desires, and God takes this kindness kindly at their hands, that 'tis in their hearts to do

greater things and to grow: this poor man is better than a Liar, than an Hypocrite that pretends to, makes professions and promises of great things without a real desire and kindness to the things which he make a fair show of in a complement and in the flesh. If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 Cor. 8.12. 'It is not a little to be able to say as Nehemiah did, Chap. 1.11. O' Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the Prayer of thy Servant, and to the Prayer of thy Servants who desire to fear thy Name. And as the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. 13.18. Pray for us, for we trust that we have a good Conscience in all things willing to live honestly. This Babe is a man of desires (in both senses) i.e., he is loving and beloved, he is desiring and desired, Cant. 7.10. Isa. 26.8 9.2 2 Cor. 7 7. Thus you have seen the Tastes and desires of Babes to grow: which is an attainment not to be undervalued by them, nor are they to be undervalued by others. For a close to all their former attainments and characters I shall add one more, which is much taken notice of in Scripture.

## VI. Their Love to the Brethren

There is but one thing more which I shall take notice of in relation to Babes attainments, and that is, Their Love to the Brethren, whereby they act like members of the Body of Christ, whose office it is to have the same care one for another, 1 Cor. 12.25, and not be like this world, every man for himself, or say like Cain, Am I my Brothers keeper? That they do love the Brethren (in their degree fervently as well as truly) is attested by Peter, who writing to Babes saith, Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth by the Spirit unto unfeigned Love of the Brethren, see that ye (continue to) Love one

another, with a pure heart fervently, 1 Pet. 1.22, he exhorts them to do that fully, which they already did in part, according to that, 1 Thes. 5 11. Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, as ye also do. 'It is the great Character of Christ's Disciples that they Love one another, Joh. 13.35, and by this they are known to have part from death to life, because they love the Brethren, 1 Joh. 3.15. Where give me leave to note this as to this Epistle of John, the great duty urged in it is to love one another (spoken to and of all the children of God) and the sin so much declaimed against is hating or not loving of one another: and when he saith, Chap. 3.8. He that sinneth is of the Devil, he meaneth this sin in special, For, saith he, Vers. 9, whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, viz. this sin, because the seed of God (of whom he is born) remaineth in him (which is the same reason that is given by Peter pressing to the same duty, 1 Pet. 1.22, 23.) and Vers. 10, he distinguisheth the Children of God from them of the Devil by this very thing: and Vers. 12, instanceth in Cain who was of the wicked one, as he proves by his breaking this command of loving his Brother. And perhaps the sin unto death spoken of, Chap. 5.16, —19, is meant of this sin, for such a one abideth in death, Chap. 3.14, compare Chap. 3.7, —16, with Chap. 5.16, —19, and this seems to be very clear.

But to proceed as to the thing in hand, viz, that Babes Love the Brethren, 'tis clearly manifested by this among other things, that they are ready to minister to their necessities, as occasion, opportunity and ability gives them leave to do. The Apostle boasts of his Corinthian -Babes, that he knew the forwardness of their mind, and boasted of their readiness to this thing, 2 Cor. 9.1, 2, and the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrew-Babes, tells them, Chap. 6.10, that God was not unrighteous to forget their labor of Love, which they had showed to his name, in that they had ministered and did continue to minister to the Saints: and upon this score he is

persuaded such good things of them as accompanied and contained Salvation, Vers. 9, of so great an esteem is this grace of Love, warranted and adjusted by ministering to the Saints. And indeed 'tis the great thing for which Jesus Christ saith, Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you; why Lord? For I was hungry, &c. and you ministered to me in doing it to mine, Matth. 25.34, —40. This labor of Love is not in vain in the Lord.

I might enlarge on this Theam, but it shall suffice to have touched it. And now that Babes may behold themselves in this Glass, I shall sum up their attainments and characters briefly thus: They have the Foundation laid; they are new-born and do eat Milk in obeying the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ: they have all things necessary to the being of a Saint, and such as accompany or contain Salvation; though not enough to a well-being here, or to have an entrance ministered to them abundantly in Heaven, as other Saints have: they have all constituting and essential Graces, as Repentance, Faith, Love, though not in so perfect a degree as the other Classes have, they press forward (after their manner, in desires) to grow; though they cannot run the race, yet they walk in the way of God's Commandments; they press after to follow the other Saints though slowly (as the Poet said of Ascanius,—sequitur non passibus aequis ) and are not able to keep pace with them. This is their picture, the draught of their attainment; the particular features and lineaments whereof are described before in their respective places, to which I refer you. I must now proceed to show them their defectiveness in comparison of other Saints, and wherein they are as carnal, that I may provoke them to jealousy and emulation, and thereby to perfection.



III. Of the Babes defectiveness in comparison of other Saints, and wherein they are as carnal, and walk as men.

1. Of their defectiveness, and wherein they fall short in comparison of the higher Classes of Saints.

That they fall short of Fathers and Young-men, who are strong Saints, 'tis needless to take up much time or many words to declare, because 'tis so obviously known and easily granted by all; but that they fall short of the little Children is that which I am to evince. The character of little Children is that they know the Father, viz. to be their Father, 1 Joh. 2.13. But the Babe-child, the Infant of (attainment as well as) days, the sucking Child that is sed only with Milk, though he have a Father, and a Father that provides for him, yet he knows him not to be his Father. The generality of the Old Testament professors were but Babes, and their usual way of address to God was, as the God that made Heaven and Earth, the Creator; and sometimes as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Promiser: But seldom, not above twice (as a collective body) addressed to God as their Father; the places where they did so address are Isa. 63.16, and 64.8, both which are rather Prophecies of what they should do hereafter, than assertions of what they did do, as some conceive. And in this latter they address to him as a Father, viz a maker and Sovereign, as appears by calling themselves the clay, and God the Potter, and telling him that they were the works of his hand. And to prevent an Objection that may be made from the Prodigal, who did at first address to God, as his Father (I will go to my Father, and in my Fathers house) it might be in this sense of a Creator, as in Dent. 32.6, beside, I may say that he seems to be the representative of a returning back-slider, rather than of a Convert at the very first: and though returning also is a Conversion, and works much like what it doth at the very first, yet it hath respect to a former

relation, which was not wholly cut off, as was the case of returning Israel, in Hos. 1.7. Jer. 3.1, —5, where they speak of him as theirs, though they had been called by him Loammi not my people, and almost divorced by him, which they deserved to be.

So for a while at the beginning of the Gospel, the Disciples were but as Babes, for they knew not the Father, Job. 14.6, —11. And though Christ had taught them to pray Our Father, yet 'twas long ere they had learned to ask of the Father in the name of Christ, Joh. 16.23, 24, or to know their union with the Father and the Son: and therefore our Savior tells them so often that they should know and enjoy more at that day: what day? Viz. when he was ascended to the Father, for then 'twas my Father and your Father, my God and your God, Joh. 20.17. And the Spirit descended from the Father, the Holy Ghost not being given till Christ was glorified, Job. 7.39, saith Christ, At that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (which yet you know not, though it be so) Joh. 14.20. In that day ye shall ask me nothing; Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you, Chap. 16.23, and Vers. 25. The time cometh (viz. that day) when I shall no more speak to you in Parables, but show you plainly of the Father. And again, Vers. 26. In that day ye shall ask in my name. And accordingly after Christ's Ascension, and the receiving of the Holy Ghost, they did usually cry, Abba Father, Rom. 8.15, 16. Gal. 4.6, they addressed to God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father; as may be seen in places more than too many to be quoted here: they had more knowledge (even assurance) of their interest in the Father and the Son, of communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son, 1 Joh. 1.3, which for a great while they were unacquainted with. This then is the conclusion which I draw from these Premises, That,

1. The Babe-Saints though they have interest in and communion with God and Christ, yet (while such) 'tis much in the dark to them, and they have not the assurance of it, as the little Children and other higher degrees of Saints have: I may say of these, as God did of Israel in their infant age, Hos. 11.1, 3. When Israel was a Child (a Babe) I loved him, I taught Ephraim also to go, but they knew not that I healed them: The Babes are rather said to be known of God, than they can be said to know him, as 'tis expressed concerning them, Gal. 4.9. Babes have life, and light, and power in a measure; there are influences from God to them, and a secret converse between God and them, which yet they apprehend and discern but a little. It may be said of them as Jacob said, Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not, Gen. 28.16. God descends into them by many elapses, they ascend to God by many breathings, yet they are not sure, they know not whether this be God that come down, or grace that goes up. The best see but darkly and through a glass, but in part in comparison of what vision is to be; but these see more darkly than the others that see but darkly, and know less than they that know but in part: being Babes they understand as Babes, for so that is which we render Child, 1 Cor. 13.11. Now though there be more than a Potentia, some Acts, yet they have so little understanding, that 'tis insignificant in comparison of men, 1 Cor. 14.20. They see as the poor man did at first in a confused way, men as Trees, yet walking, Mark 8.24, when other Saints see them as they are, men clearly; as that man did after the second touch of Christ's hand, Vers. 25. These poor Babes act grace, but can hardly say 'tis grace: they walk and follow, as Peter did the Angel out of Prison, but wist not that it was true, which was done unto him, Acts 12.9. They hear God and answer to his call as little Samuel did, but as yet he knew not the Lord, 1 Sam. 3.7. They have attained to more things, than they have attained to the knowledge of, which is the advance of other Saints. Their eyes are held in great measure as the Disciples were, that though Jesus draw near and talk

with them, yet they know him not, Luke 24.15, 16, he tells them this and the other thing, and they feel its working, but know not what to make of it, and are afraid to ask him, Luke 9.45. Many saw and talked with Jesus, yet took him for the Gardener, and knew him not till a while after, Joh. 20.14, —17. So 'tis with these poor souls, though God know them, and work in them, and talk to them, yet what he is doing, they know not yet, as Christ said to Peter, Joh. 13.7, if they be in the Mount and see any glory, they are more afraid than transported, and say, It is good to be here, and yet know not what they say, Luk. 9.33. While Christ talks to them their hearts burn within them, some heat and warmings they feel, but they know him not, Luk. 24.16, —32, they are troubled, and thoughts arise in their hearts, though he say, Peace be to you, Vers. 36, 37. And then again, they believe not for joy, Vers. 41, that which would promote another's, seems to obstruct and put a stop to their Faith. This is their first defect in comparison of others, and wherein they fall short, that though they are (and act like) God's people (in a measure) yet they know it not, nor can yet discern clearly the work of grace, nor can say, I am my beloveds, and he is mine.

2. They are defective in this, far short of other Saints, that they are unskillful in the Word of righteousness, because they are Babes, Heb. 5.13, the Word of righteousness is the Gospel, or Christ Jesus who is the whole of the Gospel; for to Preach the Gospel, and to Preach Christ is all one, so a Minister of Christ and the Gospel, or the Word, is all one. Christ Jesus is called the Word, Joh. 1.1, the Word of Salvation, Acts 13.26, with Acts 3.26, the Word of God's grace, Acts 20.32, the Word of Life, Phil. 2.16, and here the Word of righteousness, in which these Babes were unskillful, <H&G>. Which is not negative, excluding all knowledge; but privative, excluding full knowledge and skill. Now as to this they were inexpert or unskillful to discern and know Christ (as they should) to be the root of

righteousness, for justification and sanctification, to be made of God to us righteousness, both by imputation and operation.

1. They were unskillful in the Word of righteousness for justification. These Jewish or Hebrew -Babes could not easily, Exuere hominem Judaicum, put off the legal man, who sought righteousness by, or at least as it were by the works of the Law, Rom. 9.32, and 10.2, —4. Saith Vatablus of this Babe, Non potest intelligere sermonem Evangelicum, qui docet veram justitiam: he cannot understand the Word of the Gospel which teacheth the true righteousness, and that is Justification by Faith and not by the works of the Law. This Babe knows the Elements (<H&G>) the letters of the Gospel, but is not yet able to spell and read the whole Word of righteousness. Though Jesus Christ were made of God to the Corinthian -Babes righteousness, as 1 Cor. 1.30, yet they were ignorant how, viz. that he became sin and a curse for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him, as the Apostle tells them and us, 2 Cor. 5.21, and therefore he resolved to know (or make known) nothing among them, but Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. 2.2, that is, as dying for our sins (for he had none, knew none of his own) and as he rose again for our Justification, Rom. 4.25, which was the thing he Preached to the Corinthians at first, but doubted a little, whether they firmly believed it, 1 Cor. 15.1,—5, and therefore were but Babes as well as for other things, which he mentions, 1 Cor. 3.

And that this is the Apostles meaning, as to the Hebrew -Babes, is clear from the context and the scope of the whole Epistle, which is to show the excellency of Christ the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (the Lord our righteousness) beyond that of the Law which made none perfect nor righteous. He begins, Vers. 10, 11, with this High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, which is the Word of righteousness and strong meat, and the sum of all which he had to

say, as he speaks in Chap 8.1, where he reassumes the discourse and goes on with it, telling them that this is more excellent and better, which word (better) he useth of Christ and the Gospel dispensation at least thirteen times. This their weak stomachs could not concoct, and therefore he calls them Babes: to this purpose Jac. Capelius speaks clearly and fully, Qui typorum ceremonialium ita particeps est, ut iis indigere se putet, ut cibum suum amplectatur, is sermonem justitiae, foedus Evangelicum, in quo vera justitiae doctrina traditur, capere non potest; repuerascit enim, adeoque jam redit ad infantiam, eamque priore deteriorem. In short, he that thinks he needs the ceremonial types and makes them his meat, cannot take in the Word of righteousness, the Evangelical Covenant, for he is a worse Babe than they were of old. The Galatians also were guilty of this babishness and were not past the Spoon; they were receding and going back again to the Law, or at least blending and mixing it with Faith for righteousness; for which Paul calls them foolish, the same with Babes and unskillful, as appears by the whole Epistle, and the scope and design thereof takes up hereabout: yea he travels again for them, to bring them out from the Law to a more perfect knowledge and Image of Christ, Chap. 4.19. So then, this is the Babes defect that he is unskillful in the Word of righteousness, that and how Christ is our righteousness. The Christian Jews were many of them but Jewish Christians, they were not easily brought to lay Moses and his Law aside; and the Christian Gentiles were too much but Gentile-Christians, they could hardly part with their old acquaintance, the Law of Nature and works. Few were come to Paul 's pitch to rest only in Christ Jesus, to reckon all Ceremonies, Privileges, Tears, Prayers, Humiliations and all that may be called our own righteousness to be loss and dung as to Justification, yea though as touching the Law, blameless; and to be found in him and the righteousness that is of God by Faith in him, that they may have no confidence in the flesh (which is but grass) and rejoice in Christ Jesus only. And therefore

'tis observable that the Apostles whether they writ to Jews or Gentiles made it still their business to bring them off from every Law and Covenant, to that of Faith; and there to ground and build them upon the only true foundation and corner-stone Christ Jesus, that he (as he deserves) might in all things have the preeminence, and be all in all, Col. 3.10, 11. Gal. 6.15, 16. Heb. 13.7, 8. 1 Pet. 2.5, 6. 1 Cor. 1.29, —31.

2. Babes are also unskillful in the Word of righteousness for sanctification, to know him experimentally as the root of sanctification, and that they are not only to bring forth fruit, but to bring it forth by and in him. We have not only our first but future grace from Christ, and our fruits of righteousness which are by Christ, are also (even then when we are filled with them) acceptable to God, and to the glory and praise of God by him, in whom all our fresh springs are, in whom is our fruit found, from whose fullness we receive grace for grace, and without being and abiding in him we can do nothing, Phil. 1.11. 1 Pet. 2.5. Hos. 14.8. Psal. 87.7. Joh. 1.16, and 15.5. They that will grow in grace, must grow in the knowledge of Christ, as the root of that growth, 2 Pet. 3.18, that as they have received him they may walk in him, rooted and built up in him, Col. 2.6, 7, that he may be not only the foundation, but the whole structure and the adorning may be from him. As it is essential to Gospel sanctification to do all for God, is our end; so 'tis to do all from and in the strength of Christ, through which alone we are able to do all things, Phil. 4.13, as the glory of God is the final, so Christ is the efficient cause of all the fruits of righteousness, Phil. 1.11.

Indeed, 'tis as hard a thing to live out of ourselves and fetch all from another, to say as Paul, It is not I that live, but Christ liveth in me, as 'tis not to live to ourselves but to another. Babes act and speak as if they lived on their own stock, and boast too often as if they had not

received, as the Corinthians did, 1 Cor. 4.7. This principle of deriving all sanctification from Christ is not presently and distinctly known to all believers; 'tis probable that the Disciples understood it not, till Christ taught it them in that Sermon, John 15, and this indeed is the case of Babes, for though to them Christ be made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, yet they are unskillful and inexpert as to the derivation of it, and to have particular recourse to him for it. Again,

3. Babes are defective in this, that though they love to hear much, yet they are unable to bear much, especially anything that is beyond Milk, and called meat, yea strong meat: and therefore 'twere to hurt and not to help them, to feed them with Bread and Wine, such as Melchizedek presented to Abraham, Gen. 14.18. Our Savior had many things to say, his heart was full, but he could not give it vent then, for his Disciples were not able to bear it, Job. 16.12. And Paul tells his Corinthian -Babes, that he had fed them with Milk and not with strong meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it nor yet are ye able, 1 Cor. 3.2, so the Hebrew Babes were dull, thick and hard of hearing the Doctrine which he calls strong meat, they could digest Milk only, Chap. 5.11, &c. Strong meat makes Babes sick of hearing. 'It is like Saul 's Armor to David, too heavy for him, he hath not been used to it, nor tried it, and therefore cannot bear it, he must to his Sling or can do no feats. They are not yet so strong to put on all the Armor of God, they cannot wield the Sword of the Spirit, nor use the Shield of Faith dexterously. They are not yet weaned from the Milk, and who can teach them knowledge? i.e. High and great knowledge of wisdom, &c. they must have line on line, now and then a little, Isa. 28.9, —11, they must have the same things over and over; as little-ones when they go to School, are a great while a learning their Alphabet, and must be shewn again and again, which is A, and which is B, &c. a man must lisp and stammer and tone it to them in their



way. Many a young Student takes a great deal of pains, is ever reading, but is not Master of what he reads; and the fault is not so much in the memory, or the Will, as in the understanding: so 'tis with these Babes, they hear and read much, but cannot digest and concoct it; no, though they remember it: but strong men love to make their meals of strong meat, Heb. 5.14. Again,

4. Babes are defective in this that they have not attained to use or a habit as they of full age (or the perfect) have: as much difference as there is between habit and disposition, so much there is between Babes and grown Saints, for so the distinction is, Heb. 5.14. Habits are full of skill and strength and make operation easy, whereas dispositions are faint and weak, mere essays and attempts, such as are in Babes to speak and go. They have not (like David as to his Armor) been used nor habited to such things, and cannot go nor walk in them as others can that have tried again and again: we easily do things we have been used or wont to do, but we are bunglers at things for want of use and habit, which is the case of Babes; so that the difference between these and grown Saints, is as much as between manhood and infancy, the strength and weakness of the one and other, as between an habit of perfection and an imperfect disposition and inclination.

5. Babes are defective in this, that they have not the senses exercised (the taste they have (as before) but not all the senses exercised) to discern both good and evil. Heb. 5.14, that which strong men have, Babes want, viz. discerning faculties, and an ability to distinguish things that differ, that they may approve of the things which are most excellent, as Paul prayed that the Philippians might be able to do (Chap. 1.10, compared with the Margent) and not only hold fast that which is good. For want of this skill of discerning.

6. The Babes are apt to be tossed to and fro with every (fair) wind of Doctrine, and to be abused by crafty mates and false teachers, that can make and fit as well as feign words on purpose: this is hinted in Ephes. 4.14. That we henceforth be no more Children (gr. Babes) tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. And of all them to whom Epistles were written, the people that are called Babes were in most danger; as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 4.15, —21, which is the occasion of his putting them upon watching, standing fast in the Faith, to quit themselves like men and to be strong, 1 Cor. 16.13. And again tells them his fears of them lest as the Serpent beguiled Eve (in her infancy) through his subtlety, so their minds should be corrupted (by false teachers) from the simplicity that is in Christ, 2 Cor. 11.1, —5, and again, Vers. 12, —15, so the Hebrews (the Babe Christian Jews in Judea) were in great danger of being turned aside by false teachers, which occasioned that Epistle to them: and the Jews dispersed also were in the like danger, as appears by a Pet. 2.1, —3, and 3.17, and the Galatians also, as is evident from Chap. 1.6, —9, and the scope of the whole Epistle, but the little Children are more fixed and firm, 1 Job. 2.18, —27.

7. The Babes defectiveness is seen in this, that they serve God rather after the manner of Servants, than as Children: they are (as the Prodigal did at first wish to be) as hired Servants. This is clear from Gal. 4, the Heir, Vers. 1, as long as he is a Child (gr. a Babe) differeth nothing from a Servant, but is, Vers. 2, under Tutors and Governors (a Schoolmaster, the Law, Chap. 3.24.) and while they are Children (gr. Babes) are in bondage under the Elements, or rudiments of the world, Vers. 3, which he calls beggarly, Vers. 7, and tells them 'tis (though they desire it) to be in bondage, Vers. 7, and opposeth the Son and Servant, Vers. 6. But now, the grown Saints stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ had made them free, as Paul exhorts, Gal.

5.1, and will not be again entangled with this yoke of bondage; but worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Thus have I shewn wherein Babes are defective in comparison of other Saints; and now I must show worse things than these, viz. their carnality, wherein they are as carnal.

## II. Of their being as Carnal and walking as men.

These poor Babes are but a degree above Carnal men; though they be not carnal, yet as carnal: Many of them are so, for (as I have once and again hinted) there are degrees among them, and they are not acted nor do act all alike: some of the Babes are less defective and less carnal than others. Of the Corinthians the Apostle speaks, not only that they were Babes and not spiritual, but that they were as carnal, and walked as men; there was but little difference (in many things) between them and mere carnal men, men in and walking in and after the flesh, 1 Cor. 3.1, —3. This will appear in (alas!) but too many particulars and instances. As,

1. They were as carnal in this, that there was among them, envy, strife, and division or faction, Vers. 3, and because of this which was undeniable, the Apostle appeals to them and makes them Judges, whether they were not carnal and walked as men, viz. in the flesh, or according to men and not according to God, as Grotius expresseth it: Are ye not carnal? Ye cannot deny it, 'tis undeniable; You cannot deny that ye are envious, &c. it witnesseth (and is not only witnessed by others) to your faces, and therefore you cannot deny but you are carnal; for such things are the works of the flesh, Gal. 5.19,—21, and it comes from below, not only from earth and men, but from Hell and the Devil (who worketh these things in the children of disobedience, and in you who are herein disobedient children) if ye have bitter

envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth, for this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is sensual, earthly and devilish, Jam. 3.14, 15. 'It is such as a spiritually and heavenly wise man would be ashamed of. Whoever then be found such as these Corinthians are, but Babes and as carnal, how high soever they may carry it, and how great soever their name may be: the same thing that denominates them Babes, will denominate any or all others so, where ever 'tis found. Only this is to be noted, that this is not ascribed to them from any particular act (for who liveth and sinneth not, in many things we offend all) but 'tis from a kind of habitual frequency and continuance, for so the word walking doth import. A Christian should excel the best of men in all morality and Ingenuity, but to be like the worst of men (envious ones, the Devils pictures) is very carnal indeed. But let us inquire a little into the occasion and rise of this.

The occasion not given but taken was from Paul and Apollo, who planted and watered them; from hence they grow into more than emulations, for they were envious for their sakes (as Joshua was for Moses) and puffed up for one against another, Chap. 4.6, one was for Paul, and another for Apollo, as being of them, and this was their carnality, Vers. 4, but wherein lay this carnality? Were they more carnal in saying, I am one of Paul's Children, or one of Paul's Hearers, than Paul in calling himself their Father and Teacher? Surely no, the carnality lay not in this. Paul calls Timothy and Titus his Sons, and faith of these Corinthians, Chap. 4.14, 15, that they were his Sons, that he had begotten them, that they were of him; and therefore in that relative, respective and resembling sense they might without carnality call him Father, and say they were of him. But the carnality lay in such things as these following.

1. They were more taken with the gifts and parts of either of these than with their office and graces: men have (as I may say) several humors, and they are most taken with that man, that takes and toucheth their humor most: Some that were for down-right plainness took Paul 's part; others that were of a more nice and ticklish humor were taken with Apollo 's Eloquence: for Paul came not with Oratory, Chap. 2.1,—4, but with plainness of speech, 2 Cor. 3.12. And Apollo was an Eloquent man, Acts 18.24. In this they were Babes and as carnal; for whereas they should have no man's person or parts in admiration, but honor the man of God for the works sake, they seemed to honor each for their words sake, and not for God's Word sake, which came unto them. And alas! How many such Babes are there among us also Some are all for a bold Preacher (that comes with down-right blows) for a plain man without welt or guard as we say: and others are more fine and curious, they must have the Dish garnished, the Cloth laced and trimmed Al-a-mode, they care not for plain Song: this is all Babish and carnal to look after what suits our humor, and not after edification and increase.

2. These Babes, and as carnal Corinthians did it seems much confine, not only themselves but God too, to such a man's Ministry: they looked for no increase (some of them) unless Paul did Preach, nor others unless Apollo did Preach; as if their Faith and the blessing had come from the man, as is intimated in Chap. 3, verse. 5, 6.7, with Chap. 1.13, 14, if Paul Baptized, Preached and administered the Lord's Feast or Supper, then they promised themselves great matters, as others did from Apollo; as if the success had been from men and not from God. Poor Babes! That will let none feed them but such a Nurse, or such a Servant, as if the Milk would do them most good when this or that person puts it into their mouth. How many of these are there to this day, that care not to hear unless such a man Preach; tush, say they, this is not the man I came to hear, and away

they go. My heart will never be beaten down and broken, saith one, unless Paul Preach; nor mine quickened and raised up, saith another, unless Apollo Preach. They are more taken with man than God, and man's word than God's too too often: when we must know that if any work be wrought 'tis the Lord's doing, and he alone should be wonderful in our eyes: whoever brings a mercy 'tis God sends and blesseth it, and the glory should be his. These Babes receive a man, that they affect, as an Angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus, and bless him too, Gal. 4.14, 15, and it may be after awhile another steals away their hearts (for they are giddy, and unstable many of them) and then Apollo is beyond Paul, and he becomes their enemy for telling them the truth, Vers. 16, and they exclude him for another, Vers. 17. Thus as if the men were all in all, as they affect, do they celebrate and admire; as if not Christ but Paul, &c. had been crucified for them, or were divided, the Apostle upbraids them, 1 Cor. 1.12, 13.

3. These Babes were yet so carnal that some truth would scarce be believed by them unless it came out of Paul 's mouth, nor by others unless it came from Apollo 's: they embraced the truth for the man's sake, more than the man for the truths sake; and the feet were more beautiful than the tidings, or else the tidings were not beautiful, if such a man's feet did not bring them. If Paul said it was an Oracle, his (ipse dixit) word was sufficient to some, who would scarce believe it from Apollo; and others that were for Apollo preferred it much beyond what they would have done if Paul had said it: 'tis to them as if 'twere another thing, another Gospel, another Christ, another Spirit, 2 Cor. 11.4. And as it was then is it not now? Some truths will not down with some persons unless it come from such a man, as if he made it more and another less true than it was; whereas the truth is the same whether in Paul or Apollo 's mouth; and not at all the more or less true for this or that man's saying it. If such a man or party of men say so, we will believe it, say many Babes. This or that man is

their Oracle, if he say it, it must be true; if he do not say it, especially if he gainsay it, it cannot be true.

4. They were yet so carnal that they fell into parties, and took sides, and thence came envying and strife, faction and confusion; they break out into vilifying of one another, they grew proud and quarrelsome, and could scarce live in love and peace together. We say Paul is the best Preacher, he Preacheth strongly, say the Paulinists; and say the Apollonians, Apallo is the best Preacher, he Preacheth fluently: and they can scarce forbear fighting, and crying out, Who is on our side? Who? And woe and alas, is not this fulfilled in our ears in our days! Who would think that Babes should make so much a do? But the question resolves itself, the Babes are carnal; and whence comes fighting and war but from the lusts of the flesh? Jam. 4.1. Oh that I might by entreaty prevail that these Babish and carnal tricks may be laid aside: it shall be granted to you that God may use one man more than another for bringing in and building up; but still remember that the excellency of the power is of God and not of the Earthen Vessel. It shall be granted that thou mayest love, if thou wilt not Idolize thy Father Paul, not call him Father as the Jews did the Pharisees. It may be Boanerges may suit one and Barnabas another better; but remember, it must not be judged by humor. Hear thine Apollo, but receive the Word not as his but as God's, or else 'twill not work effectually, 1 Thes. 2.13, do not call him thy (magnus Apollo) thine Oracle. Believe the truth whoever Preach it, Paul or Apollo, but do not pin thy Faith on any man's sleeve, be it white or black: be of what Church thou wilt, so thou be of the Church of Christ, and do not glory in this, I am of Paul, and I of Apollo; for there is no Church in Scripture called this man's or that man's, 'tis the Church of God, and the Churches of Christ. I could say other things, but I intend to spare you all I can, though there are many more carnalities yet to be mentioned; pudetque referre, &c.

2. They were as carnal in that they were proud of being in Church communion, though they had and kept communion with very unclean persons (and their lump was leavened) That they did so is clear from 1 Cor. 5, and yet were puffed up, Vers. 2, and gloried, Vers. 6, they boasted of being in fellowship, though it were with gross and unheard of sinners, Vers. 1, which puts the Apiole upon such Exhortations as we find in Vers. 11, and 2 Cor. 6.14, —When persons can content themselves with and be proud of such common, profane (and therefore fulsome and offensive) communion at large, 'tis an argument of their being as carnal: when content with Ordinances disorderly administered, they are as carnal, 1 Cor. 11.17, —34, when human partitions steal the name of a Church, and mixed participations the name of communion, and Christians can please themselves with and glory in it, they are as carnal. Be not therefore unequally yoked; and if any that is called Brother be a Fornicator, &c. with such a one don't you eat.

3. That these Corinthian -Babes were as carnal appears by their going to Law with one another before the unbelievers and unjust, 1 Cor. 6.1, —8, this they were bold and daring in, durst any of you? Vers. 1, this they did for toys and trifles, the smallest matters, Vers. 2, they had cause to be ashamed of it, Vers. 5, as if there had not been one wise or honest man among them; 'twas utterly and undeniably a fault, Vers. 7. And yet being but Babes and as carnal, this they durst to do. Such Babes are all they who do after this fashion: so is everyone, such another piece of carnality, who refuseth the hearing of the Saints, and goes to Law with his Brother before unbelievers and the unjust. The Apostle speaks angrily in this case, What? Dare you? Know ye not, &c. Can you profess and pray? And yet not forgive, nor suffer, but wrong and defraud, and that your Brethren! Oh what a strange thing is this, it cannot be excused nor any plea can be made



for it, 'tis utterly a fault ('tis altogether and wholly a fault, as the gr.) 'tis base all over!

4. Babes appear to be as carnal in this, that they pass from one extreme to another in their acting's, and are not acquainted with the golden mean and moderation: they either under or over do. A while these Corinthians were so careless that they did not mind to cast out or censure the incestuous person, 1 Cor. 5, and anon they are so violent, that they will not forgive him, but suffer him to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, 2 Cor. 2. Thus they go from the extreme of defect, to that of excess, and are not acquainted with the divine mediocrity to walk in the midst of the paths of Judgment. So the Galatian Babes, at the first they admire Paul, and bless him, but after a while, they carry it to him as if he had been their enemy, Gal. 4.14, —16, and this was soon done, Chap. 1.6. At the beginning, who but Paul, they were ready to Deify him; after a while, he was nobody, they were ready to defy him: thus do they, not veeze about by degrees, but chop about from one extreme to another, being tossed with every wind of doctrine, Ephes. 4.14, they fail with that wind that blows, and are carried with the last man they heard, poor weather-cocks that they are.

When our Savior began to wash the Disciples feet, John 13, says Peter, Vers. 6. Lord, dost thou wash my feet? He seems to put it off with scorn; what have I no more manners, than to let thee wash my feet? Thou shalt never wash my feet, Vers. 8, and yet when Christ had told him but a word or two, says he, Vers. 9. Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head. The one extreme was, thou shalt not, never wash my feet; and the other extreme is, wash my head: he passeth from one extreme to another in a moment as 'twere. In matter of practice the Corinthians were in the extreme; one while not cast out, another not take in the incestuous person: in point to

affection, the Galatians would now pull out their eyes for Paul, and then pull out his eyes: and as for protestation, Peter is one time for not at all, and by and by for all over: this is the way of these Babes, and this their way is their folly, for they are as carnal.

5. They are as carnal in this, that they take great exceptions at a little matter, they will take pet at nothing almost. If you be not of their way and follow them, they will take it ill even to the forbidding of doing Christ's work, as the Disciples did, Mark 9.38, but they were as carnal in this, and therefore Christ forbids them to do any such thing, and on weighty reasons too, Vers. 39, 40. Babes in Christ are many of them of a touchy, peevish and sour humor. So when the Disciples met with colder entertainment than they looked for, they were for fire from Heaven, which was an evident sign that they knew not what spirit they were of, Luke 9.51, —55. When the Apostle Paul had made a promise to the Corinthians of coming to them, 1 Cor. 16.5, —7, and was disappointed, they presently accuse him of lightness and complement, which puts him upon Apologizing for himself; 2 Cor. 1.15, —24, and surely they are as babish as these were, that are so rash and censorious, that take pet and make exception without cause: they are as carnal.

6. Babes are as carnal in making many questions, either trivial or needless ones; they concern themselves much about things of little concernment to their edification. Under the notion of a case or scruple of Conscience they will ask many an impertinent question. The way of asking questions may be of great use, *Qui dubitat, qui saepe rogat, &c.* but carnal men as the Pharisees and Sadducees were, asked Christ many a captious and quarrelsome question; yea the Devil abused our common Mother by a Query: and in this the Babes are as carnal that they take up a great deal of time and discourse about impertinent and little things. The Corinthians

troubled Paul about such things as common discretion would have determined, and therefore he tells them so often in relation to it, thus say I, not the Lord, (1 Cor. 7.6, and 12, and 25, 26, and 40.) as much as to say, these things are not so much matter of Religion and Conscience, as of prudence and discretion. As about Marrying, so about eating they seemed to be very solicitous and much concerned, 1 Cor. 8, which yet was an indifferent thing, Vers. 8, only such liberty must not be abused to the offense of others, Vers. 9, else 'tis not a matter of Conscience whether I may eat or not, this or that, for anything that is sold in the Shambles and good for food is lawful to be eaten without a dispute, 1 Cor. 9. 27, —33, so the Disciples till Christ's Ascension were full of pitiful questions, who shall be greatest? Matth. 18.1, what shall this man do? Joh. 21.21. Wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel? Acts 1.6. Alas! What a poor low way of questioning is this? Indeed to ask, What shall I do to be saved? What is the Will of God concerning me in my place and relation? How shall I attain to a more perfect state? Such things are considerable and worth the asking: but to be taken up about little and low things, is to be as Babes, and as carnal; more nice than wise.

7. These Babes live much more by Tradition and the example of men, than by rule or reason. They are as to their Faith a kind of implicit believers, and believe as the Church, or such and such a great wise and learned Doctor believes: and their practice is a kind of imitation of some men in such and such things. This made Paul speak to his Corinthians to follow him but as he followed Christ, if you will follow and have an example of me, look on me only as in, and walking in the steps of Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 11.1, —3. I fear that to this day many persons take into such a track, because such and such men (whom they affect) do so, more than for any conviction that is upon them, or any account they can give that it is the way of God. But remember,

Non quaitur, sed qua cundum est, we should not walk by what is done, but by what ought to be done, Matth. 19.1, —9.

8. They are as carnal in having more zeal than knowledge to manage it: of the Jews the Apostle speaks thus, Rom. 10.2, 3, and in like manner doth he speak of the Galatian -Babes, and upon the like occasion, Gal. 4.16, —21, and Chap. 3.1, —5. They no sooner get a notion by the end, but they are all of a flame; they (like tinder) take fire presently, and suffer zeal (though without discretion) to eat them up. Paul himself, while carnal, was a most zealous man, but 'twas in the days of his ignorance. Zeal (like fire) is a good Servant indeed, but 'tis a bad Master, it need be well watched. When the Disciples in their zeal would have called for fire from Heaven, 'twas from their unacquaintedness with their own spirit. And 'twas in such a fit that Peter drew his Sword. But this is not the way of Christ, whose Kingdom is not of this world, and therefore will not that his servants fight, Matth. 26.51, with Joh. 18.10, and 36. 'tis like carnal men to think we do God good service by killing them that do not deserve it, as being not of our way, Joh. 16.2, and usually this zeal of such men shows itself most in the presence of their leaders and dies in their absence, Gal. 4.18. 2 Chron. 24.2. I will not undertake to tell who are, and how many such Babes there are in our days, but I am afraid there are too many.

9. Babes are as carnal in this that they can hardly bear a reproof or an Exhortation: carnal men, and Babes that are as carnal look on reproofs as reproaches and cannot bear them. They are not without heart risings and grudging's against them that reprove them; the Corinthians were nettled at Paul 's dealing roundly with, and rebuking them sharply that they might be found in the Faith: they could hardly bear with him, but almost called him fool for his kindness and love, 2 Cor. 11.1, and 12.11, —15, the Author of the

Epistle to the Hebrew-Babes is fain to entreat them to suffer a word of Exhortation, Heb. 13.22. I beseech you Brethren, suffer the word of exhortation, for I have written a Letter to you in few words. Though one speak but a little, but a few words, they think them too many, if they like not what is said, though perhaps it concerns none so much as themselves. Eli 's carnal Sons could not bear reproof from their Father; nor can Babes as carnal bear any though from a Father. And beside this, they are loath to suffer for Religion, but will rather comply and conform with & to the rudiments of this world, as the Hebrews with Jewish, and the Corinthians with Gentile Rites rather than suffer persecution. 'It is true the Hebrews after they were illuminated, endured a great fight of affliction at first, Heb. 10.32, but they had weak hands and feeble knees, and began to faint and be weary, which occasioned that quickening exhortation, Chap. 12, which he entreats them to suffer, Chap. 13.22. The Disciples themselves were scattered and fled at the smiting of the Shepherd, so tedious a thing is suffering to them that are but Babes, and as carnal. If thou saint in the day of affliction, thy strength is small, Prov. 24.10.

10. To name no more, some of them are apt to measure God's heart by his hand, as carnal men do love and hatred by the things before them, which is a false rule. If God's hand be open to and fill them with his blessings, then all is well; but if his hand be shut up from, or laid upon them, then (like Zion of old) God hath forsaken them: this is their infirmity, for the best of this world is not good enough to be a Love token, nor the worst of it bad enough to be a token of hatred. If God slay their Son, or take away what they love, they draw sad conclusions, as if God had no respect for them: so it seems the Corinthians were apt to do, when God afflicted them, and therefore the Apostle tells them, 1 Cor. 11.32, when we are Judged (though for this cause, Vers. 30.) yet we are chastened of the Lord, that we may

not be condemned with the world. And so the Hebrew -Babes were heartened by the like consideration that they might not measure God's heart by his hand, nor his promises and love by his providential dispensations, but that he dealt with them as Sons, Heb. 12.5, —13.

These (seeing I have promised to name no more) are the things (too many) wherein the Babes are as carnal; and so, as no other degree of Saints are, at least in such a degree as they are. These are naughty things and unbecoming because carnal, and therefore Paul threatens the Corinthians with a Rod, if they mend not their manners, which were corrupted the more by the evil words of an Epicurean sort of men crept in among them, 1 Cor. 15. Twice if not thrice the Apostle speaks to them of these things as such whereof they might well be ashamed, 1 Cor. 4.14, and 6.5, and 15.34, and shakes the Rod over them again and again that they might fear to be carnal anymore, 1 Cor. 4.18, —21. 2 Cor. 1.23, and 10.9, —11, and 12.20, 21, and 13.10. And now I have finished what I designed and promised, as to the doctrinal part of this Subject, having shewn, 1. That there is such a Form or state of Saints, as Babes are, inferior to them called by St. John, little Children. 2. What their attainments and characters are. And 3, wherein they are defective and short of all other Saints, and as carnal, but a degree above carnal men, being new-born 'tis true, but as yet not washed clean from their bloods, no not comparatively as other Saints are. I now proceed to the last thing.

#### IV. The Use of the whole.

1. By way of Examination and self-Catechizing, whether

We are 1. Babes or not.

We are 2. But Babes.

2. By way of Exhortation to all sorts,

As 1. To them without.

As 2. To them within.

1. By way of Examination, that we may Catechize ourselves and learn to know, 1. Whether we are Babes or no, whether new-born or not: and this we have great reason to do, because not only our hearts are deceitful and may abuse us by making us think otherwise of ourselves than we are, and therefore 'tis foolish to trust our hearts, Prov. 28.26. But because many have been actually cozened, as the foolish Virgins, &c. many have thought themselves rich who have been poor, and others have thought themselves poor who have been rich, Prov. 13.7, of which former the Angel of Laodicea is an instance, Rev. 3.17, and of the latter the Angel of Smyrna, Rev. 2.9, that therefore we may pass a right judgment on, let us examine, ourselves.

In relation hereunto 'tis but necessary that I premise some things about Conversion for the preventing of Objections, the removing of offenses, and so for the clearing of the way which leads us to know whether we are new-born, converted or not. As,

1. That the new-birth is a mystery, conversion is a secret thing, a work that begins within, out of sight; it puzzled Nicodemus a Master, a Rabbi in Israel, to think what kind of thing regeneration should be, Joh. 3.3, —13. Though there be motions and visible turnings (as in the wheels of a Watch) yet the spring is within and hidden. How the Child is fashioned in the Womb is a great mystery; but the forming's of the new-birth is a greater: for 'tis a work wholly and altogether of

God; making, and 'tis curiously wrought in the secret places of the heart, 'It is a being renewed in the spirit of the mind (which is the prime and proper seat of it) Ephes. 4.23. Now the work being so inward, secret and hidden, 'tis hard to trace God's footsteps, and to search man's heart: all the ways of God are unsearchable enough, but especially these in the great deep, as man's heart is called. The way of a Serpent on a Rock, the way of a Ship in the Sea, and of a Bird in the Air cannot be found out, much less can this way of God, unless he reveal it by his Spirit, which works it, 1 Cor. 2.10, —12. Though the outside of the new-man which is created in righteousness and true holiness may be discerned, yet the inwards of it are like the white name which none knows but he (I, and perhaps not every he) that hath it. There are but few can give an exact and full relation and story of this thing; 'tis so secret that many things pass by undiscerned: as who knows the errors, so who knows the true workings of his heart? 'Tis the hidden man of the heart, and the heart is hidden from the man. If men understand but little of earthly things, which are their element, and whereof they profess themselves masters, how much less do they know such a spiritual and heavenly thing as this, as our Savior told Nicodemus, Joh. 3.7, —12, experience is the best School-Mistress in this case, of which I shall speak anon.

2. I premise this that God takes various occasions to convert men, and useth various means to bring about this work: which I mention because some are apt to think they are not converted, if it be not done in the same way as it hath with others. The first and most usual is the Preaching of the Gospel, for Faith cometh by hearing (one way or other) Rom. 10.14.—17. Sometimes God takes occasion from reading to send a Preacher, as to the Eunuch, Acts 8.27. &c. and which way soever the Word attend upon us to save us, let us attend upon the saving Word: give thyself to Reading and to Hearing, and who knows but God may give thee Faith whilst thou art Reading or



Hearing? If he have not done it for thee that way already. Sometime God takes occasion to do it at a conference or a discourse, as it was at that between Christ and the woman of Samaria, Joh. 4. Sometime God doth make use of an affliction and a low-brought condition, as he did to convert the Prodigal; and David found this of use for a reconversion, Psal. 119.67, and 71. Sometime he takes an occasion from some mercy he hath shewn and deliverance which he hath wrought for a person, and so obliged and led him to Repentance by his goodness: such a thing was the occasion of the blind man's conversion, Joh. 9, and of one of the Lepers, and perhaps of the Jailor. Sometime God takes occasion by a dream to do it, Job 33.14, —30. Sometime from a man's curiosity, as he did Zacchaeus, Luk. 19, and many that have gone to see and be seen, or to hear words as a lovely Song (as Augustine did Ambrose) have been met with, and have felt a work. When they went to hear Paul for Novelty, Acts 17.19, yet then some believed, Vers. 34. Yea, sometime he stays till men be in a full career of sinning and then meets with them as he did with Saul, Acts 9, but such cases are not ordinary. Sometime God makes use of the good conversation of others; when men will not hear the good Word of God, yet the good works (though of women) may tend to and be made use of for their conversion, 1 Pet. 3.1, 2. Oh that there were more such Preachers and Preaching, for then perhaps there would be more conversion. Sometime God makes use of the patient sufferings of his Saints, as he did that of Christ to convince one and another at the time of his passion, Mat. 27.54. Luk. 23.39, —43, and in after Ages God blest it so much that it became a Proverbial speech, *Sanguis martyrum semen Ecclesiae*, the blood of innocent and patient Martyrs became the seed of the Church.

We must not limit the holy one of Israel, for though he tie us to means, he hath not tied himself, but haply works on many so indiscernibly that they scarce know what was the occasion taken or

means used to do it: he waits to be gracious for he is a God of Judgment, he acts judiciously and takes what occasions and means he pleaseth, he best knows what will best take. If the work be done it should not be a matter of doubt to us which way it be done or by what means; yet seeing the Word Preached is the most usual, we should wait and watch at the door of hope, Prov. 8.34, and 'tis a great obligation upon all Christians to discourse and walk holily, and to suffer patiently as Christ did, seeing God may make use of their graces to make others gracious, to convince and convert men, that they shall glorify God, and say God is in them of a truth, 1 Cor. 14.24, 25. 'tis a great mercy and blessing to be instrumental to the conversion of others, Dan. 12.3. Jam. 5 19, 20.

3. As the occasions and means, so the manner of working is various and different; some he draws, others he drives in: Promises prevail with some, and threatening's with others: Boanerges works on this, and Barnabas on that. Terrors affect some most, but Love others. One is broken, another is melted. Some he keeps long under the pangs of the new-birth, and they have hard labor of it, others have a more quick delivery. Some pay but a little fine, but a great deal of rent annually; and others pay a greater fine and less rent. Many such things are with him, these are but some of his wares; who can tell all the ways that God takes with man, to turn back his soul from the pit? Some he leads on by degrees, others start up on a sudden, and are men almost as soon as they are born, as Paul was. He frowns and smiles, speaks thunders or a still voice, dismal or joyful sounds, as pleaseth him; the Spirit bloweth where and how it listeth, sometime the blustering North, at other times a benign South wind blows; sometime there falls much rain, other times but a little dew, but all shall prosper. It cost Paul and the Jailor dear for the time, but 'twas soon over; as to Matthew and others, 'twas but follow me, and they follow immediately.

4. As the means and manner, so the time of conversion is various; There are no certain set times, as not before or after such a year; but God calleth at any hour of the day, at it seemeth him good: some sooner and some later, as he did laborers into the Vineyard, Matth. 20.1, —7, some are called when young, others when old; the Thief was called at the last gasp as 'twere: 'twas one that none might despair, and but one that none might presume.

5. Conversion is more felt by some than others, and the conversion of some is more visible and signal than that of other men: some can tell the time and manner as well as means of their conversion, but others cannot do so: Zacchaeus, Saul and the Jailor, &c. could tell the whole story with all circumstances, but Timothy (in likelihood) could not do so, having been good (as I may say) time out of mind, from the very Cradle. Some know the day of conception, the moment of quickening, and can give account of the Babes stirring in their Womb, from time to time; when others take it for granted, or hope it upon some general apprehensions only that they are with Child. Now persons may be considered either as not having heard the Gospel (as the Gentiles at first) or as having been notorious sinners as Saul and the Jailor, &c. and these can better tell the time and manner of their conversion; but others that have lived under the Gospel many years, or have had the advantage of better education and more civil lives, cannot give so exact account of the change in them; though it may be as true in these as the other, yet 'tis not so visible and discernible. A little Sugar will sweeten Wine, when a great deal must go to sweeten Vinegar: and therefore usually well-bred and good dispositioned persons are more doubtful of their conversion, than others that have had so great a change made as to become clean contrary to themselves. But,

6. Though conversion be a mystery and wrought thus variously, yet still 'tis a conversion, and therefore is more or less knowable; 'tis a being translated from darkness to light, from death to life, from the power of Satan unto God, &c. and this cannot be done without making some considerable alteration in the persons, and working such good in the very best, as was not there before: and though the time of conversion may not be known, yet that the person is converted may be known. There are some things, which the most refined nature if not renewed cannot do; some things which are proper to all converts and only to such, as to be new creatures, new-born, things which nature cannot ape: grace is an element above nature, and nature at the highest cannot rise so high as grace at the lowest: 'tis not show and appearance but reality that makes the difference. Brass though gilded over is no Gold, nature though reformed is not grace: a Dog may vomit, a Sow may be washed, but they retain the nature still; but grace makes a new man, a new nature.

The Question then is by what Criteria or characters it may be known that a person is new-born? I shall not Answer only by their eating of Milk, of which before: but I shall lay down some things which are found in all true converts, and such as which the best nature (with all the advantages of education) never reached unto, nor can attain: to which the lowest as well as the highest Christian may set their seal that have known the grace of God in truth. As,

1. They desire heartily and sincerely not only that God may be their God, but that they may be his people: and wish as heartily that they may have a childlike love to him, as that he may have a Fatherly love to them. They are as willing to be his to serve him, as that he should be theirs to save them. They take Christ Jesus not as a Physician to make use of him in a case of necessity, but as a Husband to love and

live with him: and not only as a Savior, but as a Prince to rule and a Prophet to teach them. They implicitly take whole Christ in all his offices, and not divided. And who but a new-born Soul doth? The natural man (especially if assisted by the common principles and grace of the Gospel) desires to be happy; and in relation thereunto may wish God to be his God by way of privilege; but then he fails as to the other part of being equally desirous to be God's by way of duty; which every Saint doth do in its measure: yea, though they have not yet attained the witness and seal of the Spirit that they are the Children of God. The least Saint feels the work, though it (if I may so speak) have not yet heard the voice of the Spirit bearing witness thereunto, and is thereby in a sure state, though it have not the assurance of it: for 'tis beyond nature at highest, with all its attainments, to desire and endeavor to serve God as well as to be saved by him; to be like him as to be liked of him; to be conformable to him, as to have Salvation from him; to obey commands as to enjoy promises and privileges; to be holy, as to be happy; to have grace to glorify God, as well as to be glorified thereby; to be in Jesus Christ, not only that there may be no condemnation, but a new creation; and to be sanctified as to be justified and saved; to live as well as to die the death of the righteous.

2. New-born ones have the Law of God in and written in their hearts, and from this as from the living principle they act, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. When the Law of God is in our hearts, our hearts will be set to do it, as 'tis said, Psal. 40.8. I delight to do thy Will O God, thy Law is in my heart; and Isa. 51.7, they are said to be the people who know righteousness, the people in whose heart God's Law is: others may do some righteous Acts, but these do it as their proper fruit springing from the root of the matter (the Law of God and his truth) in them; and so 'tis an evidence of their new-birth, 1 Joh. 2, everyone <H&G> that is a righteousness-maker (as his

Trade) as some are called sin-makers in opposition to these, 1 Joh. 3.7, —10.) everyone that doth so do righteousness (in obedience to God whose Law is in his heart) is born of God. Now this is said of the very Corinthian-Babes, 2 Cor. 3.3, ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshly Table of the heart. This cannot be said of any but new-born ones, and may be said of them that are but newly born, even Babes in Christ.

From this Law written in their heart, there follow and flow forth desires and endeavors after growth, and such as will not permit these souls to be satisfied, unless they attain it. I say it begets desires after growth, such as was cleared before to be in Babes, from 1 Pet. 2.2. For having tasted that the Lord is gracious and taken into their hearts what they have tasted, they cannot but desire the sincere Milk of the Word of Grace to grow thereby. They desire not only to live, but to thrive and to be lively. And though these Babes do not know or see that they grow according to their desire, yet they know that they do desire to grow, and that they would, as be planted in the house, so flourish in the Courts of the Lord, and not be trees without fruit. 'It is much to be feared that they have no grace who do not desire to grow in grace; and whether they have grace enough to be saved, who can be content with only so much grace as will save them.

Again, they do not only wish and desire, but do endeavor also to attain their wishes and desires, viz. that they may grow; and do therefore diligently and conscientiously attend upon and use all means that God hath appointed for their growth. Naked velleities and idle wishes may be found in formalists and hypocrites, but to be as endeavorous as desirous is congruous to and only found in the new creatures, the new-born ones. Balaam could profess and wish like a godly man, but he instead of using answerable endeavors,

practiced the clean contrary: in formalists the end only is desirable, but in true Saints the means are as desirable, being not only the way to, but a part of their happiness.

Yet once more, True Converts (though but Babes) take not up and rest satisfied with desires and endeavors, unless they attain the end of desires and endeavors; or with the use of means without the end of means; now it's true these Babes attain but little, and that's the reason they are so restless and unsatisfied. They have the least satisfaction of any Saints, because they are much in desire and little in enjoyment, and therefore desire the more. Others take up with desires and endeavors, which these cannot do, they prosecute and pursue still, and say as Absalom, Why am I come up from Geshur, if I may not see the Kings face? Hearing, Praying, &c. is not a satisfaction to them (though they do it as a duty) unless they have communion with and conformity to God, eked out and carried on thereby: and all this is because the Law of God is written in their hearts.

3. New-born ones are for the having their sin to be taken away, and that not only by pardoning but by purging, yea though their sorrows should continue. If God should say to such a Soul, I will take away all thy sorrows, and make thee a cheerful heart, thou shalt have Corn, and Wine, and Oil enough, it would still say, O Lord, what's this if I go graceless, if my sins be not forgiven me; take away my sins Lord, though thou leave my sorrows, and make me water my Couch with tears every day, and walk mournfully all the days of my life: do anything with me so my sins may be done away: my heart will never be at ease till my sins be forgiven. And this is not all, but if God should further say to such a Soul, I will forgive thy sin and remember it no more to charge it upon thee, but I will leave thee under the power and bondage of it; Oh Lord, would this foul say, though I bless

thee for a pardon and that I shall by that be kept from being damned, yet Lord this doth not satisfy me, I have as hearty a request to make that I may be purged, and that I may be taken from sin, as that sin may be taken from me, that I may be delivered from sins dominion as from damnation. David doth not only pray, Lord blot out my transgressions, but Lord wash me, and cleanse me thoroughly from my sin, Psal. 51.1, 2, and (it seems) this was after the Prophet had said, The Lord hath put away thy sin, 2 Sam. 12, 13, and who but converted ones are of this frame? Others can be content with hearts ease, peace and good things, though they live in the love of one or other darling sin, especially if they do but entertain a conceit that God will pardon them, purging is not the thing that any do heartily mind but gracious Souls.

Beside, there is this considerable and worthy of a remark as to these new-born ones, that though they have no assurance of a pardon nor have any great conquests over their corruptions, by reason whereof they have little satisfaction and much sorrow, yet they can in their serious and sedate frames truly say, that they are glad to hear and see that other Saints do God better service than they do: they mourn that themselves are no better, and yet rejoice that there are any better than themselves. Indeed in a fit and pang they do more than emulate, even envy those happy and advanced souls, and yet (in cold blood as we say) cannot but be glad that God hath better servants than they are; that there are Sons in his house and service, though they be but as hired Servants. Alas! saith such a poor Babe, I am one of the most worthless wretches on earth, I live at so poor, low and inconsiderable a rate, that I am ashamed of myself, and am not worthy to be called a Christian, but notwithstanding this I can through grace rejoice, that God hath his Abraham's, David's, Jobs, Paul's, &c. who glorify his name at a better rate. They admire the happiness of and bless them, who stand before the Lord and minister



to his name and glory; as the Queen of Sheba did Solomon's Servants. Yea if at any time in anything they have been instrumental to the glory of God and serviceable to his name and people (as the Babes were, Heb. 6.10.) they are glad of it, though they have not yet the reward of it, but God seems to have forgotten it, and they themselves do scarce keep it in mind, as appears by Matth. 25.37. But now take Hypocrites and Formalists, they grudge what they do, as Mal. 3.14, and profess Christ Jesus out of envy to the Saints, as vying with them for a reputation, Phil. 1.15, 16.

4. New-born ones will not depart from God; let God (say they) deal with us how he will, yet this is the resolve of our souls, we will never leave him nor forsake him, for all the pleasures, profits and preferments of this world; no, though he kill us we will trust in him. Though God use them like the Dogs under his Table, and feed them with but a bit and a knock too, and give them not a meal of the Children's bread, yet they will thank him for what they have and wait for more, as the woman of Canaan did. Will a Hypocrite do this, wait and pray always? I think not. These Babes say to God as Ruth to Naomi, I will not leave thee, but will follow thee and the Lamb, though to the Grave, come of it what will; In the way of thy Judgments will we wait on thee, Isa. 26.8. If (like Ephraim) they are under the chastening's of God, and be for a while as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, yet they cry out again, Turn thou me and I shall be turned; they return and repent, they smite on the thigh and are ashamed; and God hears this as the voice of his dear child, and doth remember them, and will surely have mercy on them, Jer. 31.18, —20. If (like Israel) they have followed other lovers, and God therefore hedge up their way with Thorns, yet they return to their first Husband and grant it to be their folly that they departed from him, Hos. 2. Though Peter fail of his promise and plighted troth, yet he weeps bitterly and makes it good at last, that he will rather die

than utterly and finally forsake or deny him: and so 'tis with every Babe in Christ, who though they fall yet fall not away, but return and live. Only, let me leave this caution, Take not up with these words without this work, with fancy without feeling. It may be some Hypocrite or Formalist may hear this and give it out as if he had attained this; but 'tis not what the words of our mouth are, but what the frame of our heart is: 'tis not saying but feeling, not expression but experience that will warrant us to be in such a state. 'It is not being able to say these things by heart, but having them in our heart, and holding them forth in our lives that will do us good.

These are the things which I lay down as the characteristic discoveries of new-born ones, which distinguish them not only from common sinners, but from the most refined Hypocrites and Formalists: I have not pitched on many lest I should clog, nor on doubtful ones lest I should amuse poor Babes; but these which are essential to the new-birth state, for indeed they are all promised in the new Covenant, and wrought in all their hearts with whom the Covenant is made, and that is with all Saints as such and not with respect to degrees, as some promises are (which was hinted long since) Let us examine the Covenant and we shall find all these things punctually and particularly so, Jer. 31.31,—34, with 32.38,—40.

1. I will be their God and they shall be my people. This is not only promised, but effected and wrought; and as 'tis in God's heart to be their God, so 'tis in their heart to be God's people; and the one and other is desired by them, which made the first head.

2. I will put my Law into their hearts. This is not to be laid up there as writings in a chest to be idle and without effect, but 'tis there that they may do it, that they may fear the Lord and keep his

Commandments: that they breath after full obedience thereunto, which made the second head,

3. I will remember their sin no more. Which notes not only forgiving but subduing of sin, Rom. 6 14, which makes the third Head.

4. They shall not depart from me. That is, wholly and finally: as God will not leave them totally, so nor they God: which is the fourth Head.

Now this is clear as the Sun, that the new Covenant Promises and frames are found accomplished in all Saints, and in none but Saints: that is, the end of all and none but redeemed ones, which is the end of the Redeemer, and that is to be holy, &c. Tit. 2.14, and that becomes the aim and end of Elected ones, which is God's in Electing, and that you may read, Ephes. 1.4. God the Father, Son and Spirit are one and agree in one. Election, Redemption, Sanctification to Salvation have one and the same subjects; and all these have one and the same desire as to the things designed, they all agree in breathing after the effects of God the Father, Son and Spirits design, which no other persons do.

'It is true, these things may not be acted alike powerfully and discernably at all times, but they are rooted and riveted in them, and do more or less appear in their effects upon occasion. Take the best of Saints, and they are not acted always alike; some of them are eminent for a particular grace which hath appeared most evidently, and run most evenly through the whole course of their lives; as Abraham for Faith; Isaac for fear, and therefore God is called the fear of Isaac, viz. the God whom he feared; Jacob for Prayer, and therefore the Seekers and praying people are called his seed; Moses for meekness; Job for patience, &c. not but that these met with some interruptions and breaks, of which weighty reasons might be given,

were it seasonable here. So take any Classis of Saints, and they have variety of lessons to take out, several Books to read, and several exercises to perform; now when they are about any-one of these, the rest seem not to be or to lie dormant for that time, though it be not so, but they administer a secret contribution to one another in their turns. Sometimes Saints are most exercised about their own emptiness and insufficiency; sometimes about the riches and freeness of grace; sometimes about the beauty of holiness and usefulness of good works; sometimes sorrow and fear, at another time love and joy take hold of them; by reason of this variety and turning some are prone to think that they were never converted till they came to act so and so, which is but grace putting itself forth in another way of growth; as the sap of a tree doth first in buds, then in leaves and blossoms, and then in fruit, which fruit also hath its time to ripen, and its form and color is very various till it come to its maturity and be perfectly ripe. I take occasion to speak of these things out of tenderness to poor Babes, who are too apt to mistake and mis-judge, and to let them know that if they will judge aright of their state, they must not judge by what is proper and peculiar to a higher Classis and size of Saints, but by what is proper to the new-birth as such, what is essential and makes the specifical difference, which degrees do not do, *Gradus non variat speciem*.

2. The next thing we should Catechize and examine ourselves about, is, whether we are but Babes; perhaps many a Professor hath been long in the School of Christ, and yet is but in the lowest Form to this day: 'tis not time and standing, length of days and many years, but experiences and attainments that denominate an Advance: the Corinthians and the Hebrews were Babes, though for their time they had been long in Christ. Would we therefore know whether we are but Babes still, let us review the defects and carnalities of Babes spoken of before, and not expect a repetition of them here. As the

beginnings of grace, and their eating Milk, with the other essential (Covenant) frames newly mentioned, do give us to know that they are Babes, new-born ones; so their defects and being as carnal, give us to know that they are but Babes: examine yourselves therefore, commune with the Word and with your own hearts, compare them together, look into the Glass (as St. James speaks) and see what manner of hearts and faces you have, and be not forgetful hearers, as you may be, though you remember all these Sermons word for word, Jam. 1.25. Examination and Prayer hereabout is clove and Closet work, I commend it to you, and you to God, being to proceed to the

## II. Use of Exhortation.

1. To them without and not yet Babes in Christ, being not new-born.
2. To them within, of all ranks and degrees.

1. To them without, who are not yet new-born, but remain in a state of nature, and who cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, unless they be born again, as our Savior assures us with no less than four Verities, Job. 3.3, and 5. And alas how many are there who yet lie under the condemnation of the Word and their own Consciences, as having known nothing of conversion, no not in a profession, but live in a known and owned course of a sinful life? Oh that I might yet entreat, persuade and prevail with such to consider their way and the end thereof, which is Hell, if they turn not to God, and believe in Christ Jesus. To you, poor souls, I have spoken before by way of conviction and invitation too, under the two heads of Repentance and Faith, when I made Application thereof, which I entreat you to peruse and consider, that I may not speak the same things over and over. Further,

And beside that, I have two other things to say unto unto you, by way of Exhortation; 1. Do not offend any of Christ's little ones, no not his Babes. 2. Be not offended with Christ and Religion, because of Babes, though they be yet but as carnal.

1. Let me exhort and beseech you not to offend these little ones, the least and weakest of the stock of Christ: 'tis a great sin, and a sin which will be greatly punished to offend one of Christ's little ones. If not for their sake or God's sake, yet for thine own sake take heed of this sin. There is an enmity in the heart of sinners against the seed of God, which they express by reproaches and persecutions, by which they are injurious to and do offend and wrong them; but oh that they would hear and fear and do no more so wickedly, for Jesus Christ doth not only take notice of what offenses are committed again his person and doctrine, but of what are committed against his people, the very least of them. Consider what himself hath said in this case, Matth. 18.6, —10. Whosoever shall offend (i.e., despise, verse. 10.) one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the Sea: This being thus drowned was looked on as a dreadful punishment, but that's nothing compared with being thrown into the depth of Hell, with a Millstone weight and load of thine offenses about thy neck: for if Jesus Christ deal severely with them that were not merciful to his people, as he will, Matth. 25.41, —45, how, oh how will he deal with them that have been cruel to his people? Especially seeing 'tis a cruelty to himself! Of this not only their Angels carry tidings, Vers. 10, but Christ himself knows it by feeling, as he tells Paul, Acts 9.4. And he will one day say to non-converted ones that have slain his little ones, as Gideon said to Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they will then Answer, As thou art so were they, each of them resembled the Children of a King; to which he will reply, as

Gideon did, They were my Brethren, if ye had saved them alive I would not have stain you; but now you shall be damned body and soul, I will destroy you in Hell. Depart ye cursed, take them Devil. Hear therefore and fear to despise or offend his little ones. And,

2. Take heed ye be not offended with Christ and Religion because of the Babes who are yet as carnal: as it should and doth oblige God's people not to be as carnal, lest they give the enemies of God (as David did) an occasion to blaspheme, and cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of; so it obligeth the men of this world not to be offended with and to blaspheme the way of God and his people, because some of them, viz. the Babes, are yet as carnal and walk as men. The worldly seed is hugely illogical and draw many non sequiturs, for say they, These professors are as bad as others, they are all alike, and this is their Religion. Not so neither, for though they are as carnal, yet they are not carnal and in the flesh as other men are, (*nullum simile est idem*) though they be too much like, yet they are not carnal men, for they are in Christ Jesus; and though they take too many steps after the manner of men, yet they walk nor (their whole conversation is not) after or according to the flesh as other men, who are in and walk according to the flesh; and though some are as carnal, yet all are not so, there are who are spiritual and walk in and according to the Spirit. As for them that do otherwise, 'tis not their Religion but they are to blame, for they have not so learned Christ Jesus, his doctrine teacheth not, but (*dedocet tales mores*) unteacheth them such ill manners, to walk as men. 'It is the Devils Logic to draw an Argument from seeming to being, or from similitude to Identity; from a particular to a universal; and from the concrete to the abstract: that because they are as carnal, therefore they are but carnal and wholly so: because one is bad, they are all alike; because Professors are to be blamed, therefore Religion itself is criminal! The grace of God hath taught all to deny ungodliness and

worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; which if Professors do not do, 'tis not graces fault but theirs, and therefore take heed ye be not offended with Christ and Religion because of them. And you professors learn from hence to walk circumspectly, lest the way and name of God be blasphemed through you; and lest Christ suffer, because you sin. Let not the world despise you, let them not have any occasion given them by you to despise you and that which is better than you, viz. the Christian Religion. And this leads me to the second Branch of the Exhortation.

To them within of all ranks.

1. In General to all, to walk wisely towards them that are without and within, to be circumspect and accurate, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because our days are few and evil. How we should walk inoffensively, yea winningly, these following Texts will tell us, Matth. 5.16, with Tit. 3.8. 1 Cor. 10.31, —33, with Ephes. 5.15. —17, and Col. 4.5, 6. 1 Pet. 2.12, —18, with Chap. 3.1, 2, and 8, —17. All Saints should exercise themselves to keep good Consciences void of offense to God and to men, both them without and them within. What other uses concerned all I have taught at the beginning, viz. in the Application made in the Introduction, to which I refer you: what remains as to particulars, I shall reduce to two Heads, 1. An Exhortation to grown Saints. 2. An Exhortation to Babes.

1. To grown Saints, to whom I would say these things. 1. Remember what you were, not only when unconverted, as 1 Cor. 6.11. (I speak not to that now) but what you were at your first conversion, viz. but Babes, for such were you: be not like Israel who forgot God's work of old. Call to mind the former days, Forsan & haec olim meminisse juvabit, 'twill be worth your while and be of great use to you.



Remember there was a time when you were but Babes and suckling's, and how before that God took you by the hand and taught you to go, what go-carts and hold-bys you made use of then; remember what kisses you have had from his mouth when you were little Children, and how he led you forth after that to fight his battles when you came to be Young-men; and by fighting the fight of Faith, and using the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, you overcame the wicked one and led captivity Captive; if you are Fathers remember him whom you have known from the beginning, who hath given you all the experiences and wisdom with which you are endowed. Though you can eat strong meat now, yet time was you could eat but Milk.

The remembrance of these things will be of huge use to you to give God the glory of your higher attainments and all your advances from step to step: 'twill make you greatly useful to the instruction of Babes, which is one of your great works and duties: 'twill keep you low in your own eyes, when you see that you owe a beholdingness to God for bringing you hitherto, merely of and by his grace, not for any worth or merit of your own: 'twill help you to know that you were converted long ago, and not to think (as some are apt to do) that all the work was as nothing, till they came to such or such a pitch; which occasions a neglect of them below that pitch, and an ingratitude to God for what went before it and led to it. Thus will it be many ways advantageous to remember the work of old.

2. Be exhorted to bring forth fruit answerable to your state. Time was when fruits worthy of Repentance were the fruits called for, but now you are to bring forth fruits worthy of assurance, victory, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 'It is true, God had some little praise from you when but Babes, but now he expects much more: that you bring forth much fruit and be filled with it, that you be strong in Faith, that you

abound in love, that ye be filled with all wisdom and knowledge, to walk worthy of God to all-well-pleasing, and to do all to his glory.

3. Be not ashamed of your youngest brethren that are but Babes, Paul, nay Christ himself was not ashamed to call them Brethren; but carry it lovingly, gently and tenderly towards them; you know the heart of a Babe, for you yourselves were once Babes, as 'tis said to Israel in behalf of the stranger, *Exod. 23.9*, and *Levite. 19.33, 34*. It may be some (*patres aequum esse censent nos jamjam a pueris illico nasci senes*) poor Babes complain, that such and such do not regard them, because they are not grown up to their stature; but pray remember, these things ought not to be so, there is an honor due to the weaker vessels and uncomely parts, *1 Cor. 12*. We should be nurses to these froward Bantlings, and crying Babes, and as Paul was among the Thessalonians, we should be gentle as a nurse that cherisheth her own children nurslings, *1 Thes. 2.7*.

4. Give good examples to Babes, and abuse not your liberty to their offense: I told you that Babes mind example much, and if they have bad ones given them, especially by good and eminent men, they are drawn aside by it; as when Peter dissembled, the other Jews dissembled also, insomuch that Barnabas (an eminent person) was carried away by that dissimulation, *Gal. 2.13*. and saith the Apostle, take heed lest by any means your liberty become a stumbling block to them that are weak; for if any (weak and ignorant, which is a Babe) man see thee which hast knowledge to sit at meat in the Idols Temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened (gr. edified) he takes thy example for a warrant, and thinks he is edified thereby, when alas 'tis to his loss and detriment, *1 Cor. 8.9, — 13*.

5. Acquaint the Babes with your experiences, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1.6, —10, and with Satan's devices, as he did, 1 Cor. 7.5. 2 Cor. 2.11. 2 Cor. 11.2. Babes have but little skill to distinguish between good and evil, between impressions from the good or evil spirit; especially if Satan transform himself into an Angel of Light: Israel of old was to tell the story to and write a History (of God's dealing with them and Amalek's against them) for after Ages: and to instruct the children how God had dealt with the Fathers; so do you. Let the little Children tell stories of the Fathers love; the Young-men of his power; and the Fathers of his wisdom, in carrying on the work of Grace: how God overthrew Pharaoh, led them through the Wilderness, sought for and provided for them from heaven, till they came to the good Land. But,

2. 'It is time to speak to the Babes whose case we have in hand, and so to conclude. There are three things that I would exhort Babes unto.

I. To be glad that they are Babes.

II. To be humbled that they are but Babes.

III. To press after being more than Babes.

1. To be glad that they are Babes, newborn and in Christ Jesus. Glad, alas! There's no comfort for me, who am but a Babe; no, yes but there is, that thou art a Babe, though but a Babe: 'tis true, it doth not belong to thee as carnal, but as a Babe in Christ: the least work of God is great consolation to the least of Saints, viz. to Babes. Consider, whether this be nothing,

1. That thou hast attained to the first Resurrection, viz. from being dead and lost in sin; thou art called out of Egypt, and art called his Son, and as such brought out of Egypt: the work is begun, thou art

new-born, and eatest Milk, the Foundation is laid, and is this nothing? Who knows to what a great Tree this little Mustard-seed of Grace may grow? The Babe that lies in the Cradle may become a Father in Israel; and is this nothing? He that hath laid the Foundation will lay the top-stone, and thou shalt cry out with shouting, Grace, Grace unto it. God is not like the foolish Builder, he hath cast up his cost, and hath wherewithal to finish what he hath begun, he will not be laughed at and mocked as one that laid a Foundation, began to build, but could not finish it: though thou be a knotty piece, yet he will fit thee for thy place, and perfect that which concerns thee; for this work is not only that of his hand, but of his heart; and is this nothing? Pray to him and believe, as Psal. 138.7, 8.

2. Thou art not only brought out of Egypt, but he hath drawn thee into the Wilderness, and though thou be in the Valley of Achor, yet even there is a door of hope. Thou art bewildered, and thy motions are full of windings and turnings; now forward and then backward almost to Egypt again, that thou seemest to wander rather than to walk or to go a journey; true, but yet thou art in thy way and God is leading thee to his holy Hill, Mount Zion. 'It is observable how differently the condition of Israel (and so thine) is expressed, Psal. 107.4, with 7, in the 4. Vers. 'tis said, they wandered in the wilderness; but in the 7. Vers. 'tis said, he led them forth: in the 4. Vers. 'tis called a solitary way; but in the 7. Vers. 'tis called the right way: in the 4. Vers. they found no (and despaired to find any) City to dwell in; yet Vers. 7, that they might go to a City of habitation: So 'tis with thee, poor soul, and notwithstanding thy unbelief and murmurings, yet he holds thy Soul in Life, and when thou art hungry and thirsty he provides food and drink convenient for thee; and thy Clothes shall nor wear out.

3. Thy being a Babe hath more of encouragement than discouragement in it: Thy being a Babe in Christ is more to thy safety, than thy being as carnal is to thy danger, though it must be thy sorrow: Babe is the name of a Saint not of a carnal man, and it makes more for thee that thou art a Babe, than it doth against thee that thou art as carnal. Is it nothing to thy Joy that thou art born? Though thou be not yet clothed with a robe, nor kissed with thy Fathers lips? 'Twas more for the Prodigal that he was alive, than against him, that he had been dead, and came home without rags, even naked and bare. 'Twas more for the Disciples that the Spirit was willing, than against them that the flesh was weak. 'It is so with us as to our Babes, their being ours doth more endear them to us, than their being froward and peevish doth disengage us to them. And though the elder Brother chargeth his Father as guilty of an indiscreet and partial fondness to make so much of a Prodigal, yet he still owns it as meet that they should rejoice, and be glad.

4. Though thou be as carnal, yet on conviction of this thy carnality thou art angry with it and thyself, and dost repent and abhor thyself as in dust and ashes. The Corinthian-Babes were no sooner convinced of theirs, but they made the Apostle glad by their sorrow, seeing their sorrow wrought Repentance never to be repented of, because it was to Salvation, 2 Cor. 7. Yea thus it was with the Incestuous person himself, 2 Cor. 2.4, 7, so that the Apostle on the account of this ingenuous Repentance pronounceth them clear, and him a person to be comforted. Now the same consolation belongs to thee if thou do likewise; and I am sure 'tis in thy new nature to do it, whenever thou art under the conviction of thy sin: and I can safely tell thee that sin repented of (as theirs was) will not be laid to thy charge.

5. Though thou be but a Babe yet God hath some praise from thee; 'tis true indeed he hath more from others, but yet 'tis true that he hath some from thee: thou dost help to perfect his praise. 'It is one of the burdens of these poor souls that they are such unprofitable servants, not only (as others are) in that they do but their duty, but alas in that they do not do their duty, but fall short of it and the glory of God: herein is God glorified when much fruit is brought forth, but as for us, say they, we bring forth but little. 'It is true, but yet thy Mite of grace gives a measure of glory; all the good-ground Hearers brought forth fruit to the glory of God, though some more than others, Matth. 13.8. When the Pharisees were displeased at the Hosanna 's ascribed to Christ by little ones, and are angry with him that he had not rebuked them, as if they had taken God's name in vain, for say they with a scorn, Hearest thou what these say? Yea, saith he, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of Babes and Suckling's thou hast perfected praise? Matth. 21.15, 16. Christ hears their Hosanna 's with joy and gladness, as that which full-fills a Scripture, and helps to fill up the praise and glory of God. A Babe is one of the joints and members of the Body, and supplies its measure even to the perfection of praise. As 'tis in Nature, there is one glory of the Heavens, another of the Earth; One of the Sun, and another of the Moon and Stars; the Heavens declare his glory, and the Earth his goodness, for 'tis full of it; the Sacred and Royal Prophet doth not only admire the Heavens and the Sun, but the Moon and Stars too, and that in the very Psalm where he speaks of Babes and Suckling's (from whence our Savior quotes it) Psal. 8.2, 3. For as 'tis in Nature, so 'tis in grace, not only the greatest, but lesser Luminaries; not only the highest but the lowest creatures do contribute something to the praise of God: the Sun indeed shines bright, and gives a great luster, but the Stars also do twinkle; so though an Abraham, &c. is strong in Faith giving great glory to God, yet God's praise is not fully perfected, till the Babes contribution be taken in, small though it be. In the

body, the least member; in a House the least Pin hath its use and tends to the perfecting of the whole; and vessels of an inferior office serve not a little to eke out the glory of more honorable one

The Milk that the Babes do eat, doth every spoonful of it, give praise and glory to God: Repentance doth so, Faith towards God, submission to Ordinances, trembling at his Word, desires after growth, love of the Brethren; these all praise and glorify his name, though not with so loud a voice and so open a mouth as that (and the higher attainments) of Children, Young-men and Fathers doth do. And the truth of it is, that 'tis not a little glory which accrues to God hereby; for, that these poor Babes who have so much corruption (and not without considerable temptations too) should yet be kept from Apostasy; that Grace should live (like a spark of fire in the midst of waters) and not be extinct, is a wonder; and such an one, as that 'tis not so great a wonder that other Saints of higher Forms cleave close to God, as that these do; nor that the Devil is conquered and baffled by them, as that he is defeated by these: 'tis much to the praise and glory of God and his grace, though not so actually given by them, as 'tis by others.

2. The second Branch of this Use is to exhort Babes to be humbled that they are but Babes, i.e. as carnal, and not past the spoon, and so incapable of having strong meat to eat, or of any more than the Alphabet of Religion, such as we Preach to sinners, viz. Repentance, and Faith towards God, &c. which is but Milk: and this especially concerns them, who are old in years, and yet but Babes as to understanding and practice, who have been professors of long standing, but little proficiency. 'It is a prime part of the Christians ingenuity to be low and vile in his own eyes, under the sense of imperfections and defects, yea and that though God be pacified towards him, Ezek. 16.60, —63. Let Babes therefore that are as

carnal, though they be in Christ Jesus, be very humble in the sense of their defectiveness, and, which is worse, their carnality. Especially considering,

1. That they have enjoyed means and helps by which they might have been more spiritual, had they not been dull of hearing. We are all careful to use means, but we should take one care more, and that is to make use of means to profit thereby, the want whereof calls for being humbled. The Apostle might well twit the Corinthian Babes with this, you boast of Paul, Apollo and Cephas, but is it not a shame to you to be carnal under such men's Ministry? The more persons are privileged with means, the more improved should they be by the means; and if not so, they should be the more humbled for their non-proficiency. Many of you have had not only the Milk but the Cream of the Gospel, and are ye yet carnal? Let it then be for a lamentation and answerable Humiliation!

2. Be the more humbled considering that many of the more refined sort of Heathens would have scorned to be so carnal as some of you: the Apostle upbraids the Corinthian Babes and thereby provokes them to shame by this very thing, 1 Cor. 5.1, 2. It is reported commonly (and in this, fama non est mendax, report is no Liar) that there is Fornication among you, and such Fornication, as is not so much as named (recorded of any) amongst the Gentiles, that one should have his Fathers Wife, and yet ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned. It should deeply humble Christians to be guilty of that which the Gentiles are not and scorn to be.

3. Let your Humiliation and Humility be the more, that ye have been better taught, Ephes. 4.17, —21, and that for a long time, Paul had spent a year and a half among these Corinthians, Act. 18.11, and had written to them two or three times, and was yet ready to come again



to correct their Babish-carnality, as 2 Cor. 12.14, with 20.21, and Chap. 13.1, 2. Our Savior upbraids his Disciples with this, that he had been so long with them, and yet they were ignorant of the Father and of him, Jeh. 14.9, and another time asks them (as one grieved and angry too) How long shall I be with you? Will ye never learn, &c. 'It is with this that the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews twits them also, that for their time and standing they might have been Teachers, and yet were still to learn, yea and stood in need of being taught their Primer over and again, Heb. 5.12. When men have been planted in God's Hort-yard and have been often watered with the dew of Heaven, and he comes year after year for Fruit, yet finds none, this calls for deep Humiliation. To be old men in profession, and novices in knowledge and practice is that which should lay us low.

4. Think of this also to humble you, how many that came in long after you are gone far before you; Paul was a Post-hume, born after Christ died and rose and went to Heaven, yet out-stripped and labored more abundantly than many that lived in Christ's time and Family. To allude to the Story in 2 Sam. 18.23, —. I may say that many like Cushie run first, and yet are out-run by Ahamaaz, who set out after him, for he run the way of the plain, when others (like Cushie) fetch a compass about, and are for vagaries and wanderings. The Gentiles came in last, but out; un the Jews who were first: and is it not so with you also, that some who were called but the other day, long since you, have yet out-learnt and outwrought you? Be humbled therefore.

5. Let this eke out your humbling, that as yet you are incapable of the strong meat, which God hath prepared for his: 'tis true, you are fed with Milk, which keeps your soul in life; but the choicest dainties are behind, reserved for a second course. Were you more spiritual he would lead you into his Wine-Cellar, he would feed you with Apples,

and his Binner of Love would be displayed to you and spread over you: he would make you drink of his Flaggons, yea of his Rivers of pleasure, and fill you with joy unspeakable and full of glory. While you are but Babes you cannot bear this, you are ignorant of the choicest of Gospel mysteries, of the most intimate and sweetest communion with the Father and the Son; and how should this these you and make you lay your mouth in the dust, that after so long a standing, you should be capable of no more than the common cheer, the ordinary fare of the Gospel, which is but Milk, without Bread and Wine, &c.

6. Let this help to break thine heart and make it humble, that thy being as carnal doth open the mouth of the wicked and carnal to cry out of and to blaspheme Religion for thy sake: though it be their sin to do so, yet 'tis thy sin (and should be thy shame that 'tis thy sin) that gives them occasion so to do. On say the wicked, beside profession we see no difference between professors and ourselves, they are as peevish, as humorous, as proud, as carnal as others. Alas! I beseech thee be humbled, that thou shouldst open their mouth to speak evil not of thee only but of the way of truth, and lay thy sins to the charge of Religion; Tertullian tells us that Christians had wont to be known by the amendment of their lives and being better than other men: I, this indeed adorns the doctrine of God our Savior, and otherwise men bring disgrace and reproach upon it. If we would not do Religion (and ourselves) the right to practice it, we should not do it the wrong to profess it; yea, and stand in the way of their coming in, who are ready to enter, were they not put back by them that are as carnal. Saith Paul, Dare any of you go to Law before unbelievers? What will they say to these things? Will they not laugh at and scorn you and your Religion too? Think what became of them that brought up an ill report on the good Land.

7. And lastly, remember and forget not this, that though thou go to Heaven 'twill cost thee dear before thou come there, that thou hast been as and so carnal: 'twill bring down thy gray hairs with sorrow to the Grave. Thou mayest be saved, yet so as by fire, as Paul tells his Babes, 1 Ger. 3.13.—15. This flesh and blood of thine cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, thou must through a Purgatory of water and fire, of Repentance and Zeal, before thou have thine inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith in Jesus. Be thou therefore humbled betimes, and leave not the sense and weight of all this to come upon thee when thou art on a death-bed, lest they latter and know more sorrow than thy beginning, and a worse thing befall thee then, than there did all thy life before. Be humbled for being as carnal. And,

3. Be exhorted also to press forward after being more than a Babe, yea than a Babe at the best: It should not suffice us barely to be in Christ Jesus, but we should be ambitious to walk in him, Col. 2.6. Yea not only to be and walk in him, but to abide in him, and to walk as he walked, 1 Joh. 2.6, to be rooted and built up in him, to be established in the Faith, as we have been taught, and to abound therein with thanksgiving, Col. 2.7. Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, should quicken our appetite after the Word to grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2.2, to grow in Grace and (as a help to it) in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3.18, that we may abound in Faith with thanksgiving as before; in hope, Rom. 15.13, in liberality, 2 Cor. 8.7, in every good work, 2 Cor. 9.8, in mutual love, Phil. 1.9, and 1 Thes. 3.12, in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. 15.58, in pleasing God, 1 Thes. 4.1, in all grace, 2 Pet. 1.8. There are many encouragements hereunto; as 1. Because grace hath abounded toward us, Rom. 5.20, and Ephes. 1.7, 8. And 2, our labor is not, nor shall be, in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15.58. But 3, an abundant entrance shall be ministered to us, into the Kingdom of our Lord and

Savior, 2 Pet. 1.8, —11. And lest we should sear and despond as if 'twere not attainable, we are Fourthly to know this, That God is able to make grace abound, 2 Cor. 9.8. Let us therefore go on to perfection, from Babes to little Children, from little Children to Young-men, from Young-men to Fathers; till we all come into the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephes. 4.13, —16.

In relation hereunto I shall add to what hath been said, 1. Some Considerations to provoke to growth. 2. Some helps to further and promote growth. To the first, in brief, none knows but he may attain to more than a Babe and therefore should press forward on these Considerations.

1. The highest Saints (Fathers) press forward, and therefore much more should you. See how Paul presseth forward, Phil. 3.8, —14. Shall one that hath attained so much as he had, be so pressing, and will not you that have attained but little? Let the zeal of the highest provoke the lowest to zeal.

2. Little Grace hath but a little comfort: Though the Babe have enough for a being, yet but a little for well-being. *Vivere est valere*, to live is not barely to be, but to enjoy oneself and to be well; as to this Life we do not take care only for so much as will keep life and soul together, but that we may live comfortably: and shall we not much more endeavor it as to our spiritual life? Little Faith is full of Fear (which excludes present joy and comfort) and is as no Faith in that respect, for so saith our Savior, Matth. 8.26. Why are ye fearful, O ye of-little Faith? Which Mark 4.40, is thus expressed, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no Faith? Would ye therefore have less fear and more joy? Press forward then to grow in grace.

3. Little grace gives but little glory to God; 'tis true, the Babe contributes something to the perfecting of God's praise, but 'tis very little; herein is our Father glorified when we bring forth much fruit, Joh. 15.8. 'It is being filled with fruits of righteousness which brings full glory to God, Phil. 1.11. And Abraham being strong in Faith gave glory to God, Rom. 4.20. If therefore you would glorify God to purpose, grow in Grace.

4. While you are but Babes you are of little use to others; 'tis true, the least member is of some use, 1 Cor. 12, but 'tis of least use. A Candle may give some light, but none in comparison of what the Sun gives: Now, we should be (as John was) not only burning but shining lights: and our light should so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven, Matth. 5.16. But,

2. I proceed to give you some Directions by way of help and assistance, to promote and advance grace to growth: If and as ever you would grow in grace be exhorted,

1. To be humble and lowly in mind; Humility promotes us, 'tis <H&G> to ascend downward. Humility and a low esteem of ourselves is the ready way to grow high. The Trees spread most upward that have the deepest roots. Before Honor is Humility, 'tis Honors Usher, Prov. 15.33. He that is lifted up is like to fall, Prov. 18.12, so Heb. 2.4, with Heb. 10.38. But the same God who takes no pleasure in, but resisteth the proud, is greatly in love with, and will assist, teach and give grace to the humble. Some Babes alas are apt to be puffed up (though without cause) 1 Cor. 4.8, but pride hinders growth.

2. Be thankful for what's received: ingrateful and unthankful persons never or seldom thrive, Rom. 1.21. Because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, they became

vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. But he that blesseth God for what he hath, is like to be blest with more, as Luke 19.16, —26. To everyone that hath (thankfully acknowledged his Receipts and Improvements) shall be given (more) but from him that hath not, even that which he hath (or as Luke 8.18, that which he thinks he hath or seems to have) shall be taken from him.

3. 'It is no little help to growth to be united one to another in oneness of mind and affection; they are not like to come to much excellency that are divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel; for where there are divisions, there is least contribution of help and mutual assistance. When the Apostle exhorts the Corinthian Babes to be perfect, he subjoins this as conducing thereunto, he of one mind, live in peace, 2 Cor. 13.11, for Love is the bond of perfectness, Col. 3.12, 13, 14, and the blessing of the God of love and peace will be with such, as the Apostle tells them, 2 Cor. 13.11, and his blessing maketh rich, Prov. 10.22.

4. Attend conscientiously and with eager desires on the word of grace that you may grow thereby: use Ordinances to make use of them for your perfection; to which end they are as much designed as to bringing in, Ephes. 4.11. Pastors and Teachers are for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ (and every member thereof) till we all come to a perfect man: Desire therefore the sincere Milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2.2.

5. Get better acquaintance with Christ Jesus: The Apostle knew Christ Jesus in a good measure; and yet that he might perfectly win him and perfection by him, and attain to the mark and the prize, he breaths and presseth after more, even the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, Phil. 3.8, —14. Babes in Christ know not

the Father, and are unskillful in the Word of righteousness; now the Father cannot be known but by the Son, nor grace grow but through the distinct and excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, 2 Pet. 3.18. As ever therefore you would grow in Grace and attain assurance of the Fathers love, look after the distinct and excellent knowledge of Christ, which consists mostly in being found in him, i.e., his righteousness, in knowing the power of his Resurrection, though it be by the fellowship of his suffering and by being made conformable to his Death (by descending that we may ascend as he did) Phil. 3.9, 10. Ephes. 4.9, 10.

6. Would ye grow? Make use of the Promises then, which are given not only that we might escape the pollutions which are in the world by lust, and so be made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Pet. 1.4, but that we might cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit to perfect holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7.1, and might add grace to grace, to abound and be fruitful, as it follows in 2 Pet. 1.5, —8. The Covenant refers to our being and birth, but the promises to our well-being and growth: if therefore David's house do not grow he hath recourse to the Covenant, 2 Sam. 23.5, but that it may grow, he hath recourse to the Promises, 2 Sam. 7.25, —29. As ever therefore you would enjoy what's promised and contained in the Promise, be careful to do that to which the Promise is made: as for instance, Would ye that God be a Father (and not only a God) to you, and you be to him (not only a people, but) Sons and Daughters, then be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing, 2 Cor. 6.17, 18, and mark it, these Promises, viz. of being a Father, &c. are of most use to the perfecting of us: for so it follows, 2 Cor. 7.1, having these Promises (the Emphasis is in these ) let us cleanse ourselves, &c. that so we may enjoy what's promised, viz. God as a Father, &c.

A little to inform you about making us of and improving promises, I shall (to prevent a mistake) enlarge further on this head: Some persons do think that the chief if not only way of improving promises is by believing (as they call it) than which I think there is scarce a greater mistake, that is in this sense; when they read or hear a promise (as that God will be a Father, that all things shall work together for good, &c. ) they think there is to more required but to believe that God will make this good, and do as he hath promised; there is no question but he will, for he is faithful that hath promised and cannot lie; but beloved let me tell you (lest you deceive yourselves) that 'tis not so much Faith as obedience and practice which is necessary to the enjoyment of these promises: if you practice the duty to which the promise is made, God will make it good, whether you believe it or no, 2 Tim. 2.11,—13, but if you believe it a thousand times over and do not do the duty, God is under no obligation to make good the promise. If you love not God, how can you expect that all things should work together for good to you, when the promise is made to none but lovers of God: so if you separate not from uncleanness, how can you expect God will be a Father to you, when 'tis promised only to them that separate, &c. Take heed then of an idle and dead Faith: 'tis true, Faith is a duty, but not Faith alone, Faith that's idle and dead; whatever promises are made to Faith, shall be made good to Faith; and whatever promises are made to Love, to Humility, to Patience, shall be made good when these graces are acted. Saith the Apostle, Heb. 10.23, 24. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of Faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our bodies washed with clean water. Let us hold fast (this) profession of our Faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised: by which we see that there can be no Plerophory or full assurance of Faith (without the other qualifications therewith mentioned, viz. a true heart, &c. ) by which we can expect the performance of promises, This I thought good to



hint, that none might think Faith enough in relation to the promises without obeying in that very particular to which the promise is made. But to proceed.

7. Would you attain to perfection, be patient then: Babes are apt to be impatient and peevish, for which they have been already noted; but impatience hinders growth; as ever therefore you would be perfect, let patience have its perfect work, then shall ye be perfect, entire and lack nothing (viz. of perfection) Jam. 1.4. Patience is a completing and perfecting grace, as God speaks to Abraham, Gen. 17.1. Walk before me and be thou perfect, that is, not only sincere (as 'tis in the Margent) but patient; wait yet a while longer till I give thee seed by Sarah, perfect thy hitherto waiting, by waiting to the end. So the good-ground-hearers bringing forth fruit with patience, is opposed to the Thorny-ground-hearers not bringing forth fruit to perfection, Luke 18.14, 15, so that patience doth not a little contribute to the bringing forth perfect fruit, and to our growing up to a perfect stature. For,

1. It establisheth the heart, makes it steadfast and immovable, which helps to abounding and growth, as appears by the places where they are joined together, 1 Cor. 15.58. 2 Pet. 3.17, 18. While persons hang loose and are tossed to and fro (as Babes are apt to be, Eph. 4.14.) they are not in a growing condition: but patience doth settle, fix and establish the soul, as the Apostle tells us, Jam. 5.8. Be patient, stablish your hearts, i.e., stablish them by patience: For, as 'tis hinted in a parallel place, Luke 21.19. In patience we possess our souls; when as an impatient man is wavering and unstable, is uncertain, inconstant and double-minded, ever doubtful and in suspense, and therefore receives little if anything from the Lord, Jam. 1.6, —8.

2. Patience helps the soul to wait notwithstanding disappointments and sufferings: disappointments, &c. are discouraging things, they dishearten, weaken and make us faint, and so put us under an incapacity of thriving, but patience steels and strengthens our hearts; when hope deferred makes us sick, patience gives supports and cordials, enabling to wait till the hoped and longed for desire be granted, which is as a Tree of Life. This may be seen in such places as these, Rom. 8.23, —25, Heb. 10.35.36, and 12.1. Both these ways (to name no more) doth patience help us onward.

8. As ever you would grow and proceed to perfection, watch over your hearts and lives, and keep your accounts well, observing how you gain or lose day by day: narrowly view your daily experiences considering what's attained and what's lacking, that you may forget what's behind (so as to rest in it) and press forward to what is yet before, as the Apostle did, Phil. 3.13. They are not like to thrive that keep not their Books and Accounts well, but let all go at fix and seven, and run at random: As ever you would grow, keep your diurnal, monthly and annual annotations, for else how can you discern the difference between what you were, are and ought to be?

9. And lastly, make Conscience of Prayer, your own and others: Praying Saints, and Saints Prayed for are most like to prosper. The great Apostle not only prayed himself, but often begged the Prayers of others (his inferiors also) for himself; much more should you, who being but sickly Saints cannot pray as much and well as you ought for yourselves, and therefore should call in the help of Elders and the Church to pray for you. Read over the Prayers which the Apostle made for Babes, and make them for yourselves. I will instance only in one, and with that conclude this whole Discourse, 'tis that in Heb. 13.20, 21. Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood

of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his Will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

# **THE SECOND CLASSIS IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST, VIZ. LITTLE CHILDREN.**

From 1 John 2.13.

I write unto you little Children, because ye have known the Father.

Having formerly spoken to the first and lowest Classis or Form of Saints, viz. Babes in Christ from several other Texts, I now proceed to treat of the second Classis, or degree, or rank of Christians, who are called Little Children: which Title is not used here (as sometime 'tis elsewhere) for a name common to all the Saints, for in that sense a Babe is a Child and a Father is but a Child; but here it notes a peculiar state, characterized and discovered by a peculiar attainment, as was cleared in the former Treatise, where I gave a general account of this Text: and to which I must refer the Reader, as for many other things.

That in the School of Christ there are several and distinct Classes of Fathers, Young-men, little Children, and Babes; that these states are not to be measured by their age or years, but by their attainments and experiences; That there is something common to all these; and something proper to each of these which cannot (at least) so eminently be said of all these or of my other sort of them; only that whatever excellency there is in the lowest is in the highest (gradually) much more, and whatever defect or carnality is in the lower, is in his higher much less: I say of all these things I have treated at large before, and shall not make any further repetition of them here.

Before I come to the next rank, viz. Little Children, 'twill be convenient to give an account of two or three things; 1. That what is here written to the (<H&G>) Sons or Children, which is the name in common to all these three following divisions of Saints (Fathers, Young-men, and Little Children) I say, whatever is written to them in common (as Chap. 2.1 and 12, and 28. Chap. 3.7, and 18. Chap. 5.21.) doth more or less concern each of them, the highest as well as lowest. 2. In that he writes to Fathers, that the Fathers are not past teaching, though they be the highest Form: 'The best may be yet better, Fathers may be more so than they are, they that have attained to most may attain to more, the most perfect may be more perfect, Phil. 3.12, —15. And 3, in that he used several and various arguments to engage and provoke all to the same things, we may observe that the most likely way to prevail with persons (whom we speak or write to) is to use such reasons and arguments as are most proper and peculiar to them: As, I write to you Fathers (to this and that purpose) because ye have known him that is from the beginning; I write to you Young-men, because ye have overcome the wicked one; I write unto you little Children, because ye have known the Father.

And now to come nearer to our purpose; There are in this Text three sorts of Saints denominated from and characterized by their several and special attainments and excellencies; and though many other things are wrapped up and included in and under them, yet these which are named are the <H&G>, the Apex, the Culmen, the Top, the Crown and chief excellency of each of them: This is the Fathers, that they are persons of great, much and long experience and wisdom, having known him that is from, and having known him from the first or beginning: This is Young-men's excellency, that they are persons of strength and valor, having overcome the wicked one: This is the excellency of the Little Children, that they are persons assured of God's Love, having known him as their Father. And so this state of

little Children is (we see) a middle state between Babes (whom they excel) and Young-men to whose excellency they have not yet attained, much less to that of Fathers.

In the Words you may take notice, 1. Of the subject spoken of, viz. Little-Children. 2. Of that which is predicated and said of them, viz. that they have known the Father; 3. The time of their having had this knowledge, implied, viz. you have lately known the Father; 'tis not long since that you were new-born and were but Babes. For though every new-born one be (in the general acceptation) a Child of God, yet he is not a Child (as to degree, but a Babe) till he know the Father; and this some attain to later and some sooner, as the Father is pleased to make himself known unto them. The whole of what I intend to speak to, I shall reduce to these 5. Heads, 1. To show what their proper attainment is, which is in knowing the Father. 2. How they come to this attainment, to know the Father. 3. What the result of this attainment is as to their enjoyments and privileges. 4. What is the frame of the heart and soul, as also the manner of the conversation of these Little Children. 5. After all these I shall make some Application and so Conclude, as to this Classis.

## CHAP. I.

Of their Attainment, or their knowledge of the Father, in two Sections.

### SECT 1.

To know the Father is sometime no more than to know or to have the knowledge of God: For, as Christ Jesus is known by the name of Lord, so God by the name of Father, 1 Cor. 8.5, 6, and this name

Father is in the general no more than Creator, Isa. 64.8. Now many have not this knowledge of God, 1 Cor. 15.34. Joh. 8.19, and 8.54, 55. Joh. 16.2, 3. There are irreligious and wicked not knowing the Lord, as 'tis said of Eli 's Sons, 1 Sam. 2.12, nor do they know that Jesus Christ was sent of God; But this knowledge the Babes in Christ have, they know the Lord, much more do the little Children; yet this is not all, there is more meant than this.

Beside, to know the Father is not only to know that God is a Father, that he hath such a name and attribute; God is often called the Father in Scripture: The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Ephes. 3.14, and in many other places. The Father of our Faith, Matth. 23.9. The Father of mercies, 2 Cor. 1.3. The Father of Glory, Ephes. 1.17. The Father of Spirits, Heb. 12.9. The Father of Lights, Jam. 1.17. Yet this is not all, there is more meant than so: And therefore,

Yet again, to know the Father is not merely to know him to be the Father of all Saints in general; He is the Father of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named, Ephes. 3.14, 15. There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all, Ephes. 4.6. And 'tis for this cause that Jesus Christ (the first-born among many Brethren, Rom. 8.29.) is not ashamed to call them Brethren, Heb. 2.10, 11. They are all born and begotten of God, and therefore bear not only his Name but his Image; you may spy the Fathers Image in the Babe his eye: yet this knowledge of the Father is not all.

Moreover, to know the Father is to be taught of God, or to have the unction from the holy one, whereby they are taught and know all the things which concern their Salvation, as 1 Joh. 2.20, 21, and 27, which it spoken of these (<H&G>) Little Children, of whom he began to speak, Vers. 18, which is the Word used in our Text, Vers. 13, yet

this is not all intended, for to be taught of God is contained in the Covenant, in relation to all the seed, Babes as well as others, Heb. 8.11. And this is all one with the drawing of the Father, Joh. 6.44, 45, which Babes partake of. This knowing of the Father spoken of these little Children must therefore signify some more signal, Emphatical, more excellent and transcendent way of knowing the Father beyond what is attained by any below them in the School of Christ; which is called the excellency of knowledge, Phil. 3, and whereof I come now to speak more distinctly.

## SECT. 2.

To know the Father according to the scope and intendment of the Text in relation to the Little Children, is to know him by way of interest and experience: 1. By way of interest, as their Father, to know themselves to be his Children; and so it notes a state of assurance. 'It is a reciprocal knowledge in a relative notion, like that of the Spouse, I am my beloveds, and he is mine; to be able to say as Thomas, My Lord and my God. Though every Child of God (as Babes) cannot say, My Father, yet every of the Little Children can say, My Father; and not only, Abba Father, but My Father: according to Jer. 3.19. I will put thee among the Children, and thou shalt call me, My Father. Our Savior promised his Babe-Disciples, that (when the Spirit was poured out upon them) in that day they should know their union with and interest in him, which was all one as with and in the Father, Joh. 14.8, —20, and at that time he (by his Spirit) would show them plainly of the Father, Joh. 16.25, with Joh. 14.26. The great thing (one of them) among others, which the Spirit was to declare, was their interest in and union with the Father, and with Christ Joh. 16 13, —15, with 1 Joh. 5.19, 20, and Joh. 17.5, to assure them of Love.



2. 'It is to know the Father in a way of communion and experience, 1 Joh. 1.3, they find the communications and imparting's of his Fatherly Love. Some have interest in a Father, Yet see not the Kings face (as was Absalom's case, though called to Court) but these have a knowledge of enjoyment; they find and feel his Love shed abroad into their hearts; the light of his countenance is listed up upon them, and they walk in the light and joy of his Salvation, 1 Joh. 1.3, —7. They hear the joyful sound of my Son and my Daughter, my pleasant and beloved Child in whom I am well pleased, Thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art mine. They find the Father falling on their neck and kissing them with the kisses of his mouth, embracing them in his arms, and taking them into his bosom: And this indeed is their knowledge of the Father, viz. knowing him in interest and experience, union and communion: They feast with the Father and on his Love, as the Prodigal did; after his Father had sealed his Love with a kiss, Oh how sweet and pleasant was the entertainment and communion! They rejoiced.

## CHAP. IIa.

How they come to and by this knowledge of the Father, in three Sections.

### SECT. 1.

I have shewn you the attainment of Little Children, which is a sensible assurance of the Love of God in the enjoyment of union and communion with him. The next thing is to show how they come by and unto this knowledge: and that is by the working and witnessing of the Spirit; I put both together, because though he may work where he doth not witness (as in Babes) yet he never witnesseth but where

he hath wrought, as Rom. 8.13, —16, where 'tis observable, that mortification, ver. 13, being led by the Spirit, Vers. 14, and being in part a Spirit of Adoption and Prayer, Vers. 15, did precede the witnessing with their (and so doth before witnessing with our) Spirits that they were, or we are the Children of God, Vers. 16, so 1 Cor. 2.12, which he speaks of the spiritual ones and not of Babes, as Vers. 13, which may be read, expounding or communicating spiritual things (either in spiritual words, opposed to words of man's wisdom, going before, or) to spiritual persons, in reference to what follows, in the latter end of this and the beginning of the next Chapter. Again, 1 Joh. 3.24, where he speaks of the assurance or knowledge of these Saints dwelling in God, and Christ, and he in them, and that he abideth in them, by the Spirit which he hath given them; but before he mentions that, he doth characterize them by keeping his Commandments: so that the work precedes the word, as I may call it, or witness of the Spirit. In relation to this more things will be said anon, only at present I shall take occasion from what hath now been said to make some discoveries concerning the persons that God doth usually call, pick and single out (from among his Babes) to put them among the Children, and to give them assurance.

SECT. 2. Discovering the persons that God singles out to place them among the Little Children, and to give them the assurance of his love and being their Father.

Perhaps some poor souls, among the Babes (for whom I have a great concern) hearing what hath been said may be inquisitive to know if there be any hopes for them to come to this attainment of the little Children; that they may also be kissed with the kisses of his mouth, that they (who are sick of love for him) may be brought into his banqueting house, stayed with Flaggons, comforted with Apples, and that the banner over them may be Love, Cant. 2.4, 5, and for their

sakes I shall make search (though it may seem a digression) to find out the footsteps of God's way in this particular case. But before I enter upon it, 'twill be necessary to premise 2, things.

1. That God is free in his choice, and may choose out whom he please, his Spirit bloweth (this gale of knowledge and assurance of the Fathers Love) when and where he pleaseth; 'tis no trade-wind, if I may so say. God is not under any obligation, nor is bound to any man, but to whom he pleaseth: as he shows mercy to whom he will, so 'tis what degrees of mercy he will to any; persons and times are wholly at God's dispose; 'tis not in him that willeth nor in him that runneth (which refers to the story of Isaac 's blessing Jacob instead of Esau) but in God that showeth (this as all other) mercy.

2. God hath been pleased to pick and choose out some persons upon whom he hath fixed so special a love as to make them his darlings, to make himself known as a Father to them. Among all the Disciples, John was he whom Jesus loved (viz. peculiarly) as 'tis often mentioned by the Evangelists; he loved all his Family, but John was his bosom-disciple and favorite: As when Fathers have many Children, only one is the beloved, and kissed more often than all the rest ('twas Joseph 's case beyond all his Brethren, Gen. 37.3.) so it is here: God is pleased to pitch upon some to show special manifestations of his love unto them. And he hath done it usually (and promised to do it) to such as these.

1. To such as come in to his service betimes; they that seek him shall find him sooner or later, but they that seek him early shall be sure to find him betimes and that right early, according to Prov. 8.17. I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me. They that love him (so as to obey him) shall know his and the Fathers love in its manifestations, Joh. 14.21, and 23, and the sooner their love is

manifested the sooner his is. The reason that many give why John was the beloved Disciple, is this, That he came in to Christ while very young. We have a common affection to all Children as ours, but if we find a towardliness and ingenuity budding and blossoming in any very timely, it endears them to us, and we have a peculiar and special affection for them, and use to show it by kindnesses, tokens, smiles, &c. and truly God himself doth usually do so. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love (of God and the Brethren) dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 Joh. 4.7, 12, and 16, and usually, the sooner our love appears, he accordingly manifests himself to us and lets us know that he loved us first, Vers. 19, with Chap. 3.24. The Scripture records them as special favorites, who were converted and did turn to God, when they were young: God remembers the kindness of Israel's youth, and the love of espousals, which was while they were young, and went after him in the Wilderness, Jer. 2.2, and then had they wonderful discoveries of his love. Not to mention Abel; Joseph was very gracious and tender-hearted, for he could not bear with the wickedness of his Brethren, even then when he was but seventeen years old, Gen. 37.2, and presently hereupon God appeared to him, as to Solomon, twice, Vers. 4, and 9. Samuel ministered to the Lord, while yet a very Child for years, 1 Sam. 2.18, and 3.1, to him did the Lord appear, Vers. 4, and though at first he understood not the voice and Word of the Lord, Vers. 7, yet soon after he did, And Samuel grew and the Lord was with him, Vers. 19. Josiah was well given (as we say) and very good at sixteen years of age: he began to reign at eight years old, 2 Chron. 34.1, and in the eighth year of his reign (which was the sixteenth of his age; while he was yet young (as the Text remarques it) he began to seek after the God of his Father David, and in the twelfth year (when twenty years old) he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, Vers. 3, &c. Now how dear he was to God, and what a manifestation of love he had, you may see, Vers. 26, —28. I might instance in many more; as David, Moses, Daniel, the

three Young-men in Daniel, Timothy, &c. But this shall suffice to have shewn, that God doth usually and signally manifest his love to them that are Godly betimes, while they are yet young. This lays a great obligation upon and gives great encouragement to persons to come in betime, to remember, &c. Eccles. 12.1.

### SECT. 3. A Continuation.

2. God hath been pleased to pick out such to show his fatherly love to, as have lain under deep humiliations for sinning against God, though it have not been of long continuance, and which it would have been, had not he made himself known as their Father, i.e. loving of them: When the Prodigal came to this, that he was pinched with the sense of having sinned against his Father (as well as felt the sad effects of it, in being tantum non almost dead) the Father runs to meet him, and falls on his neck and kisseth him; thus he knew the Father and had assurance of his Love. When the Spouse had undergone a hard winter of humiliation, and hid herself in the clefts and secret places, as being ashamed to lift up her face or voice to God, she then hears the joyful sound, Rise up my Love, my fair one, my Dove and come away, Cant. 2.10, —15, and in the next sixteenth Verse she concludes (as one that had assurance) My beloved is mine and I am his.

'It is said of Manasseh (though he had been desperately wicked) yet that when he was in affliction he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, 2 Chron. 33.12, and 'tis presently added in the 13th Verse that God heard his supplication, &c. Then, and then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God, viz. gracious and forgiving sins. David no sooner confessed his sin (as against God) he doubles it, Against thee, against thee, Psal. 51.4, but God forgave him, and told him of it too, Psal. 32.5, with 2 Sam. 12.13,

see more to this purpose in Isa. 57.15, and 66.2. Jer. 31.20, all which doth confirm what David said in this case, Psal. 51.17. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, which is a <H&G>, a diminutive expression, but full of signification; for 'tis as much as if he had said, thou wilt cherish it, revive it and make it glad with the joy of thy Salvation. This lays a great obligation upon persons what to be, and gives them great encouragements when they are, though they be greatly and deeply humbled.

An Objection. Oh alas for me saith some poor soul! I have been under humiliations a long time, sin hath cost me dear, my bones (as David said) yea and mine heart have even broken with sighs and groans, and I am still watering my Couch with my tears; yea they are my drink; and yet I cannot obtain a smile, not a good word nor a good look from God: but he seems to call me Dog and cast me off! Woe is me!

Answer. But poor soul, remember, 1. What I newly said, that God is not bound to make himself known as a Father to thee; he will not be commanded into this condescension: nor must thou think to bribe and compound with him by Prayers and Tears. 2. Remember that though God have taken vengeance on some men's sins, yet he hath forgiven them, Psal. 99.8, and who knows but he may deal so with thee, and not turn thee into Hell, nor deal with thee as thine iniquity deserves, though he make thee know much (and yet much more) sorrow and smart. 3. Consider that perhaps thine humiliation hath been hitherto but legal and selfish; that thou hast been more concerned that God was displeased with thee, than that he was displeased by thee; that thy Tears have been more for the shame and pain than for the sinfulness of sin as against God: if so, be humbled for this also, and in due time he will exalt thee to a better condition, or save thee at last with a notwithstanding.

3. God doth usually manifest himself (and his love) as a Father to them that hunger and thirst after, and are greatly in love with his Son Jesus Christ: in him God is well pleased, and declared from Heaven, That he was his beloved Son; and he is pleased to do the like for them that love his Son: God will that we honor the Son as we do the Father, Joh. 5.23. Now him that honoreth me (and consequently that honoreth my Son) I will honor, saith the Lord. What honor will God confer upon such? Viz. they shall be called (not only be but be called, manifested and declared to be) the Children of God, and behold what manner of love this is! 1 Joh. 3.1. When the Spouse was sick of love, she was much made of: and to Mary who loved much, there was much forgiven, and special manifestations of love made unto her. Our Savior tells his Disciples that the Father loved them, for this very reason because they loved him; and that shortly they should have clear and plain manifestations of the Father, Joh. 16.25.—27, according to what he promiseth to all that love him, Joh. 14.21, —23.

4. God hath promised to be known as a Father to them that do separate from and are not unequally yoked with unbelievers, and that do not touch the unclean thing, 2 Cor. 6.14, 17, 18, which is more (as to manifestation, love and joy) than to be known to us as our God, Vers. 16, with Heb. 1.5. Wherefore come cut from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you (viz. into my favor, embraces and bosom) and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters; and you shall be treated accordingly. For this reason was Christ himself anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Heb. 1.9, and as any of his are conformable to him in the separation (which love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity makes) the more are they like to be anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows.

5. God usually gives out manifestations and assurances of love to such of his as are about to do and suffer great things for him; and this he gives them as a preparation thereunto. Christ Jesus had the voice from Heaven a little before he entered upon his ministry. The Apostles had the Spirit sent to prepare them for doing greater things than they had done in Christ's time. And the reason that Paul had so early an assurance of his election (and being dearly beloved) of God, was because he was presently to go about great undertakings and to undergo great sufferings, Acts 9.15, 16, so that he in a very little time in a few days, past from the Babe-state to that of a little Child, and from thence into that of a Young-man Saint: which few so suddenly do but on such an occasion as this. Thus have I discovered some of them (I cannot say all, for there is no confining nor limiting of God) to whom he is pleased to make himself known as a Father, to call them out of the Form of Babes, and to place them in the second higher Form, that of Children; and to give them assurance of his love that they may say unto him, Thou art our Father. Though I cannot say for whom of us God will do this, yet according to these presidents 'tis more than probable, that if we be found among this number, we shall in due (and it may be in a little) time know the Father. But I must proceed to show something more largely how he is thus made known, by the witness of his Spirit.

## CHAP. IIb.

Continued and enlarged. Showing how they come to know the Father by the witness of the Spirit, in five Sections.

### SECT. I.



At the beginning of this Chapter I began to show how they came to know the Father, or (which is equivalent and all one) that they are the Children of God and dearly beloved of him; and that was by (not barely the working of the Spirit in them, but after and over and above that, by) the Spirit witnessing to them, clearing up that work to be of God which is wrought in their own hearts and spirits, Rom. 8.18. Here are two witnesses (and both Spirits) that out of the mouth of two knowing witnesses, this thing may be established: our spirit affirms, and the Spirit of God confirms. Our spirit knows what acts and workings are wrought in us and by us; our spirit affirms, that such Repentance, Faith, Love, &c. there is in us, but whether this be wrought according to God our spirit by itself cannot tell without and until the Spirit of God bear witness to it, that it is according to the Will of God, Rom. 8.26, 27, with 1 Cor. 2.10, 11, 12, of which I have given some account above in this, and more in the former Treatise of Babes. From whence I infer these two things.

1. That this witness of the Spirit is not a thing common to all Saints (for Babes have it not, though they have the things which do assure, yet they have not assurance, because they have not the Spirit witnessing with their spirit) 'tis not a thing that runs parallel with saintship, as having the work of the Spirit doth: If we have not the Spirit of Christ we are none of his, that's true, Rom. 8.9, but 'tis as true, that we may be his, though we have not the witness of his Spirit in us; for we are his before we have the witness of it; and the witness doth not make us so, but the Spirit finding us to be his, doth witness and declare that we are his. The witness doth not make us but manifest us to be, and to us that we are the Children of God, as the Text (and thing itself) is clear, plain and full, Rom. 8.16. That which is witnessed to, must be before 'tis witnessed unto. I shall add but one Text more to confirm this, Ephes. 1.13, 14, where this is evident and apparent, that as they heard before they believed; so they

believed before they were sealed with the holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance; and which we had a little before we had this seal and earnest. So that we were the Children of God by Faith, Gal. 3.26, before we have the witness of being Children. And though it be said, 1 Joh. 5.10, that he who believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself, as if every Believer had it; yet I have two or three things to say hereunto, 1. That St. John perhaps writ not to Babes, but to all the higher Forms, (of Children, Young-men, and Fathers) and all these indeed have the witness (of the Spirit) in themselves: But 2. If we take in all (Babes among the rest) it may also be said of them that they have the thing which doth witness, and the witness of their own spirits; but it will not thence follow that they have the witness of the Spirit or assurance, which is the thing that I am speaking to. 'It is as true that the three witnesses in earth (in us below) agree in one, as 'tis that the three witnesses in Heaven are one, Ver. 7, 8. Yet all three do not give out their witness all at once; the water and blood may and do witness before the Spirit doth. Yet again, 3. The witness in himself may be understood (and I think most properly) of that which is witnessed, which is, that God hath given us Eternal Life, and that by and in his Son, Vers. 11. And accordingly he that believeth hath both the Son and Eternal Life in himself, Vers. 12. 'It is already begun in every Believer, though everyone hath not the assurance of it, as is implied in the thirteenth Verse. Therefore,

2. I infer that this witness of the Spirit is not barely or only the working of Grace (by the Spirit) in our hearts, but something added thereunto, and superadded thereupon, beyond the gracious qualifications, which are called, The fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5.22, 23. Whether it be a light shining upon their graces and making them clear; or whether it be the Application of someone or other promise made to such graces; or whether it be some immediate irradiation

and beaming forth of love from God upon the soul, it matters not; it may be by any or all of these ways. Let me a little illustrate it, by the heat and light of the Sun; The working of the Spirit is like to the heat and influence of the Sun, which reacheth all things; but the witness of the Spirit is like the light of the Sun, which shines not on all places at once; the work and influence of the Spirit reacheth all Saints, but the witness of the Spirit doth not shine upon all Saints at once, nor upon all in the same degree: Yea, I am apt to believe that assurance is a very great rarity, and not so much enjoyed as talked of, or pretended to. I have read of one Island, of which it is said, that the Sun shines on it more or less every day of the year: it may be there are some such Island-Saints, but I am inclinable to think, there are not many of them; because, as I have somewhere hinted before in the Treatise of Babes, the greater part of God's Children have not (I fear) yet attained to be little Children, to know and have assurance of the Fathers Love. 'It is true the Fathers have; but how few are they? And that the conquering Young-men have; but how few are they? Yea that the little Children have; but how few are they? There was but one John among the many Disciples. However this is clear, that they who are of this Classis (be they few or many) have attained to assurance, and it may be said of them as Psal. 89.15, 16, 17. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance, in thy name (which is gracious, Exod. 34.6, named upon them) shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness (the Lord our righteousness, i.e., Christ, Jer. 23.6.) shall they be exalted; for thou art the glory of their strength, and in thy favor our horn shall be exalted! And now this gives me occasion to consider, 1 What this witness is. 2. How it may be discerned from illusions of Satan, or the pretensions and presumptions of our own hearts.

SECT. 2. Showing what this witness is in three things; it is clear, sure and powerful.

This witness of the Spirit (by which we know the Father as ours, and that we are the Children of God) is, 1. Clear and perspicuous; 'tis no dark, cloudy discovery of a thing, but bright and illustrious: this brings evidence and demonstration with it. Like him who at first saw men walking as Trees, but at the second touch saw all things clearly, Mark 8.23, —25. This is not like the Oracles of the Heathen, a Trumpet which gives an uncertain and dubious sound, nor like that of our own hearts, which though it often excuse, yet it often accuseth and leaves us doubtful which to take for truth: no, this witness is not perplexed, nor tells either false or feigned, dark or dubious stories. He that runs may read it, 'tis written in so fair and legible, in such Text-hand and Capital and Golden Letters. 'It is that we may know, 1 Cor. 2.12. (Ut eerto noscamus, non fluctuante conjectura) 'tis not a conjecture, a perhaps, or, it may be, but as clear as the Sun in its Meridian brightness and strength. This witness doth not leave the soul under disputing's and fluctuations, it takes off all Skepticism, the thing is past dispute. 'It is not like the Spirit of the world which is ambiguous (as the Oracles newly mentioned) that may be interpreted pro and con, for or against (like Aio te Aeacida Romanos vincere posse) but like the Oracles of God, of a clear and certain, and of an ascertaining and assuring sound. For,

2. As 'tis clear 'tis a sure Testimony, 'tis true and faithful, and infallible: what the Spirit of God saith is as true, as that God is, and that God is true. This witness can be no otherwise, for 1. The Spirit which beareth testimony is the Spirit of truth, and therefore a Spirit of consolation, the Comforter. He cannot lie, he cannot deceive, 'tis not only against his name but his nature which is contained in his name, The Spirit of truth, in opposition to the Devil, the deceiving

spirit and father of lies. No lie is of the truth, nor of the Spirit of truth; this Spirit guides into all truth, and nothing but the truth: he never bears witness to Hypocrites or Formalists (but only to new born ones) that they are the Children of God. 2. As the Spirit of truth cannot deceive, so he cannot be deceived, for he knows the deep things of God and men; what is in God's heart to us, 1 Cor. 2.10, 11, and what is in our hearts towards God, Rom. 8.26, 27. 'It is a vanity as well or ill as Villainy to lie to the Holy Ghost, Acts 5.3, for he cannot be deceived, nor will be mocked; no nor can he be mistaken, for he knows the deep things of God, and of man, though a man's heart be a great deep also. This witness of God is true and sure: if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. 'Twas Paul's great comfort that God was his witness, Rom. 1.9. 1 Thes. 2.4, 5, he would not satisfy himself with this, that he knew nothing by himself, but as he was approved of God so he expected his Justification, 1 Cor. 4.3, —5. 2 Cor. 10.17, 18. This witness is clear, true and sure. And therefore,

3. 'It is a powerful witness, for it satisfies and settles the Spirit of a man in a quiet, serene, peaceable and assured frame: the soul is carried by it above bondage and fear, 2 Tim. 1.7. 'tis like an oath that puts an end to strife and Controversy, Heb. 6.16, and so affords strong Consolation, Vers. 18. The soul enjoys God and itself in Halcyon-days and in an undisturbed calm of assurance; the soul retires into rest, because the Lord hath dealt bountifully with it, and it is upheld by his free and freeing Spirit, which hath set it at liberty and filled it with Glory, 2 Cor. 3.17, 18. And yet further to show the influence and power of this witness (by which the Children know their Father) I shall discover several other effects thereof, which though I might refer to another part of this discourse, viz. either that which is to show the enjoyments, or that which is to show the frames

of these Children, yet I shall choose to place some of it here in a few particulars.

SECT. 3. Showing what the effects of this witness are, and the influences they have upon the Soul and Spirit of the Children.

1. THE Soul that hath received this witness is filled with a great deal of joy; of which though I speak, yet 'tis joy unspeakable and full of glory; yea though the person be in the midst of afflictions, temptations and sufferings, yet the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon it, and dwells there, 1 Thes. 1.4, 5, 6. 1 Pet. 1.6, 7, 8, and Chap. 4.14. 'tis so great, that there is want in the words that are, and want of more words than there are to express it significantly; this work cannot be worded: 'tis such an experience as comes not under expression. All the Eloquence in the world cannot acquaint you with the sweetness of this honey, so well as the taste can and doth do. 'It is like the new name, which no man knows but he that hath it; a stranger doth not intermeddle with this joy. And as none knows it but he hath it, so he that hath it cannot make it known as he hath it. If a single witness, that of a man's own Conscience, afford so much joy, as the Apostle found it did, 2 Cor. 1.12, what incomparable joy must that be which flows from a double witness, viz. That of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the Children of God: this is the joyful sound, it's such Music as makes the Soul to leap and dance for joy, Hos. 2.14, 15, 16. They were Babes and under bondage in Egypt, but now they sing like the Children that had heard the joyful sound of the Silver Trumpets, proclaiming love and peace, in their youth they sang when God had proclaimed them his Sons and first-born, and called them (his Sons) out of Egypt.

2. Notwithstanding this joy, yet (consistently enough) they blush and are ingenuously ashamed in the sense of their former sinfulness,

which made them unworthy of such favor, yea worthy to have been Children of wrath forever: The Fathers lips were no sooner off from them of the returning Prodigal, but the first words he utters are, Father I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son, Luk. 15.20 21. And this confession was a great part of his gratitude, and so taken by his Father; for this interrupts not their feasting and rejoicing together. This ingenuity is an effect of this assured reconciliation, as 'tis in Ezek 16.62, 63. I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I Jehovah (viz. gracious and merciful) that thou mayest remember (thy ways, Vers. 61.) and be ashamed, &c. but when this? When I am pacified toward thee for (or notwithstanding) all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.

3. By reason of this Testimony the little Children have a great deal of confidence and boldness towards and with God. If our hearts condemn us not, we have confidence towards God, 1 Joh. 3.21, but how much more when by the Spirit which he hath given us we know that he dwelleth in us and we in him, Vers. 24. This is the perfecting of love (viz. assurance is) love with us made perfect, which gives us not only a boldness at the throne of Grace, 1 Joh. 3.21, 22, with 5.14, 15, but in the day of Judgment, Chap. 4.17, for there is no fear in love (thus made perfect) but it casteth out fear, and fills with confidence and boldness, familiarity and freedom.

4. The little Children having received this Testimony long exceedingly to be with their Father; not only to have their affections and conversations in Heaven, but to be personally there. Few Saints are willing to die that are but Babes and know not the Father; and I fear if God should not take them to Heaven before they were willing and desirous to die, I say I doubt that Heaven would be very thinly peopled, as to that sort of his people. But when they have got

assurance that God is and Heaven shall be theirs, they sing their nune demittis with the reverend good old man (Simeon) Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation. And not only Paul, 2 Cor. 1.—8, and Phil. 1.23, but all the seed (that have received this Testimony, the first-fruits and earnest of happiness) do sigh and groan and long, yea and think it long till they be set free, Rom. 8.23. While here they are absent from the Lord, and 'tis not without self-denial that they are willing to stay here: but while they must be here, they are hugely ambitious to be acceptable to God, as 'tis 2 Cor. 5.9, and to serve the Churches good, as 'tis Phil. 1.23, 24. They are sure that though they suffer with Christ yet they shall be glorified together, Rom. 8.16, 17, and therefore they would (as they are bid) hasten his coming, and Pray, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly: And surely might they have their wishes, either Christ should come to them, or they would go to Christ within a very little while. But yet remembering that they are not their own, and that they serve not God only for their own advantage, but his glory; they are made willing to wait all the days of their appointed time (though it be a warfare, as 'tis in that Text in Job) till their change come, Rom. 8.23, 24, 25. As much as they long to be at home, they would make no more hast than good-speed. This much of the first thing. The second follows.

SECT. 4. Showing how the Testimony of the Spirit may be distinguished from delusions of Satan, and the presumptions of our own hearts.

It may be some or other may be yet fearful and suspicious lest they should mistake and be deceived; and so meet with the true miseries of false joys: 'tis all one to the Devil which way any go to Hell so they go there; whether through the common road and dirty high-way of profaneness, immorality and irreligion, or through the Fields and



pleasant walks of a Form of godliness, which hath its Joys, Raptures, Transports and Ecstasies too; for the evil spirit doth ape the good one, and that he may the more facilely and undiscernibly deceive, he puts on the garb of an Angel of Light. How therefore shall we discern whether the Testimony, which we think we have, be sound and good or but feigned and counterfeit? I confess 'tis good to watch and be circumspect. because of our adversary the Devil, who is seldom more our adversary than when he pretends to be our friend, as he did to Eve and to Christ himself; but yet they that have the Testimony of God's Spirit are secure and safe, though they that have it not cannot be so, whatever presuming confidences they may entertain themselves with. I shall therefore endeavor to clear this thing, that none may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, or Satan, or their own hearts. In relation whereunto I shall lay down three Rules, to which though I purpose not to speak much, yet I hope to speak much to the purpose; having first premised this one thing; that they cannot have the witness who have not the work of the Spirit; and consequently they cannot have the witness of the Spirit, who have not the witness of their own spirit, or the Testimony of a good Conscience: for if our hearts condemn us (upon just grounds, and we do not bear false witness against ourselves, which is the sin of many an otherwise tender-hearted Christian) I say, if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts; but here begins our confidence towards God, if our hearts condemn us not: if we love not in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth, hereby we do (in part) know that we are of the truth, and shall assure (or as 'tis in the Margent, persuade) our hearts before him, 1 Joh. 3.18, —21. And the Apostle tells us, Rom. 8.16, that the Spirit bears witness with our spirit; as also it follows, 1 Joh. 3.24, we may have ours without that, but not that without our own; and therefore to make up the full and complete Testimony, both witnesses (both Spirits) must concur and agree without contradicting or thwarting one another: The three that bear

witness on Earth agree in one, 1 Joh. 5.8. And now to the Rules for discerning the difference between the true and the pretended or presumed witness the Spirit.

The Rules are these three: 1. The witness is known from the Rule by which it speaks. 2. By the ground on which it speaks. 3. By the end to and for which it speaks. I say 'tis known,

1. By the Rule according to which it speaks: To the Law and to the Testimony, for if they speak not according to this Word, there is no light in them (Hebr. no morning in them) no, not so much as the dawning of the day, or the eye-lids of the morning, Isa. 8.20. 1 Joh. 4.1, —6, and Epistle 2.7, —10. Gal. 1.6, —9. 2 Cor. 11.1, —4. The Spirit of God acts and walks by the same Rule that we are to act and walk by, and that's the Word. If the Word and Spirit do not agree, we must question either whether the Word be of God, or whether the Spirit be of God? And we are at a rueful loss if they do not both agree; for if the Word say one thing and the Spirit another, how shall we reconcile it? But God's Word and God's Spirit do always agree, and are of one and the same mind. The Spirit of God did indite and dictate the holy Scriptures, and therefore it cannot say one thing there, and another in thine heart; that were to bear witness against itself: and if its Kingdom be divided how can it stand? This conclusion therefore is infallibly true, that when and wherever the Spirit of God doth bear and give its Testimony, 'tis always according to the written Word, contained in the Old and New Testament: this is the foundation upon which it builds, both us and its Testimony, Eph. 2.18, —22. The Spirit of God (as was hinted) did indite and dictate the Scripture, 2 Pet. 1.20, 21. 2 Tim. 3.14, —17. 1 Joh. 2.20, —27, which unction refers to and is according to what they had heard from the beginning, Vers. 24, so that they were taught the same thing by the unction within, as they were by the word (called unction also)

without. In all times the Word was the Rule of trial. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself opposed and conquered the Devil by this Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. He proved himself to be the Messiah more by the Scriptures, than by Miracles; and tells them that if the Scriptures did not testify of him, they should not believe him, and therefore bids them search the Scriptures, Joh. 5.39. Our Savior confutes the errors of the Pharisees and the Sadducees by Scripture. He tells us that his Spirit shall not bring us a new Doctrine, but make Application of what he had taught, Joh. 14.26. The Apostles commended them of Berea, that they searched the Scriptures to see if the Apostles spake true, Act. 17.10, 11. And Peter prefers it to the (Bath cal filia vocis) the voice which he heard, calling it (in relation to the Jews) a more sure Word of Prophecy, 2 Pet. 1.16, —19. So then upon the whole 'tis clear that what is not according to the Sacred Scriptures, cannot be the witness of God's Spirit.

#### SECT. 5. A Continuation.

2. The witness of the Spirit is known from any other by the grounds on which it witnesseth; of which I shall name but two. 1. The Spirit finds this ground-work laid that thou art new-born, though but a Babe or Infant of days and experience: this always precedes the witness. The Spirit doth not nor can bear witness to them that are dead, i.e., that live in sins, Ephes. 1.1, 2, 3, nor to them that have but a form of Godliness, or are Pharisees-hypocrites, that they are the Children of God: It cannot witness that to be which is not. 'It is when and because ye are Sons that God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father; and so thereupon or therewith beareth witness to and with our spirits, that we are the Children of God, Gal. 4.6, with Rom. 8.15, 16. The work is always begun before the witness come; that which is not wrought cannot be witnessed to:

If thou therefore be not new-born, thy believing thyself to be a Child of God is a delusion, not the witness of the Spirit.

2. The Spirit of God bears witness that a man is the Child of God, not upon the ground or account of works and self-righteousness, but upon the score of mercy and grace through the redemption which is by Christ Jesus. It witnesseth upon the account of mercy not of merit. Though there be a work wrought and working too, yet the witness attributes this to (and so witnesseth to it) as of grace. The Sons of God are and their salvation is not of works but of grace, Joh. 1.12, 13. Rom. 4.1, —16, and 9.15, 16, and 11.5, 6. Jam. 1.17, 18. Tit. 3.4, 5. 2 Tim. 1.9, by all which it doth appear, that all is of grace, and on this bottom and foundation is the witness laid and born to it. 'It is called sonship by Adoption (which is merely of grace, all Adoption is so) and 'tis to this as such, that the Spirit witnesseth, as Rom. 8.15, 16. Gal. 4.6. It beareth witness that we are the Children of God, but still that we are so by Adoption, and not by nature; for so we are Children of wrath, Ephes. 2.3, and as to works, we were Children of disobedience, and enemies in our minds by wicked works, Col. 1.21. And as to works wrought by us after the new birth, we are not the Children of God by them, for they are from our being first the Children of God, and that not from our worth or will, but his grace and good will: to this and to nothing but this and on this account doth the Spirit bear witness. And this much of the second Rule, viz. the ground on which it witnesseth.

3. The witness of the Spirit is known by the ends it aims at and attains (by affecting them) when it beareth witness: what they are I have declared in part before, and shall show more hereafter, and therefore content myself with but hinting a few things here. The design of the Spirit is the abasing of us, and the exalting of the Fathers and the Sons love, the Fathers grace and the Sons

righteousness in our eyes; that we may be nothing, that God and Christ may be all in all: that we may admire the God of all grace & glorify his Son Jesus forever and forever. The best admirations are those which spring from knowledge and assurance; ignorance is the Mother of but faint, languid & piteous devotion, but that which flows from knowledge is strong and vigorous: and therefore doth the Spirit bear witness, that our admirations, devotions and adorations may be such. 'It is to endear God to us that we may love him the more and serve him the better; that he may be not only the dearer for his mercy, but dearer than it, and we may live to the praise and glory of God in righteousness and true holiness, in this present world, that is, all the days of our life, yea and that to come too in Eternity. I might add, that this witness designs to wean us from this world; that we may put the scorn upon the lust of the eye and flesh and pride of life, and live above (above the grandeur and gallantry, pride and pomp, pleasures and prettiness's of this world) I say that we might live above where the way of life is to them that are wise; so wise, as to have their affections and conversations in Heaven. Thus it follows upon our Text, 1 Joh. 2.15, where he bespeaks the Fathers, Youngmen, and little Children, Not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world, upon this very account that if any man love the world, the love (included in the knowledge) of the Father is not in him: he doth not know the Father. So that if any conceit themselves to be Children of God, and yet admire themselves, grow proud, wanton and worldly minded, they deceive themselves, for they have not the witness of, nor this witness from the Spirit. God's Children are of another world while in this, and they that know him to be their Father, live like men of another world in this, Psal. 73.25. Phil. 3.20. Heb. 11.13, —16. And hence there is fair way made for me to pass on to the third part of this discourse, viz. to show more at large the result of this knowing the Father (or that by the witness of the Spirit,

they are the Children of God) as to the privileges and the enjoyments of this attainment of the little Children.

### CHAP. III.

Shows the privileges and enjoyments of the little Children in knowing the Father, in four Sections.

#### SECT. 1.

How upon having received the witness of the Spirit, they do triumph over the Law, Sin, the world and present enjoyments, I have declared long since in a little short Discourse in Print, called the Triumph of Assurance, being an Appendix to the first part of my Orthodox Paradoxes; to which I refer the Reader, and proceed to discover other the privileges and enjoyments of these assured ones. Which privileges must be more than ordinary or common, because to know the Father is more than common knowledge; and the more excellent the knowledge, the more excellent the enjoyment is, whether it be in kind or but only in degree. That which I shall chiefly instance in is the great privilege, dignity and honor of being able to cry, Abba Father, by the Spirit of Adoption received into and witnessing in ourselves: not barely Adoption, nor only the Spirit of Adoption, but by it to cry, Abba Father, is the great thing I shall instance in, according to Rom. 8.14.15, 16, compared with Gal. 4.1, —7. Now, whether the Spirit of Adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father, be the same thing with the witness of the Spirit, whereby we know the Father, i.e. that we are his Children, or something precedaneous to it, or something succeeding it, and following thereupon, is a great question: in so critical and nice a thing we need be wary and cautious. Yet with all humble submission I shall speak what I think

to be most clear and evident in this case; which I suppose to be this, viz. that the Spirit of Adoption may in part, and a little precede the witness of the Spirit, as the dawning of the day doth the Suns rising to our view; withal, that more of it may come and appear together with the witness; but especially and chiefly that most of all (as to exercise, use and comfort) doth flow from the witness after the receipt thereof; that is, the Children of God who are led by the Spirit, do act most in and by the Spirit of Adoption crying, Abba Father, after they have received the witness of the Spirit, whereby they know the Father and that they are his Children. For the better clearing hereof, I shall (from comparing, Rom. 8, with Gal. 4.) lay down several gradual positions, all which (well considered) will not a little contribute to the deciding of the question according to what I have already hinted.

Position 1. These Texts (with several others) do discover the great advantage and dignity of the Gospel state beyond that of the Law; under the Law they were Sons and Heirs, but under age, i.e., Babes, Gal. 4.1. The Heir as long as he is a Babe (so the Word is) and Vers. 3. So we, while we were Babes (so the word is there also, which we render Children) yea they were Sons by Adoption, or by grace, Acts 15.11, for none have been the Sons of God any other way since the fall of Adam: But under the Law, they were under a Spirit of bondage more than of Adoption; and differed not from servants, Gal. 4.1, were under bondage, Vers. 3, and received not the Spirit of Adoption till the redemption by Christ was over, Vers. 4, 5, and till they received the filliation or Sonship by Adoption (thus manifested) they had not the Spirit of the Son, crying, Abba Father, Vers. 6, and after this they ceased to be servants, Vers. 7, that is, they ceased to be Sons and Heirs as Babes only, which differeth nothing from a Servant, Vers. 1, and became Sons and Heirs of God through Christ, Chap. 3, from 23, to the end. The state under the Law was a Law of bondage; the Law is

called, A yoke of bondage, Gal. 5.1, and they under it were under a spirit of bondage, which (in the genuine and proper sense of it) is a weak, slavish and cowardly spirit of fear, opposed to that of power, love and a sound mind, 2 Tim. 1.7. This spirit of bondage is usually interpreted to signify a slavish frame of heart, whereby the Jews (like slaves and superstitious persons) did serve God out of fear, and this I shall not deny; their religion at the best was called, The fear of the Lord: yet I shall add this unto it, that they did serve God not only from fear, or out of fear, but that they were afraid and under bondage though they did serve God; their service did not free them from fear. They were afraid of suffering Death and Hell, notwithstanding their Services and Sacrifices, for Jesus Christ took flesh to free from this fear, Heb. 2.14, and instead of it, to bring in the Spirit of Adoption, 2 Tim. 1.7. Gal. 4.4, 5, and so 'tis spoken of Rom. 8, to bear them up against sufferings which they were under, as appears by Vers. 15, — 18, and accordingly 'tis mentioned to encourage Timothy notwithstanding others (Paul's) or his own suffering, 2 Tim. 1.7, 8. And 'tis observable that since the death of Christ and the pouring out of this Spirit, the Saints (many of them) have been as desirous to die, as before (under the Law) they were (most of them) afraid or loath to die. Well then in the general the Gospel state is as far advanced beyond that of the Law, as liberty is beyond bondage, and courage beyond fear, as to them that have received not simply the Adoption but the Spirit of it.

#### SECT. 2. A Continuation.

Position 2. The Spirit of Adoption is an addition, a superaddition to Sonship; under the Law they were servant-sons, but now they are Son-servants, they have the Spirit of Sons: saith the Apostle, Now ye are no more Servants but Sons, viz. you that have received the Spirit of his Son, Gal. 4.6, 7. They are Sons (as all Babes are) before they



have this Spirit of Sons, to cry, Abba Father. Indeed when God is pleased to translate a Babe into an higher Form and to place him among the little Children, this Spirit of Sonship or Adoption doth begin to exert itself, before it have a clear and full witness thereof; but ordinarily as among the state of Babes, though they be Sons, yet there's little of the Spirit of Adoption, but much of bondage appears in them: so that the Spirit of Sons is an addition to Sonship; as Gal. 4.5, they received the filliation and Adoption, and after that the Spirit, Vers. 6, and so by degrees they came to call, Abba Father. So Rom. 8.14, they are called the Sons of God, and upon being Sons, received the Spirit of Sons or of Adoption, Vers. 15, they were Sons before they could call Father, which they could not do, but by the Spirit of Sons, or of Adoption.

Position 3. The witness of the Spirit of God comes upon (not barely the sonship or Adoption, but) the Spirit of Adoption; for it bears witness with our Spirits, viz. them of Adoption: for our natural Spirit doth not bear witness that we are the Children of God, 'tis our Spirit of Adoption doth that, and with and thereunto doth the Spirit of God bear witness. The Babes are Sons, but have not the spirit of Sons, and therefore have not the witness of God's Spirit, or assurance; but as soon as the Spirit of Sons begins to put itself forth, then usually doth the witness of the Spirit join itself to it.

Position 4. Upon the witness of the Spirit (which gives assurance that they are the Children of God, which was doubtful before, because they had only the single witness of their own spirit, and yet that left them not without hope) I say then, doth such a soul cry out aloud, with freedom and boldness, My Father, my Father, Abba Father: it might hope this before and faintly and brokenly endeavor to lisp out Father before, but now it opens its mouth wide and speaks, My Father. 'It is observable that the Spirit of Adoption whereby we cry,

Abba Father, is called the Spirit of his Son, Gal. 4.6, such as was in Christ, who did (but once, My God, my God) always pray to God with the Appellation of Father, and once, Abba Father, Mark 14.36, and all these after he had received the witness of the Spirit, that he was the only and beloved Son of God, Matth. 3.17. So, when we have the witness, we do not only think or hope that God is our Father, but with confidence and assurance (a Plerophory) of Faith we draw near to God, and cry, Abba Father; which we cannot so freely do before we have the knowledge of the Father to be ours, and that we are his Children. So then the Spirit of Sons, and the witness of the Spirit of God therewith is (not the Babes, or Servants, but) the Childs portion (and their that are above their Form, viz. the Young-men and Fathers) and henceforth they are taken from being Servants into the glorious and noble liberty of the Children and friends of God, Rom. 8.19, 21. Gal. 4.7. Joh. 15.9.

Position 5. To have the Spirit of Adoption (and the witness of the Spirit thereunto) whereby we cry, Abba Father, is a choice and transcendent privilege; to have the Adoption barely, seems, I confess, to be an advance beyond their Sonship under the Law, as 'tis Gal. 4.5. As if they, though Sons, were yet Sons of another denomination and nature (viz. servants, or servile sons) yet to have the Spirit of Adoption, is more than Adoption; and to have the witness of the Spirit, is more than the Spirit of Adoption; for from hence is our boldness to call and cry, Abba Father, 'It is the height of Gospel glory to converse with, to enjoy and obey God, as Children do a Father. Though the Sons under the Law were under bondage, 'twas yet a state of more freedom than other Nations and people had; but this is a state of liberty, glorious liberty. 'It is a great advance and preferment to pass from servants to friends, Joh. 15.15, to pass from Babes to Children, from as carnal to spiritual: I, and to have not only the Spirit of Christ, without which we are none of his, Rom. 8.9, but

to have the peculiar Spirit of his Son (an Emphatical distinction!) whereby as he did, we do cry, Abba Father; which the other (that are Christ's, and have the Spirit of Christ) cannot do without this special Spirit of his Son. In relation to this privilege, I shall, 1. Prove that 'tis a great and glorious one. 2. Show wherein the glory, excellency and sweetness of it is.

SECT. 3. Proving this to be a glorious privilege.

That to know the Father (as I have spoken of it) is a great attainment and glorious privilege, will be evident by these following Considerations, or considerable proofs: to begin with the Old Testament. 'It is Propheesied of in the Old as the glory of the New Testament; The Prophecies of the time (and world to come, the Messiah or Gospel dispensation) were glorious far beyond their present enjoyments; and the Prophets were more Seers, in respect of what was to be, than of what was; so the Apostle tells us expressly, 1 Pet. 1.10,—12, and when the day dawns and the day-star ariseth in our hearts, it supersedes the Prophecies, they being then know in accomplishments; so that we may say with a little alteration, as Joh. 4.39, —42. Many believed because of the Prophecies which testified of these things, but more believed because of his own word; and now they may say, We believe not (only) because of their sayings, but because we have heard (and felt him ourselves, 1 Joh. 1.1, —3.) and know that this is indeed the Spirit of his Son, which beareth witness with our Spirit of Adoption. Now, among many other Prophecies of the glories of the Gospel-Saints, this is one, that they should know God as a Father, and their Father, Psal. 89.26. (which is spoken of David, and of Christ who was more a David, than David was) He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, Isa. 63.16. ('tis spoken what they should say in time to come) Doubtless thou art our Father. So Chap. 64.8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father. Jer. 3.19. I said,

How shall I put thee among the Children? And I said, thou shalt call me, My Father. Again, to know God as our Father, is (in the New-Testament) put as a greater glory than to know him as our God; for 2 Cor. 6.16. 'tis said, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; but if they come out from among them, and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, then I will receive them, and will be a Father to them, and they shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty. God is the God of Angels, but to which of them said he at any time? Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. The Apostles add this Title to that of God, 2 Cor. 11.31. Ephes. 1.3. 1 Pet. 1.3. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: from whence 'tis apparent that 'tis fuller of sweetness that God is Our Father, than if he were only our God.

The great (if not the greatest) discovery which Christ promised to make (by sending the Spirit to do it) was to make known the Father. They had heard him speak much of the Father and of knowing the Father, Joh. 14.1, —7, whereupon saith Philip, Show us the Father and it sufficeth us, Vers. 8, from whence our Savior takes an occasion to speak more at large of the union that was between him and the Father, and that in knowing him they might know the Father also, and that whoever loves him shall be loved of the Father, and that the Father would send the Holy Ghost to be the Comforter, under which name he had not yet been (at least not so clearly and fully) known; and that therefore they should rejoice because he went to the Father; with many other such like sweet things in that Chapter. And Chap. 16.25. The time cometh (viz. when the Comforter cometh) that I will show you plainly of the Father, and in Vers. 26, 27, places more comfort in it than in his own intercession for us, which yet is one of the greatest comforts we have, as may be seen in Rom. 8.34. Heb. 7.25. 1 Joh. 2.1. Accordingly the good news which he sent his

Disciples after his Resurrection was this, that he was ascending to his God and their God; and not only so, but to his Father and their Father, Joh. 20.17. To have the witness of the Spirit, and so to know the Father, is such another honor as was conferred on Christ himself; as the Spirit is the Spirit of his Son, so the glory is the glory of his Son, viz. such as he had, Matth. 3.17, and 17.5, which voice and testimony is called a receiving honor and glory from God the Father, 2 Pet. 1.17. And when the like Testimony is born by the Spirit of God to our spirits, we receive honor and glory from God the Father: For if it be so great an honor to be known of God, how much is it to know him, and to know him as our Father, Gal. 4.9. 1 Cor. 13.11, 12. Phil. 3.12. By all these things it appears that it is a great, glorious and sweet privilege to know the Father by the witness of his Spirit.

SECT. 4. Shows wherein the glory and sweetness of this privilege consists.

The second thing I am obliged to discover and to treat of is, the glory and excellency of his privilege that the little Children can cry, Abba Father. And it lies much in two things,

1. That they have a great deal of freedom, boldness and assurance in their addresses to God and appearing's before him at the Throne of Grace, and in the day of Judgment. That they have at the throne of Grace, is express upon the account of their Intercessor and High Priest, Heb. 4.14, —16. And indeed the Spirit becomes a Spirit of Prayer (an Intercessor) in them, as it follows, Rom. 8.26, 27. The Spirit's knowledge is more to their advantage and comfort, than their ignorance is to their detriment. They go to God as to a Father, as Children use to do to their Fathers, but with a much more assurance, Matth. 7.11, as the Prayers of Christ are heard always, Joh. 11.41, 42, and by his Prayers he can obtain and do mighty things, Matth. 26.53,

because they are addressed to his Father; so 'tis also with these that know the Father, 1 Joh. 3.21, 22, and 5, 14, 15. God always had his favorites, who had his ear and heart and hand (to command almost) for his Sons and Daughters, such were Noah, Daniel and Joh, Moses, Joshuah and Samuel, Abraham, Jacob, &c. And now these little Children (the Johns that lie in his besom, Joh. 13.21, —26.) are such as they, viz. great prevailers with and obtainers from the Lord, as our Savior tells them and us, Joh. 14.12, 13. Joh. 15.7, and 16.23.24, all which places and promises refer to what they should ask and receive and do after he was ascended, and had sent the Spirit to make known the Father to them. As they have great boldness at the throne of Grace, so in the day of Judgment also; for perfect love (a Plerophory or full assurance) hath boldness in the day of Judgment, because as he is, so these are in this world (viz. he is declared and witnessed to be the Son, and these are to be the Sons of God) 1 Joh. 4.17, they shall have confidence at his coming, 1 Joh. 2.28.

2. The advantage of knowing the Father and being able to cry, Abba Father, is much in this, that 'tis a great relief to them in the saddest times and conditions: 'Twas Christ's standing consolation that God was his Father, and so 'tis theirs. It's sufficient to now the Father, who is all-sufficient, and whose grace shall be sufficient for them, come what will or can. This is great and strong consolation,

1. In case we are mis-judged and mis-interpreted; thus it was to Christ himself, Joh. 8.15, —19, and Vers. 47, —55. Whatever you think or say it matters not, My Father witnesseth to me, and my Father honoreth me, &c. 'Twas Paul 's comfort that The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (and in him our Father) knew that he did not lie, though they were too apt to think that he did, 2 Cor. 11.31. 'It is a small thing to be mis judged in man's day, when our Father will be our Judge, and judge righteously, 1 Pet. 2.23.

2. 'It is great and strong consolation when we fear wants, we are but too prone to be solicitous for tomorrow, and therefore to pour out many and long Prayers to God; but to take us off from vain Repetitions, Tautologies, much speaking and solicitous thoughts, our Savior propounds the remedies for our hearts case from God to be known as a Father. Matth. 6 7, 8, 9. And therefore bids them pray briefly and pithily, and to address and make applications to God as a Father, who knows better what they need, and what's fit for them, than they do. So as to cares also, Vers. 26, and 32.

3. When forsaken and forgotten by friends and nearest relations. Though Father and Mother forger us, yet will not God our Father, and therefore the Church pleads it, Isa. 63 16. Doubtless that art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father. This supported Christ himself when the Disciples fled and left him alone, yet he was not alone for his Father was with him. Joh. 16.32.

4. In case of suffering not only from men but from God himself to know the Father ingageth to patience and submission, which is never without case and comfort. When a person was lanced and cut by a Chirugion her Father, and asked by one how she could endure it? Oh, said she, 'tis my Father and he loves me. Thus our Savior took the cup because his Father gave it him to drink, Joh. 18.11. And the Apostle presseth to endure chastening upon this account, Heb. 12.5, —10.

5. Yea in the time of desertion, Death and Judgment, this is a cordial notwithstanding: if it were enough to a Child of light, that walked in darkness and saw no light, to have this staff to lean on that God was his God, Isa. 50.10, much more (as was hinted) that God is his Father, as 'tis Isa. 64.7, 8. Thou hid thy face from us, &c. but yet, O

Lord, thou art our Father. When our Lord Jesus cried out, My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me; yet presently he concludes in almost the same breath (which was also his last) Father into thine hands I commend my Spirit, Luk. 23.46, yea as I newly said, this casts out fear in the day of Judgment.

6. 'It is great comfort that we know the Father and are known of him, when no man knows the good we do, it being done in secret, Matth. 6.4, and 6, yea though we forget the good we have done, yet our Father will remember it and bless us for it, Matth. 25. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, who fed me, clothed me, &c. O Lord, say they, when did we do this? Though they had forgotten, yet the Father had a Book of remembrance written for them that loved his name, and showed it in ministering to the Saints, Heb. 6.9, 10.

7. 'It is a great comfort when we are straitened in Prayer, and cannot express nor utter our own conditions, yet that our Father knows and concerns himself for all our affairs, Matth. 6.7, 8, 9, with Rom. 8.26, 27, which is spoken as referring to them that had the Spirit of Adoption, Vers. 15. The Spirit that witnesseth is assistant to such in Prayer, and commends their thoughts, sighs and groans to God, for he (saith the Text) searcheth the hearts.

8. 'It is a great comfort though at any time we have not some particular things that we pray for: our heavenly Father will not withhold any good thing; if he withhold any, that thing is not good for us; if it were ( *pro hic & nunc, rebus sic stantibus* ) good, and good now, we should have it presently, for no earthly Father can be so ready as our heavenly Father is to give good things, even the Spirit to them that ask (aright, and according to his Will, Matth. 7.11, with Luke 11.13.) they have all that they may ask, would or should ask, as



that may be read, 1 Job. 3.22, and that is what's according to his Will, 1 Joh. 5.14. And beside this a Child of God would neither have nor ask anything knowingly. They are sure to have all that's good (and 'tis best to be without what is not so) yea that which is denied, their disappointment of it and his denial, (the evil they undergo as well as the good they do) the good they are without as well as that which they enjoy shall all work together for their good who love God, and that (to be sure) they do (and dearly too) who know the Father, and have assurance of his love.

'It is time now to dismiss this third Chapter, having shewn in it the privileges and enjoyments (as far as I intended) of the little Children, who know the Father, and what sweetness and honey drops from this rock of ages the everlasting Father: I now proceed to the fourth particular, which is to discover the frame of the heart and conversation of the life of these little Children, who know the Father.

#### CHAP. IV.

Showing the frame and conversation of these little Children, who know the Father: in two Sections.

This state or Classis of Saints being not so much noted particularly as that of Babes is, I shall not be able to bring many instances of particular persons; yet considering the nature of their attainment, by rules of proportion and degrees of grace, and what the sacred Writ says in general, I shall endeavor to clear up these things, as an addition to several others hinted before.

#### SECT. 1.

1. That these little Children (who knew the Father by interest and experience) are of a very loving (which is a very lovely) disposition and frame, and consequently are of a very ingenuous, affable and obliging, yea of a winning conversation, *Cos & magnus amvis amor*, Love is the whetstone and lodestone of love; they therefore being beloved of the Father, and this Love being made known and assured to them, they cannot but feel inwardly and expressively, most dearly and significantly love and show their love to their Father and to their Brethren, 1 Joh. 4.19, 20, 21. Love begets Love, and the manifestation of Love begets the manifestation of Love. Seeing they lie in his bosom, under the influences of his smiles and kisses, they cannot but be enamored and inflamed with Love. The Love of God shed abroad in their hearts, causeth their Love to be shed and spread abroad toward him and his, as 1 Joh. 4.8-19, -21. Their love is second to his first Love, and bears a kind of proportion to it, as may be seen

1. In this, the many pretty, innocent and harmless fondness's (as I may call them) which they express in their Love-fits: they do many things which would not seem so decent and becoming, but that Love not only excuseth but warrants them, yea sets a gloss and beauty upon them. Mary and Martha were two of his special favorites, Joh. 11.5. This Mary especially is she was loved so she loved much, Luk. 7.47, and in the zeal and Ecstasy of her love (being wrapped and transported with it) she anointed the Lord with ointment, and not only washed his feet with her tears, but kissed them with her lips and wiped them with her hair, Joh. 11.2, compared with Luke 7.37, -47, at which though others murmured, yet Christ commends both it and her for it, and withal upbraids Simon for falling short, hugely short of her, though he made him a feast.

2. Their Love appears in this that no danger will fright them from him whom they love: when the other Disciples fled, yet John (the

Disciple whom Jesus loved) was found (and observed by Christ himself) standing by the Cross, Joh. 20.26 But to instance in Mary Magdalene especially, Oh how is she carried beyond, above and out of herself by love to Jesus who loved her first! The story is in John, Chap. 19.25, she stood by the Cross, and was not affrighted away by the Troops of Soldiers, rude and unruly though they were, Joh. 20.1, when others were doubling, she heads to the Sepulcher early. and (as 'tis remarked there) while it was yet dark, this did not fright her, being made bold by love though she were of the weaker and more fearful Sex: and went not empty handed, but carried sweet spices, Mark 16.1, she ran to tell Peter and John how 'twas. Joh. 20.2, which when they had seen they returned, but she stayed weeping, and as she wept she stooped down, and as she stooped down she looked, Vers. 11, busy love! And when the Angels asked nor why she wept? Alas, said she, do you ask me what I all (as he in Judge. 18.23, 24.) they have taken away my dear, dear Lord, and I know not where they have laid him: though he be as one that is not, yet I cannot but love him! And love at that time was so much a passion that she knew not her Lord, though she saw and heard him, but thought it had been the Gardener. But when Jesus called her by her name, oh how is she transported! Rabboni, oh my Lord? Is this so? Am I not in a dream? Rabboni! And it seems she would have embraced him, but that love knows how to obey as well as to enjoy, and therefore being commanded away, away she goes. And this brings me to a;

3. Discovery of their love, which is in keeping his Commandments, and that without regret or grief, according to 1 Joh. 5.1, —3. Love is such a thing as desires not only to be beloved, but to be commanded; it hath so great a right and inclination too, as well as obligation to do good and well, that it thinks itself either wronged or suspected if it be not put upon the most high and difficult services: love never says, This is a hard saying, who can bear it, love never repines; neither

doing nor suffering is grievous to it. Therefore 'tis noteworthy that when our Savior was about to tell Peter what he must do and suffer, he doth in the first place make sure of his love, Joh. 21.15, —19. When the Father gives out commands, amor addit al as, as love wings the soul that it flies to obedience with speed and pleasure. Love hath an ambition to please to the utmost, 2 Cor. 5.9, with 14, to do something worthy of the Fathers love, 1 Thes. 2.11, 12, therefore the Apostle having prayed that they might know the unparalleled love of God and Christ, such as passeth knowledge, i.e., there was never the like known, Ephes. 3.18, 19, he presently exhorts them to walk worthy of their vocation, Ephes. 4.1.

## SECT. 2. A Continuation.

2. Little Children are modest and humble, they seek not after greatness nor great things in this world, for they are weaned, Psal. 131.1, 2, being weaned and past the state of a Babe and suckling, they are not concerned to catch after and grasp at things which are not suitable to their state. The Disciples while but Babes were often querying who should be greatest? But our Savior called a little Child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, unless ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (i.e., you shall have no abundant entrance, as 2 Pet. 2.11, and so the subsequent Verse expounds it) Who soever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child (the emblem of God's little Children) the same is (one of the) greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 18.1, —4. They were converted before, but they needed to be converted from this being as carnal and but Babes: Conversion is continued and advanced in growth (not only as to degrees in the same state, but) in passing from one Classis to another, as from being Babes to little Children; for till

we are thus converted we are not weaned from being as carnal, nor can we strengthen our Brethren, as Christ spake to Peter to do.

3. The little Children are full of bowels and compassion, very tender-hearted; God as a Father is so, and in being so we are his Children, Mat. 5.44, —48. Eph. 5.1. Col. 3.12. And this is pure Religion before God as a Father, Jam. 1.27. 'Twas upon this account that our Savior committed his blessed Mother to the beloved Disciple John, who of all was most like to be tender of her, Joh. 19.27. Yet again, they are very tender-hearted in this respect, that if at any time they do anything which grieves their Father, or the Spirit by which they are sealed to the day of redemption, their heart smites them and they are more angry with themselves than their Father is, for they will not forgive themselves, though he forgive them. Though God had told David (the beloved one, and the weak Babes are not yet as David) That his sin was forgiven, yet he repents and abhors himself in dust and ashes, as Joh also did, Chap. 42.5, 6.

4. Children are full of imitation, they tread in their Fathers steps (as Ascanius did in Aeneas 's; sequitur (licet) non passibus aequis) they make the Father their example and to walk as they have him for an example, 1 Pet. 1.14, —17. Ephes. 5.1. And in fine, Children are very teachable: the Babe is not so. Teach a Child the trade of his way, the Child-state is a learning state: the Babes are dull of hearing, Joh. 5.11, 2 Cor. 3.2, Joh. 16.12. Great things cannot be taught to Babes, Isa. 28.9. But hear ye Children, Prov. 4.1, and come near my children, I will teach you, Psal. 34.11. These are capable of strong meat, for they are spiritual, having received the Spirit of Adoption, and the witness of that Spirit by which they bring forth all the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. 5.22, —26. These few things shall suffice concerning the disposition and conversation of these little Children, by which we may see what Doctrine is most proper to be Preached

unto them (non omnibus omnia) as belonging to their state. I should now come to apply the whole, but that there is one Question which will require an Answer to it before I show the uses of this Point.

The Question is, Whether those that have assurance do always, to their dying day, lie in the enjoyment and powerful influences of this assurance? May not this Sun be Eclipsed? May not this Child of light walk in darkness, after the light and sight of God as a Father? May not the witness of the Spirit be suspended and withdrawn?

I Answer, 1. Some of them may and do live in a continual enjoyment of their assurance, as 1 Joh. 5.18, 19, 20, especially if they be grown up to be Fathers (after they have been Young-men conquerors) for the Fathers are spoken of as persons, who have without interruption, known him, that is, from the beginning; and these little Children (such as are to be kept in this state) may also (as John did) lie in the bosom to the very last: but if any of them be (and many of them are) designed to be Young-men, then indeed they are tempted to call their Sonship into question, but by the word and witness abiding in them (like Josephs bow in strength) they overcome and conquer, as Christ Jesus did; which will appear in treating of the next degree or Classis, viz. that of the Young-men.

2. As to the influence of assurance in respect of joy, rapture, transport and the like, I humbly conceive that it doth not abide with any in so high a degree and great a measure as when it came at first: my reason is this, their Spirit would fail, for the vision is too strong, and the light too glaring and bright to be born always or long as it shined at first, and may now and then at some certain seasons afterward; beside if it should continue long, as it seized them at first and for a while, they would be unfit for any of these lower offices and affairs of their particular calling, wherein they are to serve the Will of

God in their generations; for this would so possess and take them up (as the Prophets of old were during the time of their Visions) that they could not attend anything else. As when wrath is upon any, the Spirit would fail if God should so contend forever, as 'tis in Isa. 57.16, —18. So indeed if God should continue the bright shine of glory always, as 'tis when the assurance comes at first, they would faint under so great a weight of Glory, and beg God to forbear a little, lest their spirit should fail. Now as wrath due to sin is not always apprehended as at the first conviction, so neither may love be; and yet the influence of this Sun may operate much when the Clouds interpose: and accordingly the little Children (during their abode in that state) have a sedate peace and calm serenity possessed by them for the most part, and so can go on cheerfully to serve their God and Father, and to accept of and be pleased with his Will in all conditions.

3. They having received the witness of the Spirit, this Spirit never witnesseth against them to deny or contradict the former witness: it never revokes it, though it should suspend it; nor reverseth it, though it should witness better things against them. For though it never do say to such a soul, Thou art a Child of wrath, yet possibly in a time of desertion and darkness it may say, Thou art under wrath; and so set home very terrible things to the great affliction and deep humbling of the Soul. And thus at length have I dispatched not all that I might, but all that I designed to speak as to the doctrinal part of this discourse about the little Children's (attainment, enjoyment, disposition and conversation, as 'tis in and from) knowing the Father, viz. as their Father. I shall now conclude it with some Application.

## CHAP. V.

### The Application, in two Sections.

#### SECT. I. An Exhortation to Babes.

My Exhortation is first to the Babes, that they would be much in Prayer unto God for this attainment, that he would place them among the Children, and give them the Spirit of Adoption, and the witness of his Spirit therewith, that they may know the Father to be their Father, and themselves to be the Children of God, and so cry, Abba Father. Beg and beg again that he would fall on your neck and kiss you with the kisses of his mouth, which are better than Wine, yea and Corn and Oil too, Cant. 1.2. Psal. 4.6, 7. For your help herein I present you with a Directory, not to be read by rote, but as a supply of Arguments which you may breath and sigh out before the Lord (though not in these very words, but) as the Spirit shall help you.

In the first place be sure to bless God for what thou hast received, Do not despise the day of small things, nor think any of his consolations little, seeing thou art less than the least of all: bless him that he hath proclaimed his name ( The Lord gracious ) and that thou hast had a taste thereof; that there is such a saying (faithful and worthy of acceptance) that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; that thou hast taken in the milk of this Gospel (the first principles of the doctrine of Christ) Repentance from dead works, and Faith towards God and Christ; that thou are taken into the Family though thou have but little of the Children's bread, but art fed with crumbs: The best way to be blest with more is to bless God for what we have; To him that hath (been thankful) shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. Yea, bless him and tell him thou wilt do it forever, though he should never do more for thee than he hath done: seeing he hath convinced thee of the sinfulness of sin, of the excellency of a



state of Grace, and given thee desires to grow, & (as thou art told) hath made with thee an everlasting Covenant (well-ordered in all things and sure) thou wilt bless him for it as for thy Salvation, though thy house be not so with God as thou couldst wish it, and though he make it not to grow. Yet humbly tell him withal that this is not all thy desire, but thou hast a request to make with this thy thanksgiving, and 'tis that he would place thee among the children that thou mayest cry, Abba Father; for the taste thou hast had of his grace, hath set thy soul a longing (as it did the Spouse, Cant. 1.1,—3.) after the good fruit and growth of the Land: and that thou hopest, seeing he did find thee when thou soughtest him not, that he will make himself known to thee (as a Father) now thou enquirest after him. Tell him that 'tis a desire of his own begetting, and beg him that it may not be disappointed or denied by him, who hath styled himself, A God hearing Prayers, which is the great encouragement that all flesh hath to come unto him: Say, O Lord, thou hadst wot not only to bring to the birth, but to bring forth and then to bring up, and wilt not thou (who art the same today as yesterday) be merciful as thou art wot to them that love thy name, which Lord, my dear Lord, thou knowest I do. Urge it yet again that thou comest not (to say as many, Who will show us any good?) for Corn and Wine and Oil, but for the light of his countenance, and his loving kindness, which is to thee better than life.

If yet he answer not, go on and confess that thou art unworthy of so great a favor (then the Father kissed the Prodigal) yet that thou prayest him to remember that all others were so; and if he please to do for thee (as he hath for some others) that thou wilt give him (as they do) the glory of his grace, and say,

'It is not my merit, no desert of mine,

'It is only thy pure Love hath made me thine.

Though it be a favor too great for thee to beg, yet not for him to give, who is the God of all grace, and hath promised, That if we confess our sin, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sin: They speed best, who confess their unworthiness and ill deserving, as the Prodigal and others did. If yet he smile not upon thee, tell him that 'tis really a great grief of heart to thee to see at what a poor, low and inconsiderable a rate thou livest, and how at most unserviceable thou art to his glory, and that thou wouldst gladly do: him better service: that thou hast heard of what an ingenuous and dutiful disposition, and how fruitful the little Children are, and that upon this very account thou longest to be one of the number, yea though thou shouldest not be acquainted with the joys and raptures that they are. Tell him that thou comest not merely to have more pleasure for thyself, but to please him more, yea that thou mayest walk worthy of him to all well-pleasing. Tell him that the Lord Jesus said, He had more of the Fathers heart-love to display, which should be done by the Spirit, and that he should enable them to bear these discoveries who afore-time could not do it; and that if he please he can advance and prefer thee to this honor also; Oh Lord strengthen me and perfect that which concerns thy Servant! If yet he make not himself known, tell him farther, That Jesus Christ promised that whatever (of this nature and concern) thou among others should ask in his name, that it should be done, and pray him to remember his own Son and Promise (surely he will be as good as his Word, who is faithful and cannot deny himself!) Is there not a much more put on the heavenly Father, the Father of Spirits, as to giving good things, yea his holy Spirit to them that ask it? Add hereunto, that thou art sick of Love, and so sick that if he do not shine on thee 'twill cost thee thy life; and will he see thee die in a love fit! He whom thou lovest is sick, and he who loves thee is sick, are the two obliging arguments, and

though thou canst not say the former, yet thou canst the latter, and therefore pray him (who is Love) to have compassion on thee in this thy sickness, seeing Love hath made thee so: The Spouse had no sooner pleaded this, but he embraced her, his left hand was under her head, and his right hand over her heart, she was embosomed between the arms of Love, Cant. 2.5.6. Oh dear Lord, let it be so with me!

If yet he seem not to regard thee, tell him then that if he persist in denying thee, it may prove a great temptation and snare to thee to turn aside to the flocks of his companions; Ah Lord, Satan and Flesh and Blood have often blurted out such things as these, Why wilt thou wait on one who cares not for thee, nor will provide thee bread, nor give thee a good word or look; but this, O Lord, goes to my heart as a sword, that they should say, Where is thy God! Oh, Lead me not into temptation, but give me one kiss at least, that I may tell Satan from experience, 'tis good, oh how good 'tis! To draw near to and to wait on God, and that I seek not his face in vain. Go on and tell him that thou art resolved thou wilt never give him over, but wilt cleave to him with full purpose of heart: that he shall have an importunate Suitor of thee, and that thou wilt give him no rest; but wilt continually pursue him (and beg others also to do as much for thee) till he establish thee a praise in the earth, by saying, Is he not my dear Son? A pleasant Child? I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. Tell him, though he lame thee (as he did Jacob) yet thou wilt not let him go till he bless thee and give thee a new name; yea though he call thee Dog and beat thee with frowns and hard expressions, yet that thou wilt love him and lie at his feet, for all that.

If he begin to speak, though it be against thee (as he did to Ephraim and the woman of Canaan) yet take hold of what he says, and plead it, for 'twill be to thine advantage at last, as 'twas to theirs. If he tell

thee that thou art not yet in a capacity, answer him humbly, that never any was till he was pleased to make them so, and that thou comest to pray him that he will capacitate and make thee meet. If he tell thee, thou wilt be wanton and abuse it, by being puffed up, &c. tell him that he can prevent it by his grace; 'tis true, thy heart (alas!) is deceitful, but thou dost not intend any such thing, but dost hope that if he will give thee this Pearl, it shall not be cast to a Swine that will trample upon it, nor to a Dog that will turn again and rend it; and dost also pray him that thou mayest never receive this grace and favor in vain, or turn it into wantonness, or sit because his grace abounds. If he tell thee the time is not yet come, reply to him, that thou wilt wait his pleasure, and not awake him till he please, but wait all thy days, if at last this change may come; oh that this happy change may come! Conclude by telling him, that if thou have been bold, 'tis in the name of the great High Priest, who sits at his own right hand and is touched with the feeling of thy infirmities, by whom thou hast been emboldened to come with thy Petitions, and present them to the throne of his Grace, that thou mightest obtain this mercy and grace for thy opportune and seasonable relief: and therefore though thou canst not call him thy Father, yet thou canst call upon him as the Father of Jesus Christ, who heareth him always. Yea at an adventure speak to him and call (though thou canst not cry aloud and confidently) yet call him Father; and tell him, Oh my dear Lord look upon me, and see if this be not thy Sons Coat: Though I am as carnal, yet thine Apostle calls me (not carnal, but) a Babe in Christ; and I am told by them who think better of me than I dare do of myself, that they do spy thine image in mine eye; which makes me the more inclinable to say, Father, look upon me and see if there be not something of the spirit of a Son in me. Oh therefore send thy good Spirit the Comforter to witness with this spirit that I am thy Child: dear God and Father do this for thy poor Babe!

Thus plead with God, and who knows but he may be gracious to thee? Delight thyself in him and he will give thee thy hearts desire, commit thyself and way to him, and he will bring it to pass, yea he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon day, unto victory; he will not quench the smoking Flax, nor break the bruised Reed; but as he hath done to them that have thus pleaded with and submitted to him, so (I believe) he will do for thee; he will revive the heart of the humble, and they shall live: yea, it may be thou shalt (within a little time) hear the joyful sound of, Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee, thou art a pleasant Child, be it unto thee as thou wilt; thou shalt no more be trembling at the door of hope, but have an abundant entrance into the Family, and be placed among the Children, to eat of their bread and to drink of their Wine, to enjoy the fruit of righteousness, which is peace and assurance forever, Amen.

SECT. 2. An Exhortation to the little Children in several particulars.

THE next branch of Exhortation is to them that know the Father, who by the witness of the Spirit are assured that they are the Children of God; I exhort you Brethren, 1. That you be not wanton, through this abundance of Revelation to be proud and puffed up: you must expect to be set upon by Satan, as Christ was, when he had received the witness of the Spirit that he was the Son of God, Matth. 3.16 17 with Chap. 4.1. When Paul was advanced to Paradise, and inclinable thereupon to be puffed up, a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, 2 Cor. 12.7, buffetings attend this state, but especially it there be puffing's up, therefore beware. High fortunes (as the world speaks) are the way to high minds; but high minds and mountainous Spirits are more liable to tempests and storms from Satan's wind and weather, than the humble Valleys: they are most like to be brought down, who are listed up. Indeed God is very

gracious in giving the witness of his Spirit, and so manifesting himself as a Father, before the Tempter comes, before we are to enter the field and fight with the Devil (in this case, about our Sonship) that we may be the better armed and able to defend ourselves, yet the Devil takes (and our hearts too often give him) occasion to take this opportunity to tempt us. Beware and take heed that you be not lifted up by this advancement.

2. Now you know the Father and his everlasting Love towards you, take heed you do not neglect the Son of his Love and the righteousness which is by him; God expects that you honor the Son as you do the Father, Joh. 5.23, for you are not justified by the Fathers Grace and Love, but in conjunction with and through the redemption that is by Jesus Christ, Rom. 3.24, the Father indeed chose you, and he blesseth you with all spiritual blessings, but still 'tis in Christ Jesus, Ephes. 1.2, —5. The everlasting Consolation is from not only the Father but the Son also, who hath loved you, 2 Thes. 2.16, be sure therefore that you do not so eye the love of the Father, as to look off from the Son, who is jointly engaged with the Father, in all the transactions of their happiness. When the Butler was advanced he forgot Joseph (to which that seems to be an allusion, Amos 6.6.) so some are apt to do by Jesus Christ, though 'twere by him they came to all their honor, if at least come they be as they pretend.

3. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption, Ephes. 4.30. If you be not kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, ye do not only forget God and Christ, for whose sake God forgave you, but you grieve the Spirit, who brought you this good news; for all these are connected, together with Vers. 30, and so is that also, Vers. 29, if you do not edify one another, and in your communications minister Grace to

them that hear you. If God should (as it were) call back the witness of his Spirit and leave thee to walk in darkness, in what a woe-state wouldst thou be; 'twill in some respects be far worse with thee than 'twas before, when thou wert but a Babe. Oh then grieve not the Spirit, nor give God an occasion to put thee under a state of desertion.

4. Honor your Father; 'tis the sin of some that they glorify not God as God, and it may be your sin not to glorify God as a Father and as your Father, Mal. 1.6. A Son honoreth his Father; not only as a man, or a man above him, but as his Father. The Father pitieth the Son that serves him, and the Son should honor & serve the Father that pities him. Be (as Christ Jesus was) always about your Fathers business, and bring forth much fruit whereby his and your Father may be glorified. Fill up the conversation of Children, live like Children: be loving, be humble, be tender-hearted, be teachable and imitate your Father, to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. The more you abound in these things, the more communion and joy will be your portion; you will know the dignity and enjoyment of Assurance, and what it is to call upon and live with God as a Father; of which I have spoken and need not to repeat and tell you how it will carry you above cares and fears; what a cordial it will be in time of suffering, Death and Judgment.

5. And lastly, Let the Word of God dwell richly in you in all wisdom, that if the Lord call you forth to fight his Battels (as he doth some of your Classis, to be Young-men) you may be strong and overcome the wicked one, by the Word of God abiding in you. Perhaps such lapping as you, are loath to leave the Closet and go into the Field, and I cannot altogether blame you; yet if God call you forth to undergo trials, and be tempted, remember that Loves commands (them from and to Love) are not grievous; and therefore you need to

hide the Word in the heart and to spend some time (as our Savior did) in Fasting and Prayer, lest and before you enter into the Battle: and not entangle yourselves with the affairs of this Life, that you may please him, who shall choose you to be Soldiers, and endure hardship as the good Soldiers of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. 2.3, 4. But of this more hereafter in handling the next rank of Saints, viz. Young-men, and their Glory, which is strength. And this shall suffice to have been spoken of the Attainment, enjoyments, dispositions and conversations of Little Children who know the Father, i.e., who have assurance of the Fathers Love, and live in union and communion with him.

The End of the Second Classis.

**THE THIRD CLASSIS IN THE SCHOOL  
OF CHRIST,  
VIZ. YOUNG-MEN.**

From 1 John 2.13, 14.

Vers. 13. I write to you Young-men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.

Vers. 14. I have written unto you Young-men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.



By comparing this with several other Scriptures, it hath been made apparent that there are four Sorts, Ranks or Degrees of Christians, whose names are given to them according to the four most usual divisions of the Ages of Man, viz. Babes, Little Children, Young-men and Fathers. The lowest, though many times not the youngest for standing, are Babes, who eat Milk and nothing but Milk, they cannot digest nor bear strong meat. The second are the Little Children (the first degree of them called spiritual or perfect) who have attained to know the Father, and to have the assurance and enjoyment of his Love: both these states have been already treated of, and I am now to speak of and to the third Classis, Form or Rank, viz. the Young-men, who are twice mentioned in these two Verses. Where you may take notice, 1. Of the persons spoken of, Young-men. 2. That which is spoken of them, and the things are three, 1. That they are strong. 2. That the Word of God abideth in them. 3. That they have overcome the wicked one: From whence we may observe, 1. That Young-men Saints are strong ones. 2. That the Word of God abideth in them. 3. That they have overcome the wicked one. 4. That they overcome the wicked one by strength. 5. That their strength (a great part of it) is from the Word of God abiding in them. I design not any long Discourse about this, and therefore shall not handle these Propositions distinctly, and in the method wherein they lie, but give a brief Exposition of the whole Text, under these following Heads.

1. What is meant by (<H&G>) Young-men, the true notion and import of the expression, as intended in the Text.
2. What their strength is, Ye are strong, and wherein their strength lies.
3. How they come by this strength, viz. by the Word of God abiding in them: where

  1. What is meant by the Word of God.
  2. By the abiding of the Word of God in them.
  4. What is meant by the evil one.
  5. What the dispute is about, between the Evil one and the Young-men.
  6. What by their having overcome the evil one.
  7. How the Word of God

abiding in them doth strengthen them. 8. How this strength or being strong conduceth to the victory. 9. How great an Attainment this victory is to overcome the wicked one. 10. What are the signs and tokens of this victory. 11. What the issue and success of this victory is. And then 12, make some Application.

## CHAP. I.

### What is meant by Young-men.

I Shall not concern myself about the notation or Etymology, but the sense of the word (<H&G>) and that not with reference to the Age but the State and Attainment of these Young-men. Among very good Authors (Historians, &c.) the word is used in a Military sense to signify Soldiers, and so 'tis also in the Sacred Writ, to which use it is most properly applicable in the Text: Yea, 'tis used not only for a Soldier at large and in common, but for the flower of an Army, the choicest Soldiers; Romana juvenus was the Roman Army, yea the flower and glory of both their Infantry and Cavalry; Juventutem legere is to list Soldiers, the choicest Soldiers. When the two Armies of Ish-bosheth and David (under their two Generals Abner and Joab ) met together by the Pool of Gibeon, Abner said to Joab, Let the Young-men now arise and play before us (as if War were but a sport and pastime!) and the Field where they fought and fell was called, Helkath Hazzurim, the Field of strong men, 2 Sam. 2.12,—16, accordingly (in a moral sense) the Young-men in our Text are said to be strong men; yea that they had sought with and overcome the evil one: the house of Saul, Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the Servants of David, to allude to what was the issue of the fight in the forementioned place.

These Young-men Saints then are the Soldiers yea the Worthies of Israel; and 'tis as much as it St. John had said, I write to you the Soldiers, Warriors, and Champions: indeed the Babes may pass, (inter gregarios milites) for common Soldiers, but these are the choice Young-men, the good Soldiers of Christ Jesus, as Paul would have Timothy be, in being strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2.1,—5, they are the Valliant's of Israel. As the Babe Saint is taken out of sinners and becomes a middle state between the carnal and spiritual (of the first degree) viz. Little Children; and as little Children are taken out of Babes, and are a middle state between Babes and Young-men; so Young-men are taken out of little Children, and are a middle state between them and the Fathers. These Young-men having known the Father and received the witness of his Spirit that they are the Children of God, they are now prepared for the Battle to enter the lists with Satan the tempter, as was the case of our Savior; who when he had received the witness of the Spirit from Heaven, was led into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. God doth not take his Young-men out of Babes immediately, but out of little Children, who are made strong by the Word and Witness of God abiding in them; and the glory of these Young-men is their strength: Which leads me to the second thing to be treated of, viz. what their strength is, and wherein it lies.

## CHAP. II.

What is meant by their being Strong.

The Text tells us that these Young-men are (<H&G>) strong. The great Critic Hesychius makes the word equivalent with (<H&G>, Calcator) a treader down, and with (<H&G>, Firmus) a settled and fixed person; and both these are suitable to the thing in hand: for our

Young-man is a conqueror and hath trodden down strength, viz. the Devil underfoot, which is the usual phrase to denote conquest, victory and triumph, as may be seen in Deut. 33.29. Josh. 10.24, 25. Psal. 44.5. Rom. 16.20, beside many other places which speak to the same purpose. The other word (<H&G>) which signifies a settled person is put to the case also, for settlement flows from victory: others are apt to be tossed to and fro, but these conquerors are fixed and immovable.

But to keep close to the word and thing, I shall speak of this their being strong, as it notes the strength preceding the Victory, and whereby they overcome, and not that which succeeds to and abides after their conquest and victory. Ye are strong, i.e., ye are mighty and were so before the dispute and fight (as well as after) or else you had not overcome. The strength of the Young-men notes and denominates them to be men of might and valor, men fit to undergo labor and to endure hardship, as the good Soldiers of Jesus Christ: and according to this notion you shall find that in the Scripture, the hardest and most difficult employments have been assigned to and performed by Young-men, because they are strong and fit for such service, The glory of Young-men is their strength, Prov. 20.29. 'tis thus remarked concerning Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11.28. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the Young-man that he was industrious (Hebr. that he did work) he made him Ruler over all the charge (Hebr. burden) of the house of Joseph: here is might, valor, work and burden-bearing spoken of this Young-man. In 2 Tim. 2.1, —5, strength, enduring hardship and being a good Soldier are joined all together. Joshua sent Young-men to spy out the Land, Josh. 6.23. The Porters mentioned in 1 Chron. 26.6, —8, are said to be mighty men of valor, strong men, able men for strength for the service. Now as 'tis naturally, 'tis also morally the glory of Young-men that they are strong. But the Question is,

Wherein their Strength doth lie?

'It is said of Samson that his strength was in his Hair; and of the Bohemoth that his strength is in his Loins, and his force in the Navel of his Belly, Job 40.16, but wherein is the strength of these Young-men? 'It is originally in the Lord and the power of his might, Ephes. 6.10, or the grace which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2.1. 'Tis not the grace that is in us, but that which is in him that is sufficient for us, 2 Cor. 12.8, 9, and 'tis of his fulness that we receive grace for grace, as we have occasion to use it, Joh. 1.16, with Heb. 4.16. God hath laid our help on him who is mighty to save, and who goeth forth conquering and to conquer till all his enemies be made his footstool, and subdued under his feet. But among and above all the grace communicated to them, their strength is in Faith or in believing, for this is the victory whereby we overcome the world even our Faith, 1 Joh. 5.4, 5, and as hereby we overcome the world, so him also who is in the world, that is, the Devil; and therefore though every piece of God's Armor be of great use, yet we are advised above all to take the Shield of Faith, whereby we quench the fiery darts of the Devil, Ephes. 6.11, —16. Abraham was strong in Faith: and in the strength of Faith did David encounter Goliath (a type of the Devil) and 'twas by Faith that the Heroes mentioned in Heb. 11, wrought such wonders and obtained victories, Vers. 32, —34, so that these Young-men are strong in the Lord, strong in the Faith that is in them, they go out in his name and do prevail; 'tis not in their own but his strength, Phil. 4.13, for 'tis not they of themselves do conquer, but he that liveth in them by Faith that makes them conquerors, Rom. 8.37. These Young-men are Christ's Armor-bearers and they slay after him, as 'tis said of Jonathan's, 1 Sam. 14.13. 'It is Jesus Christ who teacheth their hands to War, and their fingers to fight, so that the Devils bow of steel is broken by them, and they believe down the Devil under their feet.

Through the strength of Christ living in them by Faith, Ephes. 3.16, 17, they are (almost omnipotent, for they are) able to do all things, not only to abound, but to be abased and to endure hardship, Phil. 4.11, —13; and by the power of his might all things are possible to them. Abraham conquered doubts, fears, yea and naturally impossible things by strength of Faith; he could live by Faith when his own body and Sarah's Womb were dead; the things which crossed and bound up his hope were no more to him, than new Ropes and green Withs (viz. the strongest) were to Samson before his Hair was shaved, and his strength (even God) departed from him. By this strength Jacob prevailed with God and had his new name from thence, Israel a prevailer with God. 'It is by this strength that the Young-men overcome the evil one, and every one of his evils, for so his temptations are called, and the day of temptation is called, The evil day, Ephes. 6.13. Be strong, saith the Apostle, in the grace (or that grace) which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2.1. Now it may well refer to Faith which is in Christ Jesus, for though it (as all other graces) be from him, yet this is in him (we believe in him) and accordingly the same Apostle bids the same Timothy fight the good fight of Faith, 1 Tim. 6.12.

Faith is the Armor of proof against the Devils darts, as was hinted but lately: and if we will resist the Devil so that he may flee from us, it must be by being steadfast in the Faith, 1 Pet. 5.8, 9. Though the Devil roar most dreadfully like a Lyon, yet a strong and steadfast Faith will make this King of terrors to run away. And therefore as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 16.13. Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit ye like men, be strong (all Military Terms and fitted for these Young-men) quit ye like men, i.e., like Young-men Soldiers, like men of War; and that you may so do, stand fast in the Faith, be strong in Faith. Look to Jesus then the Captain and bringer up also of our Faith, he hath conquered the Devil, be you his Armor-bearers and

slay after him, by Faith following him your Leader, and as he did you also shall (if ye be Young-men) overcome the evil one. But before I show who this evil one is, and what 'tis to conquer him, I am engaged to show where and whence these Young-men have their strength in the expressions of the Text, and that is by the Word of God abiding in them.

### CHAP. III.

How they come by this Strength. viz. By the Word of God abiding in them.

The next thing which is asserted concerning these Young-men, is, That the Word of God abideth in them; which may be understood as spoken after as the sign, or as spoken before as a means or cause of the victory: as it refers to that, it imports that notwithstanding their fight, yet their bow (like Josephs ) abode in strength, and that they were not weakened by the hot and sharp dispute which they had with the Devil; but in this sense I shall not handle it here, though I may touch it anon. As it refers to this (and I suppose it most properly doth) it shows us by what they were strengthened to overcome; for if the Word of God had not abode with them, they had not been strong enough to overcome the evil one: the weapon by which the Young-men overcome him is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God; or that by which the Young-men are made so strong as to overcome the wicked one thereby, is the Word of God abiding in them. As their enemies are not carnal only, but spiritual, Ephes. 6.12, so their weapons are not at all carnal but spiritual, and so mighty through God, 2. Cor 10.4, 5. There are two Questions to be proposed and resolved in relation hereunto: 1. What is meant by the Word of God. 2. What by the abiding of the Word of God in them, for 'tis not the

Word of God in their hand, but in their heart, and not sojourning, or lodging, but dwelling there.

Quest. 1. What is meant by the Word of God?

In the general, by the Word of God we are to understand the Mind and Will of God revealed and made known in the holy Scriptures (which are so often called the Oracles, Speeches, Word or speaking of God) as held forth in the Doctrines, Prophecies, Promises and Precepts thereof; but especially as 'tis written in their hearts and imprinted there, according to the New Covenant. This Word of God in whole and in every part is hugely useful for enlightening, comforting and strengthening that we may overcome the wicked one: 'tis to make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. 3.16, 17. 'tis the sword of the Spirit, of which we may say (as David of another material one) there is none like it; for by it Christ himself overcame the wicked one. Yet more particularly, this may refer

1. To Christ himself who is the original Word of God the Father, by which or whom he made the World and hath spoken to the World by Word of mouth (as I may speak) not by piece-meal and diverse fashions or tropes and figures (as of old) but clearly, plainly and fully, Heb. 1.1, 2. Now by Christ Jesus abiding and dwelling in us are we strong, Phil. 4.13, or by the grace that is in him, of which he is full, as before: and without him we can do nothing, Joh. 15.5.

2. It may refer to the promises of God which are so often called by the name of Word, thy Word, the Word of Promise, which is all one with the Word of God; to this Abraham 's Faith did refer, and wherein he was so strong, Rom. 4.20, and truly the Word of Promise being in and abiding in us doth not a little contribute to our strength and victory. By these we are not only made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Pet. 1.4, but obliged, assisted and quickened to perfect



holiness, 2 Cor. 7.1, notwithstanding Temptations from without or within.

3. By the Word of God may here be understood, The witness of the Spirit bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the Children of God: This testimony abiding in them (as it did in Christ) doth strengthen them to overcome the evil one. When they were little Children they received this Testimony, and being now called to the War, this Word as well as Work of God abideth in them and makes them strong to the Battle. So that here is Father, Son, and Spirit (the Word of God in each respect) standing by them, and abiding in them, to strengthen them, to deliver them out of the mouth of the Lion, to keep them from every evil work, and to preserve them to the heavenly Kingdom, to use the Apostles experiences and expressions recorded in 2 Tim. 4.17, 18.

Quest. 2. What is meant by the abiding of God's Word in them?

I Answer, That it doth not only denote the in-being of the Word (in either of the respects forementioned) that there is such a thing there, in their heart and inner man; nor barely the calling in to mind and keeping it in their memory; nor its lodging and sojourning with them as an Inn-mate, no nor as a friend that is to depart: but it notes a settled abode or dwelling in efficacious power and influence. 'It is said of Timothy 's Mother and Grandmother that Faith dwelt in them, 2 Tim. 1.5. And when the Apostle prays that the Ephesians may be strengthened, he joins this with it, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith, Ephes. 3.16, 17. And 'tis said of the happy ones, who are reproached for the name of Christ, that the Spirit of God and of Glory doth rest upon them, 1 Pet. 4.14. And our Savior tells his Disciples that there is no great things to be done, barely by being in him, unless they abide in him, and he in them, John 15. And the

great thing in the Promise of the Holy Ghost was, that he should abide with them. So that the sense of this expression can signify no less than that the Word of God doth remain in them in the fullness of assurance, joy, and power, by which they are strengthened and enabled to overcome the wicked one; and what he is I am next to discover. I might here have taken occasion to show how the Word of God, abiding in them doth strengthen their Faith and make them strong; as also how their strength of Faith doth contribute to their achievements and victory, but I reserve that to its proper place, and at present shall proceed, to explain the third thing in the Text which is said of these Young-men, viz. that they have overcome the evil or wicked one. As to this I shall have these things to treat of, viz. to show what is meant by the evil one; what the dispute (between the wicked one and the Young-men) is about; that the Young-men do overcome, and how they do overcome the wicked one, &c. Of these things I shall speak in the Model and order first proposed, which brings me to the fourth Chapter.

#### CHAP. IV.

Showing what or who is meant by the wicked one.

The evil, or the evil one] this expression, especially if read in the Neuter Gender (<H&G>) is meant of more evils than one, yea of all evil; and so it may be understood in that Prayer which our Lord taught, Matth. 6.13, and that Prayer which our Lord made and Prayed, Joh. 17.15, and so in Rom. 12.9. 1 Joh. 5.19, but here it seems to be of the Masculine Gender (<H&G>) and refers to one, viz. him who is eminently and principally the evil one, or the wicked one, whether spoken of a man or of the Devil. It is used to denote and set out a notorious wicked man that hath no fellow in wickedness, a

Devil incarnate, an Antichrist, as 'tis in 2 Thes. 2.3,—9, for though the word (<H&G>) be not there, yet (<H&G>) an equivalent word is there; Hesychius makes these words to be synonymous, <H&G>, all noting a most flagitious, profligate and terribly wicked person, as this word doth, 1 Cor. 5.13, but it doth most usually refer to the Devil himself, who is (<H&G>) the wicked one, so eminently as none is beside him; and this may be observed to be undoubtedly true by comparing these following Texts, Matth. 13.19, with Luke 8.12. Ephes. 6.16. 1 Joh. 3.12, now this is the evil or wicked one (not excluding others) that these Young-men have overcome by being strong, and the Word of God abiding in them: The Devil being the Captain-General, the ring-leader, the Master of misrule and mischief, the rest fall with him. In telling us that they have overcome the wicked one, 'tis implied that there was first a fight, a hot and sharp encounter between the Devil and the Young-men: the Devil did set upon them and tempt them shrewdly, and they had not a little to do till they won the field and day of him. And surely 'twere not temptations in common but some singular ones that these Young-men were under: the Babes meet with common ones, but these with special ones, 1 Cor. 10.13. As Christ Jesus would not teach the Babes Doctrine which they could not bear, so he would not lead them into temptations, which they could not overcome: but these Young-men, who are his Champions and Worthies, they encounter Giants (as David's did) they war not against flesh and blood (weak enemies) but against principalities and powers, &c. Ephes. 6. It will therefore be expedient, if not necessary, to inquire after what the special temptations are which Young-men encounter and overcome; or what the thing is that the dispute is about between the Devil and the Young-men Christians.

## CHAP. V.

What the dispute is about, or what the temptations are which Young-men do undergo and conquer.

It must be remembered that these Young-men are taken out from among the little Children, who have received the witness of the Spirit that they are the Children of God; and about this thing is the dispute between the Devil and them, viz. whether they be the Children of God or not: and so some understand that place (which speaks in Military language as if it properly referred to the state and condition of these Young-men) Ephes. 6.12, reading that which we render in high or heavenly places, about heavenly things, viz. our Title to Sonship and so to Heaven; this is the thing which the Spirit witnessed to their spirits, this the Devil calls in question and offers arguments against it: but all these arguments do the Young-men overcome by the Word of God abiding in them, which strengthens their Faith to give glory to God and his Spirit as the faithful and true witness, notwithstanding all the cunning insinuations of wiles and the Devil.

To clear this up a little more, I humbly offer this to consideration, That the Saints (members of Christ's body) are all of them more or less conformable to his Image, and to the several states and conditions wherein he was. Now such was the condescension of our great and good Lord Jesus, that he not only took flesh and blood (the human nature) in common: but was found in our fashion and tempted like us in all things, yet still without sin; he went through all our states; he was once as a Babe, viz. made under the Law, and was in the likeness of sinful flesh, and so judged as carnal; withal, he was under Tutors and Governors, and was obedient to them, Luke 2.46,—51, where 'tis added that he increased in wisdom as in age, which

argues (without any disparagement) that his attainments (as in the flesh) were gradual. After a while he (being Baptized and Praying) hath the witness from heaven that he was the Son of God, Luke 3.21, 22, and then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, Matth. 4.1, and so past from the Childs to the Young-man's state.

So then (in conformity hereunto) I conceive and declare that the temptations which the Young-men undergo are the same (and about the same thing) which Jesus Christ underwent when after the witness of the Spirit he was tempted by the Devil. The Spirit first witnesseth, then the Devil calls this into question and puts Christ upon the proof, to which Christ answers and conquers by the Word of God abiding in him; and just so it was with these Young-men: the phrases and things do so accord that it seems to me to be unquestionable. To come up then to what I intend by steps and degrees, The Saints in conformity to Christ Jesus are but Babes at first, under the Law; in the likeness of sinners, as carnal; and are in subjection to Tutors and Governors: after this God is pleased to make himself known to some of them as a Father by the witness of his Spirit, and so they arrive to the state of Children: and then God singles out some of these to be tempted of the Devil about their Sonship, and they become (<H&G>) Young-men and brave Soldiers, who are taught to draw and wield the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, against the Devil, as Christ also did.

God was pleased to take this care of and about Israel under the Law, That when a man had taken a new Wife he should not go out to War, neither should he be charged with any business, but he should be free at home one year, and cheer himself with his Wife, Deut. 24.5. So by way of allusion I may say that when the Saints marry a new Wife, the Fathers Love, they are often privileged for some time to lie

in his bosom and to cheer themselves with his Love: but then some of them are called out to war, Joh. 21.18,—22, and though therein they endure some hardship for a season, yet they become conquerors, which is a greater glory than not to fight at all (as 'tis in some sense to conquer death than to be immortal) and in the sense and strength of his Love they go forth conquering and to conquer, and so live in the triumph of their assurance, as our Savior did, and become his Squires or Armorbearers fighting under his banner of Love against the evil one, if ever he return again and make new assaults upon them, as he did upon Christ himself, from whom he departed but for a season; but then the after-temptations are of another nature, viz. persecutions and sufferings, as our Savior's were. Upon the whole I conclude that the temptations of the wicked one which the Young-men have overcome, are such as Christ's were, when tempted of the Devil after the witness of the Spirit; which what they were I shall briefly examine.

SECT. 1. About Christ's and the Young-men's Temptations.

About these Temptations of Christ I have a larger Discourse than I think convenient to insert here (which if God please may come forth by itself in due time) at present I shall only touch the parallel between Christ's and the Young-men's temptations after the testimony of the Fathers Love. The Young-men having been proclaimed, as Christ was, by a voice like to a trumpet from Heaven, which gives a certain sound, that they are the Sons of God, and Heirs of God and glory; the Devil puts in his exceptions against this Title, and would fain have them believe that this is but Enthusiasm, a mere fancied and pretended apprehension, without any true and just ground; and therefore comes and calls it into question, caviling (as at first) if thou be the Son of God, &c He labors first to make a doubt of it; and if he cannot attain that, he then endeavors to bring them to

presume upon and make bold with it. His first design is to make it doubtful, Matth. 4.3. If thou be the Son of God, command that these Stones be made bread; this was after he had fasted forty days and forty nights and was a hungered. That which he slyly insinuates is this; thou thinkest thyself, and supposest to have witness from Heaven, that thou art the Son of God; but if God were thy Father and did love thee, would he suffer thee to be so poor and hungry? And could he find it in his heart to put thee on so much hardship, as fasting, and so long too, &c. would he let thee be in the Wilderness among the Beasts? Fathers provide for their Children, and if thou wert his Son, surely he would maintain thee at a better rate than this, would he not? Canst thou (it being thus with thee) believe thyself to be the Son of God?

Accordingly he pleads with and against the Children of God, when in a low estate in this world: it hath pleased God to choose many of the poor of this world to be rich in Faith and Heirs of the Kingdom, Jam. 2.5, and many of these who have this assurance are many times hard put to it in the world, and by Satan too because of this their poverty, as if 'twere inconsistent with the riches of Faith and title of an Heir to a Kingdom: but now as Christ answered and conquered, so do they by the Word of God abiding in them. One Answer serves them both, viz. Man lives not by Bread (a man's life consists not in the abundance of things enjoyed) but by every or any word that cometh out of the mouth of God, anything that God shall appoint, yea his Word can do it without anything else. These things below are not good enough for Love-tokens, as hatred so Love is not known by external low or high conditions: Some may have Bread and no Love; and others Love, though they have no Bread. God can and will provide in due time. And what is it to thee, O Devil, if I am contented with the Will of God, and have meat to eat which thou knowest not of! Thus being strong in Faith by the Word of God abiding in them,

they overcome the wicked one, and will not question their Sonship because they are poor and low brought in this world.

## SECT. 2. A Continuation.

The Devils first Argument being invalidated, he takes up another of a far different aspect, and would now have Christ be as confident and presuming as before, he would have had him diffident and doubtful; and so deals he with the Young-men. Saith he, Matth. 4.6. If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down (from the Pinnacle) for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. That this Promise did belong to Christ in a special manner, is undoubtedly true; and the Devil perceiving how precious the written Word of God was to Christ Jesus, he fills his mouth with Scripture and a Promise, but leaves out the condition of it to which the protection is annexed; and that which he would cunningly insinuate amounts to this, q.d. If thou be the Son wilt thou not trust thy Fathers power and promise? Canst have better security than the power of a faithful God, and the Faith of a powerful God? Hath he not appointed thee a Life-guard of Angels to bear thee in their Arms, and wilt be afraid?

Thus he often sets on the Young-men; what need you be so solicitous and concerned for means, have you not Promises of teaching, protection, preservation, &c. What will you not trust your Father and take his Word? But as before, so now one Answer fits both: 'tis this, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Indeed to trust in means is to despise God, but to neglect means is to tempt God. There is no need of casting myself down, of making such daring attempts, for there is a way down, and the farthest way about is the nearest way home. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, i.e., thou shalt not go out of



his which is thy way, and wherein only is preservation promised. While there is an ordinary appointed way and means, I must not attempt nor presume on extraordinary; that were to inquire after Signs and Miracles, when there is no need of them, which is no less than to tempt God. Thou, O Devil, dost tempt me to tempt God, which is not the Genius of his Sons to do, though thou wouldst have me to do it under that name: no Satan no, though thou tempt me I will not the Lord my God by going out of my way and neglecting the means of his appointment.

### SECT. 3. A further Continuation.

Having been defeated in the way of dispute, the Devil takes another course and falls to offering of terms and making of Bargains; saith he, Matth. 4.9. All these things (the Kingdoms of the world and the glory of them) will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Here are fine and brave things, grandeur and gallantry; pleasure, prettiness and pomp; here are the lusts of the eye, the flesh and the pride of life, the things which the Young-men in the world are enamored of even to fondness and dotage: these are the things which the Alexanders and Julius Caesar's of this world, the Nimrods and hunters after glory pursue with might and main ambition; do but fall down and bow the knee to worship me, and all shall be thine. And this seems to be the Devils (Saera Anchora) last hope, if he cannot prevail this way he despairs; he hath choked many a forward and far-gone Professor (as the thorny ground hearers) with this bit and bait, as he did our first Parents even in innocence; and therefore St. John immediately after his having spoken to the Young-men, subjoins this, Love nor the world nor the things thereof, 1 Joh. 2.14, 15.

But let us hear the Answer from the Word of God, written not only in the Bible but in their hearts; Then Jesus (and the Young-man Saint)

saith unto him, Get thee hence Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, q.d. No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon, God and the Devil. God is too good a Master to be left, and the Devil too bad a one to be served. Get hence vile varlet, wretched caitiff, thou wicked one! Dost think I will leave Heaven for Hell, God for the Devil, the Kingdom and glory of God, for the Kingdoms and glory of this world, which is all but vanity and vexation of Spirit! Is God and Heaven, and my soul no more worth than this! Avaunt Devil, get hence for shame! Dost think I will sell my Soul for a paltry vanity, and become a Lover of that which will make me the enemy of my God, and make a God of mine enemy; no, no, avoid Satan and get hence.

Now after this the Devil leaves him and runs away; he cannot stand before the Word of God: if he be resisted (by being steadfast in the Faith) he will flee; and if he flee he is (for the present) conquered; and he is put to flight and conquered by the It is written, the Word of God abiding in power and efficacy in the Young-men; as he was by our Savior. Thus I have briefly shewn the parallel between the temptations which attended Christ and which attend the Young-men (after the witness of the Spirit concerning their Sonship) which are defeated and put to flight by the Word of God. The signs of this victory shall be shewn openly as in triumph in due time, but at present I shall speak to one and only to one temptation more, which assaults some of the little Children and the Young-men, and then proceed to prove the victory by the spoils which shall be brought forth as signs thereof.

SECT. 4. One Temptation more which they undergo and conquer too.

There is one Argument which the Devil could not make use of against Christ (who was without sin) but doth often make use of against the

little Children and Young-men too (if possible, to) make them call their Sonship into question: 'tis that they are not without sin, but do in many things offend either by doing evil, or omitting good, or by falling short of their duty and giving God the glory due to his name. Thou (saith the Devil) canst not be a Child of God, nor know him as a Father, for such do not commit sin nor can they; do but read 1 Joh. 3.4-10, and 5.18, and tell me what thou canst say to these things? If thou say thou sinnest not, I will prove it; if thou say thou hast no sin, thou dost lie and sinnest in saying so; and if thou sin, how canst thou say that thou art born of God, when the Scripture saith that he who is born of God doth not commit sin? This is a two-edged Sword, an Argument that cuts on both sides; it seems to put these poor souls to a Dilemma: but yet by the Word of God abiding in them, they defeat this also.

To this they Answer, 1. By following the example of Christ Jesus in opposing truly quoted and rightly understood Scripture, to the Scripture which is falsely quoted and misapplied (which latter is as bad as the former) the Devil wrests and so wrongs the Scripture (and knows it) though it be to his own confutation and confusion: they say (as our Savior did) again, It is written, and as the Devil knows that the seeming opposite Scriptures may be reconciled, so he cannot endure that they should be reconciled; he will rather be silent and answer nothing, as when Christ opposed his half quotation by a whole one. Thus then may the Young-man Answer; Satan, thou knowest that Abraham, Moses, David, &c. were born of God and had the witness of his Spirit that they were his Children, and yet were not without sin, but sinned after their new birth or conversion; and thou knowest that if we say (the we spoken of in the foregoing Verses, who had fellowship with God) if we say that we have not sinned (since conversion) we make him a liar and his Word is not in us, 1 Joh. 1.10. This the Devil either cannot or will not reconcile, though he knows

'tis reconcilable with the fore-alleged Texts, and therefore they are misapplied as to the case in hand and the persons concerned in this dispute. But,

2. Say the Young-men, the Texts which thou hast quoted, do not seem to speak of every or any sin in any degree, but of a special Sin, viz. hating or not loving of the Brethren, which they that are born of God cannot be guilty of, 1 Joh. 4.20, but thou knowest, Satan, and that to thy vexation, that I love the Brethren, and am past from Death to Life. To this purpose see what's said in the Treatise of Babes, in the Chapter of their love to the Brethren. Or else it may refer to the sin unto death, 1 Joh. 5.16, 17, 18. Yet,

3. If the Text may not be restrained to that, I can say further that I do not live in sin nor make a trade of sin as thou dost, I am no sin-maker as thou art: I sin not as they that are of thee who workest in the Children of disobedience that they may fulfil the lusts and wills of the flesh, Ephes. 2.1,—3, and of such (thou canst not deny but) the quoted Texts do speak.

4. I can say yet more in a true sense, as the Apostle doth, Rom. 7.15, —20, that 'tis not I (who am born of God) that sin, but sin that dwelleth in me: though I with my flesh may (alas that I do!) serve the Law of sin, yet thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, with the mind I myself do serve the Law of God, Rom. 7.25. There is therefore no condemnation to me who am in Christ Jesus, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8.8. Though I (wretch that I am!) may be sins Captive yet not its Subject that I should obey it in the lusts thereof; sin may domineer but hath no dominion over me, because I am not under the Law, but under Grace, Rom. 6.1, —18, thou Satan knowest that I am none of sins Servants! Beside,

5. I confess my sin and have my pardon, and what dost thou Satan say to this, or what canst thou say against it that God should forgive my sin? According to what is said in 1 Joh. 1.8, 9, have I not reason to be of good cheer (though by reason of thee my warfare is not accomplished, yet) God hath spoken to mine heart and said, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. 'It is not against thee that I have sinned, but against God (which goes most to my heart) and if God pardon me, what's that to thee? Is thine eye evil because God is good and gracious? May he not do (without thy leave) what he will with his own? Lastly,

6. Satan, to stop thy mouth, I have an Advocate with the Father (both his and mine) Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Propitiation for my sin, 1 Joh. 2.1, 2. Thou hast nothing to lay to the charge of God's Elect, for he justifies, Rom. 8.33. Canst thou condemn? Seeing Christ hath died, yea and is risen again (he died for our sin, and is risen for our Justification, Rom. 4.25.) yea he is at the right hand of God and appears in Heaven for us, and ever liveth to make Intercession for them that come to God by him, and so saves perfectly and to the utmost: what hast thou to say to this? Away Satan, for I have heard a voice, a loud voice saying from Heaven, Now is Salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of the Brethren is cast out, which accused them before our God day and night, but they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their Testimony, and loved not their lives unto the Death, Rev. 12.10, 11.

This shall suffice to have spoken to this thing, from whence a fair way is open to proceed in to show what is meant by their having overcome the wicked one: where I am to show what the notion of overcoming doth import, and in what sense and how far they have overcome the wicked one.

## CHAP. VI.

What is meant by their overcoming the wicked one.

To their being strong, and the Word of God abiding in them, this is added, that they have overcome the wicked one, viz. the Devil. That it is so, needs no proof, for St. John 's saying so is witness enough, And we know that his witness is true, Joh. 21.24. That therefore which we have to do is, 1. To show in what sense they have, And 2, how and how far they have overcome the wicked one.

To overcome is a word that is used in a Forensic and in a Military sense, as it refers to the Court and to the Camp, 'tis a Law term, and a term of War: in a legal or Court sense, 'tis to overcome by right and justification, to be cleared and justified as to any charge and indictment laid against them; to overcome in a Military sense, is to conquer by might, by dint of Sword; which in the School sense is to overcome by force of Argument. In the first sense to be cleared and justified is to overcome, as appears by comparing Psal. 51.4, with Rom. 3.4, in the Psalm 'tis that thou mayest be justified and cleared, in the Romans 'tis that thou mayest be justified and overcome: now in this sense not only the Young-men, but all the Saints are conquerors and do overcome, that is, there is no condemnation but justification to and for them, Rom. 8.1, with 33, 34,—38, 39, though they are condemned by men yet justified by God, as Christ was put to death in the flesh, but justified in and by the Spirit. Though the Devil, accuse yet Christ their Advocate pleads for and to their justification; and they are freed (in foro Dei) in God's Court, which is a relieving Chancery against the cruel Sentences of Common Law; so that nothing separates them from the Love of God in Christ. To this sense speaks also the 1 Cor. 15.57. 1 Joh. 5.18.

But in the Military sense 'tis that we are most specially to understand the conquest and overcoming spoken of these Young-men in our Text; they have overcome by mere strength of the word and Faith, so that they not only overcome him as justified from his charge and indictment, but overcome his temptations by dint of Sword, i.e., by strength of Argument from the Word abiding in them. If the Devil plead sin and guilt, they plead Christ and his satisfaction; if the Devil witness against them that they are not, they produce the witness of the Spirit that they are the Children of God, and so overcome him. So that the Young-man is a double conqueror, by right and might; by Word and Sword; at the Bar and in the Field; they overcome by strength of Faith or believing in Christ, or rather by the strength of Christ believed in. But then,

How and how far have they overcome? The Devil is not slain, he is in being still, and hath a power of tempting still; how then is it said, that they have overcome the wicked one? May not the Devil rally and recruit again? May he make no more onsets on the Young-men? To this some make Answer thus, that the Praeter Tense is put for the Future, q.d. you shall as certainly overcome as if you had overcome: while the Word of God abideth in you, you shall never be overcome, and so do overcome, and may be said to have overcome. So the called of God are said to be saved because they shall be saved, 1 Cor. 1.18, with 2 Tim. 1.9. So Christ is said to have, yea saith that he hath overcome the world, Joh. 16.33, when yet his conquest was not complete till his Resurrection and Ascension, nor is fully and wholly so till all his enemies be made his Footstool. So he saith, Joh. 17.4. I have finished the work thou hast given me to do, when as yet he had not died, which command he was to obey, having received it from his Father, Joh. 10.18. Many other places are spoken at this rate to denote the certainty of what shall be; 'tis said to be done because it shall be done. So say they here, the Young-men have overcome the

wicked one, i.e. they are to fight, and though the dispute be so hot and fierce, as that to a stander by it may be doubtful, whether the Young-men will overcome the Devil, or the Devil them, yet 'tis so sure that they shall overcome, that 'tis said they have overcome. But though this be often true and may be admitted as a truth here, yet I doubt not but there is a reality, and not only a figure in the speech, they have overcome: they are conquerors and have obtained victory already.

I shall therefore show how they may be said to have overcome the wicked one in the Scripture sense as to what is past, the encounters that have hitherto been between them. When the Devil is resisted he flees, and so is for the present conquered; as he fled from Christ and was conquered as so that battle, Jam. 4.7. 1 Pet. 5.9. He who attains to do that which he is exhorted to, attains that for which he exhorted to it: so that being exhorted to resist the Devil that he may flee, they find that when he is resisted he doth flee, and so is conquered for that season. Beside, they stand and keep their ground, which is a further expression of victory, they not only withstand, but stand, Ephes. 6.11, —13. Ephes. 4.27, and that this resistance and standing is by Faith, being strong in Faith, is clear from 1 Pet. 5.9. Ephes. 6.16, and thus by resisting, standing firm and maintaining their ground, they have hitherto overcome the wicked one.

The sum of it amounts to this, q.d. I write to you Young-men because ye are strong, and have overcome the wicked one, i.e. you have thus far, hitherto, to this day resisted and kept your ground and have not given place to the Devil, you have stood it out against all his wiles and subtleties, you have made him flee by the power of the Word of God which made you strong in Faith, the grace which is in Christ Jesus; and this your strength abides with you, as it did with Caleb, Josh. 14.11. So that if the Devil set on you anymore, you know how to



conquer by the same Word again. Go on thou mighty man in this thy might, for the Lord of Hosts is with thee, go on conquering and to conquer, go and prosper. Keep on your Armor, lay not aside your Sword nor your Shield, for perhaps the Devil will rally his scattered forces and fall on again. Or he is it may be preparing other kind of temptations for you, viz. sufferings and death as he did for Christ; but you (as he) shall rise again and live forever, and be where Satan hath had no place for some thousands of years, nor never shall anymore, viz. in Heaven; and by not loving your lives to the death, you conquer the Devil again, as Christ also did, Rev. 12.11. Heb. 2.14, 15. And thus I have evinced that the Young-men have overcome the wicked one and shall forever. I now pass on to the other things which relate to this victory, and then shall the Young-men triumph.

#### CHAP. VII, and VIII.

How the Word of God strengthens you, and how strength conduceth to the Victory.

Having already cleared the Young-man's victory to be by strength, and his strength to be from the Word of God abiding in him, I shall join these two Chapters or Heads together, and show therein how the Word of God conduceth to their strength, and how their strength conduceth to the victory.

As we should faint if we did not believe, Psal. 27.13, and that fainting would prove our strength of Faith to be but small, Prov. 24.10. So our Faith would faint were it not upheld and quickened by the Word of God: this I might evince from the several accounts I gave of the Word of God, and how it might be understood in the Text in relation to the Young-men's strength and victory; but I shall now consider it only in

the general, which will be applicable enough to each particular acceptation of it instanced in before. To this purpose 'tis not a little observable, how David (who was one of God's Worthies) doth celebrate the Word of God in relation to this very thing, especially in Psal. 119, he tells us, Vers. 9, that the Young-man clears and cleanseth his way by taking heed thereto according to God's Word; and therefore Ver. 11, he hid God's Word in his heart, that he might not sin against him, v. 25, he begs for quickening according to his Word, so again, Ver. 107, and 154, this was his comfort in his affliction that God's Word had quickened him, Ver. 50, and when his soul melted for heaviness he prays to be strengthened according to God's Word, Ver. 28. His Word was a light unto his path, and a lamp to his feet, Ver. 105. And he had wherewith to answer him that reproached him (the accuser of the Brethren) because he trusted in his Word, Vers. 41, 42. God was his hiding-place and Shield, for he hoped in his Word, Vers. 114, and prays that his steps may be ordered in his Word, to this end, that not any iniquity might have dominion over him. Ver. 133, with many other passages to this effect, to declare the usefulness of the Word of God for the strengthening of him.

The Word of God is true, yea 'tis truth; and (*magna est veritas & praevalabit*) truth is strong, stronger than the Devil who is a liar (and a lie is weak) 1 Joh. 4.4, now this Word of truth discovers the Devils devices, falsehoods, sophistries, methods, stratagems, and all his deceits: thus the Word of God strengthens (*removend prohibens*) by taking away lets, impediments; and hindrances such as are doubts and fears, distrusts and jealousies; that the soul is no longer under a Spirit of Bondage again to fear, Rom; 8.15. 2 Tim. 1.7, and withal it comes in with counsels, comforts and quickenings (as in the forequoted Psalm) all which are strengthening things. Thus their eyes being opened and enlightened (as Jonathan 's were) by tasting

this honey, they are strong for the battle; and by Faith they see (as the Prophet's man did) more for them than there are against them; and therefore faint not, especially while they look (as Moses did) to invisible things, 2 Cor. 4, 16, —18, and see a great recompense of reward, and all things co-working for their good and glory. As the sight and speech of a General doth often quicken and animate his Soldiers; so doth a believing sight of Jesus, Heb. 12.2, and his Word puts life and courage into them, Act. 27.23. 2 Tim. 4.16, 17. And Christ as he did cast out, so doth he conquer the Devil by his Word. Our own sayings and reasonings are weak & will not do it (as 'twas in the case of the Sons of Sceva, Act. 19.13, —16.) but when the Word of God speaks, 'tis effectual, and the Devil cannot stand before it. Again,

2. As the Word strengthens Faith, so strength of Faith conduceth to and obtains the victory; the reason is, because where Faith is, God is, and where God is, there is strength, and such as against which none can prevail. Hence had the Heroes and Martyrs (mentioned, Heb. 11.) all their success and victory. When Gideon had expressed but a little Faith (not without a mixture of doubting) yet saith the Angel to him, Go in this thy might, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty may of valor, Judges 6.12, —14. If God be with us, it matters not who be against us; hence 'tis that the Saints of God (some of them) have out-braved men, Devils, dangers and death, as you may see in these following places, which I refer to your perusal, Psal. 4.6. Isa. 8.9, 10. Micah 7.7, —9. 1 Cor. 15.55, 57. 2 Cor. 12.9, 10. So that Faith is of huge use for conquest, seeing the victory (as the Eagle her prey) a far off, and is sure of victory even in the midst of the battle, Rom. 8.37. Thus then we have seen how the Young-men overcome the wicked one; and how great this victory is I am now to discover.

## CHAP. IX.

### Setting forth the greatness of this Victory.

For the illustration and display of this victory how great it is, I shall only acquaint you with the formidableness of the enemy that is overcome; 'It is no puny, no petty pigmy that is conquered but a huge Giant, a man of war from his youth, who hath slain many a ten thousand in his time. 'It is an easy matter to tread a worm underfoot (and man is no more, or very little more, but flesh and blood, which is weak) but to tread Satan underfoot (the Prince of the Air, and God of this world; as some understand the 2 Cor. 4.4.) is a conquest with a witness, a signal one! To enter a City (such as Laish was) without Gates and bars is no great achievement; but to attack the Gates of Hell and to put the Devil to fly from his strong holds, is a miracle of Victory! Stronger is he that subdueth this Spirit (as well as his own) than he that takes a fenced City, Prov. 16.32.

Alexanders conquests, and Julius Caesar's *veni, vidi, vici*, were nothing to this: Jobs conquest excels them all. I might illustrate it by the types in the Wars of Israel, and instance especially in Amalek & Goliath, who were overcome by Joshua, Caleb and David, the Young-men Saints of their generation: but I shall wave that, and take a view of this great Turk, the Devil, in and under these five Considerations. 1. I shall consider him in his strength. 2. In his malice. 3. In his subtlety. 4. In his industry and unwearied pains-taking. 5. In his acquists and victories over many myriads: by all which it will appear how great and glorious this victory is.

1. Let us Consider him in his strength. He is the strong man and the strong man armed, and he that overcomes him needs be strong indeed, as 'tis expressed, Luke 11.21, 22. He is the roaring Lion, which notes both his strength and terribleness, 1 Pet. 5.8, and cannot

be resisted but by being strong in Faith, Vers. 9. Beside, they are legions, very many, and therefore are expressed in the plural number and by words that signify strength, Ephes. 6.12. Principalities, powers, spiritual wickedness's, and rulers of the darkness of this world, against whom we need go armed with the Armor of God, all the Armor of God and the power of his might, Ephes. 6.10, 11, 13. They are spoken of in the abstract, and as invisible and in the dark, which makes them so much the more terrible. And yet these principalities and powers are not able to effect their design, but over them the Young-men are more than conquerors, or as the word may be read, they do over-overcome, Rom. 8.37, 38, 39, therefore the victory is great and glorious.

2. Let us consider the Devil in his malice, revenge and envy. Who can stand before envy? He is the adversary, the envious one, Mat. 13.28, and from this envy and enmity is the accuser of the Brethren: and to be sure, malice will do its worst. He is <H&G> the reproacher and darter, and contrary to the Law of Arms he fights with poisoned Arrows, with fiery darts, which are set on fire of Hell, poisoned with the venom of envy and malice, Ephes. 6.16. His slanderous accusations are such as would burn up the Saints, were it not that the Shield of Faith doth quench them. He put God upon afflicting Job without a cause, he slandered Job, but Job 's Faith and patience overcame these fiery darts, which put him upon no less than to curse God; they were thrown to enflame his Spirit against God, but were quenched by Faith. Oh what a glorious victory 'tis to conquer envy and malice itself, whetted by revenge and enmity!

3. Let us consider him in his subtlety. He is not only strong and malicious (which doth strengthen his strength) but he is subtle too, which doth strengthen his malice. He is the subtle Serpent; and if he were so subtle, when he was but young, as to deceive Eve and Adam

in innocence, Gen. 3, with 2 Cor. 11.3, what is he now he is grown old? The old Serpent (which hath deceived the whole world in all Ages) Rev. 12.9,—11, he is improved in subtlety by long practice: he is a Proteus and Chameleon that can turn himself into any shape and color; rather than fail, he will (though he cannot endure the light) turn himself into an Angel of Light, and hath got the knack and faculty of speaking Scripture, he will cant in Scripture language, and fill his mouth full of good words and fair speeches to deceive. He goes about (<H&G>) to circumvent and get advantages by the (<H&G>) many devices which he hath, 2 Cor. 2.11, the many fetches and catches which he hath studied and practiced these many years. He hath windings and turnings, methods of wiles, he is an old Fox, hath arts and tricks not a few, Ephes. 6.11. He is a crafts-master; though an enemy, yet he pretends friendship and good will, 2 Cor. 11.2, 3. He will pretend himself much concerned for us, yea more than we are for ourselves (as he did at first) and as if he were troubled with scruples of conscience for our sakes, he will propound Queries, and ask us if we do not mistake God, and so take less liberty and enjoy less good, than God allows us, or at least than may be attained to, by but taking a step in the way that he will show us, that we may be God's forsooth; but he means such Elohim as himself and fellows, i.e. Devils. He hath lying wonders in readiness to ape God's true miracles, as in Egypt and Rome. He can juggle and play Legerdemain to purpose, 2 Thes. 2.9. In short, he is a deep Politician, for we read of the depths of Satan, Rev. 2.24. Now to conquer such an one requires strength, Ephes. 6.10, 11, and the Young-men are they who conquer him; and 'tis a great victory!

4. Let us consider him in his constant and unwearied industry: The Pharisees and Jesuits though very near of kin to him and well acquainted with him, and follow him (<H&G>) in compassing Sea and Land to make Proselytes, do yet fall short of him, for he is night

and day walking about seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. 5.8. He takes no rest in the night nor will suffer others to rest night or day. Now add this to the rest, his industry to his strength, malice and art, and it enhanceth the Victory not a little, I will mention but one thing more, and that is.

5. His conquests and victories which he hath obtained in all Ages; alas, how many have fallen down at his feet! He hath deceived and destroyed a world of men, Rev. 12.9. 1 Joh. 5.19. 2 Cor. 4.4. Jeh. 14.30. Ephes. 2.2, yet this Devil hath been defeated in his own Kingdom, even where his Throne was, and that by these Young-men, Rev. 2.13. And this victory is the more glorious, considering the advantages the Devil hath over us as a spirit thus qualified with strength, malice and art, thus fleshed with success. This shall suffice to have (by it) set forth the greatness of the Victory: I now proceed to show the signs and tokens of this Victory, and so make way for the Young-men's triumph.

## CHAP. X.

### The tokens and signs of the Victory.

Perhaps some will be apt to say, That this is but a Romantic story, a kind of Knight-Errantry, 'tis but for talk and discourse, where are the erected Pillars, and the trophies of honor that should witness the Victory? Where is Goliath's sword and head? Where are the spoils and the booty, the signs of their victory? But hear ye despisers and wonder, for we have not brought to you a fiction or a cunningly devised fable, but words of truth and power, as shall be yet further evinced. And seeing we have formerly paralleled the Temptations which Christ did and these Young-men also did undergo and conquer

after the witness of the Spirit received, we shall now parallel the signs and tokens of their respective victories.

When our Savior was tempted and the Devils thrust put by and his argument defeated, he wholly waves the assuming of it, and shifts his ground as not able to stand upon it nor to it; which is one sign of his being so far conquered. He attempts the second time another way but with no better success, and therefore sounds a parle and comes to treat; which is another sign that his Forces failed him: when he can do no good (no evil) this way neither, he doth not only retreat but run away ashamed, as one that flees in Battle, as 'tis said of them, a Sam. 19.3, so that the field was left to Christ Jesus, and thereupon the Angels came and ministered to him, i.e. did him homage as to a great conqueror, singing and celebrating his praise, as we have cause to believe. After this our Savior went in the power of the Spirit (into Galilee ) like a conqueror that had won the day and night go where he would, as 'tis remarked concerning him, Luke 4.14, 15. Though the Devil attempted to invalidate the witness of the Spirit, yet he went in the power of the Spirit and that Testimony ever after, it being not at all weakened by the encounter: but went up and down teaching his Gospel and giving forth his Laws, yea delivering Captives, &c. as it follows, Vers. 18. See Luk. 11.22. But it seems the Devil departed but for a season, for he came again, Joh. 14.30. 'tis true: but pray observe that he never attempted with the former weapons again, never disputed Christ's Sonship again; but falls to down-right persecution without finding anything in Christ whereof to accuse, or wherefore to condemn him; as the Devils own Judge (even Pilate himself) declares in open Court, once & again. But here also Christ was too hard for him, for though the Devil bruised his heel, yet Christ brake the Devils head, according to the first Promise, Gen. 3.15, by dying he did destroy him that had the power of death, viz. the Devil, Heb. 2.14, and accordingly keeps the Keys to this day, Rev. 1.18, so that the



Devil was hugely out in his Politics, and was never so much defeated (as now) since he was a Devil: for when Christ was Crucified he spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them, Col. 2.14, 15. So that now the Saints need not fear either Law, Death or Devil, Heb. 2.14, 15.1 Cor. 15.55,—57. Yet further, our Savior not only rose from the dead (and so was declared to be the Son of God) with a (non obstante) notwithstanding the Devils guard kept the Sepulcher; but he ascended on high and rid in triumph through the Devils principality (the Air, of which he is Prince) and as the Devil could not hinder him from ascending to the Father, so nor his gifts from descending on men (another token of his victory and triumph) then, then 'twas that he led Captivity Captive, Ephes. 4.8, 9.

I might now draw resembling tokens of the Victory of our Youngmen, the Armor-bearers of Christ, who slay after him: but I shall not stay to show these parallels which may easily be observed by the Reader, I will produce only some as evidences of their Victory. They stand firm and fixed and lose no ground nor strength, for ye are strong, saith the Text, and the Word of God abideth in you after this war, and in the power of the Spirit and his Word of witness, they (as our Savior did) go about their work and employment, finishing that (as he did) which the Father hath given them to do, and so glorify him on earth. The very Angels become ministering Spirits to them, Heb. 1, ult. They have their journals to show how and where they conquered; his broken weapons and defeated arguments they carry away as spoils, and come out of the Battle enriched with experiences; which (with their Prayers to God for them) they distribute as so many gifts unto their Brethren, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1.4, —6, and these are no small signs of their hitherto victory, not to mention the Devils flight. As to what may be hereafter, the (<H&G>) the sufferings which attend them from the envy of a defeated Devil, these also they overcome by not loving their lives, but being faithful to the death,

Rev. 12.11, and 2.10, none of these things move them, Acts 20.23, 24, for in (as well as after) these things they are more than conquerors, Rom. 8.36, 37. They are of so great and noble Souls and spirits, that they accept not deliverance, but expect and shall obtain a better Resurrection, Heb. 11.35. And this perseverance to the end is often called overcoming, in the Epistles to the Seven Churches. I now go on to show the conclusion of the whole matter, viz. the issue and success of the Victory, as to their after frames and Conversations.

## CHAP. XI.

The result of the Victory as to their frames and Conversations.

Besides what flows from their having the witness of the Spirit, which is the same with that of the little Children, of which before; there is a further influence from this victory, which almost doubles their joy, love and obedience, it being another witness (as it were) or a confirmation of the former, an assured assurance.

1. It fills them with joy and rejoicing in the Lord, that of him they make their boast and to him they give the glory all the day long. They rejoice not only as the Disciples did, that the Devils are subject to them, but that their names are written in the Book of Life, Luke 10.17. They triumph in the praises of God, and say, Thanks be to God who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. When they erect an Altar, the name and Motto is, Jehovah Nissi, the Lord my Banner, and the Lord my strength; 'twas he that taught me to fight and gave me the victory: Not to us, not to us, but to thy name be all the glory. They set up their Eben-Ezer, saying, Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. They rejoice in the Salvation of God, and in the name of their God they set up their Banners. They glory not in riches nor

strength, but in the Lord. In fine, I may tell you that they sing the 18. Psalm.

2. The Lord having given them rest and settlement (which is the consequent and effect of victory) they do not only rejoice and sing songs; but they study what to return to the Lord for all his benefits; they dedicate all the spoils to God; they study (as David did) to build an house for God, and lay up all they can as a preparation for it: they have friendship with Hiram (the high Life) if I may allude or allegorize, that he may assist in this great work, and they may live above where the way of life is to them that are wise, that their affections and conversation also may be in Heaven. They Court not the Delilah's of this worlds pleasure (as too many Samson -like conquerors do) nor turn Laplins to lust after their great successes; but study to walk with God and to please him, yea therein to abound more and more till they walk worthy of him to all well-pleasing. They put not God off with words and a Song, and then forget his works; but they give and live thanks to God, the fruit of their lips and of their lives.

3. They are exceeding humble and lowly towards their weak Brethren; they dare not Lord it over the Lord's inheritance (their Brethren) though but Babes: but they give them their helping hand, and communicate their experience to them for their relief and assistance, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1.4, 6. If any be overtaken they endeavor to restore him with a Spirit of meekness: for these Soldiers are not proud like others and lifted up, but being spiritual they know tenderness, and are acquainted with the heart of tempted ones, having been tempted themselves; and so are conformable to their great High Priest and Captain-General of their faith and victory, which to brave Soldiers is always an obligation to meekness and moderation, not a spur to ambition, nor a stirrup to pride. Yea

though some Babes are apt to envy their attainment and glory, yet they pity them and bear (as well as bear with) their infirmities.

4. They keep Sentinel and strict watch, standing and walking in their Armor (that of God) always: they turn not their Swords into Plow-Shears, nor their Spears into pruning hooks, as if all were over, but they watch because of their adversary the Devil, and keep strong guards, not knowing but that the Devil may fall on again; they are not secure, nor do they lay by their weapons, as if they should know war no more.

5. From the experiences they have had they take courage and good heart of grace to trust in God for the future, not in their Sword or in their Bow (though it like Josephs abide in strength). Though some Young-men faint and Youths fail (by reason of presumption) yet these wait on the Lord and renew their strength, they mount up with wings as Eagles, they run and are not weary, they walk and faint not, Isa. 40.30, 31. They look on past deliverances as earnest of and security for future deliverances, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 1.10.2 Tim. 4.17, 18.

6. They entangle not themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may please him who hath chosen them to be Soldiers, 2 Tim. 2.4. They live above the lusts of the eye, the lusts of the flesh and pride of life, the love of these things being inconsistent with the love of God: they make Moses his choice, being come to Age as he was, Heb. 11.24, —27. They (as 'tis said of Themistocles) will not stoop to take up (much less to take up with) these things which are below; this earth is for their feet to tread on, and not to set their hearts on; no, no, this is the victory whereby they overcome the world, even their Faith, which looks to higher and better things than this world hath any, 1 Job. 5.4, 5. These charming and bewitching things have no

power over them, but they go on from strength to strength till they appear before God in Zion, and say with David, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, there is none on earth that I can desire in comparison of thee, Psal. 73.25.

I have thus briefly gone over the things intended and promised as to this Classis of Saints, the Young-men; in relation to which (as to the former also) I have endeavored to set out their conditions (not by guess and conjecture, but) as they are represented in the Scripture, and have chosen to wave speaking to other things, as intermissions, desertions, &c. which our text did not at all lead us, nor hint us to take notice of. I shall shut up all with the Application proper to this Subject, which speaks first to the little Children to prepare for this War, and to the Young-men to make good what is said of them, viz. that they are strong, &c.

## CHAP. XII.

### The Application.

1. As for you little Children who have lived hitherto in the Fathers house and lain in his bosom, enjoying his love without doubts or disputes, let me bespeak you to look for and to prepare for temptations: Satan makes challenges and desires to winnow and sift you (as he did Job and Peter, &c.) Luke 22.31. Therefore watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation, and beg of God either not to lead you into temptation; or if he will and do (as the Spirit did Christ Jesus) that he will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but that he will deliver you from the evil, or the evil one. Tell your Father that you have heard what a potent and subtle adversary the Devil is, and that he throws fiery darts to inflame the hearts of God's

Children against their Father, and tempts them to worship Devils; which are such horrid things, as you would not willingly be acquainted with; but if as he hath glorified his name, so he will glorify it again, then say, Father, thy Will be done (as your Savior did) and conclude that your Father will not leave you nor forsake you, that you should be a prey to this mighty, and a captive to this strong one. If you should any of you be called out to this War, take these encouragements for your help.

1. The cause is good, called the good fight of Faith (*libertas agitur; pro aris & focus*) the Devil would turn you out of house and home, and deprive you of your right and title to Heaven; 'tis about heavenly things this dispute, Ephes. 6.12, and whether ye be the Sons of God or no? In other wars the cause is none of the best, nay many times very bad; but this is clear and without exception, that we should fight against the Devil (and all his works) which wars against our comforts, souls and happiness. Fear not then but fight, for your Cause is good and just. 'It is to defend your own rights and liberties.

2. The Battle is the Lord's; this Goliath desires not only Israel but the living God; in calling your title into question, he calls the truth of God and the witness of his Spirt into question, so that God is engaged with you, and will plead his as well as your Cause, and will be jealous for his name and for his people: you fight for God, and therefore God will fight for you. As you may be said to help the Lord against the mighty, so the Lord will help you against their might: This day (saith David to Goliath ) will the Lord deliver thee into my hands, for the Battle it the Lord's, 1 Sam. 17.46, 47. If the Lord be with us, it matters not who be against us, the gates (power and policy) of Hell shall not prevail: no, not Death itself; for that Grotius understands by the gates of Hell.

3. You fight under such a Captain-General (Jesus Christ) as never turned his back, was never foiled, but went always on conquering and to conquer. Nil desperandum, Christo duce & auspice Christo, Look to Jesus who is the leader and bringer up, the Author and will be the finisher of your Faith, Heb. 12.2, 3. This great Commander doth not say (ite but venite) go and fight, but follow me: and 'tis always an huge encouragement to bear Arms and fight under the conduct of a successful General.

4. You are to fight with an enemy that hath been conquered by Christ Jesus, and by many of your Brethren: the Devil is not so dreadful as he was before Christ died, Heb. 2.14, 15. The Prince of peace hath conquered the King of terrors; and many of your Brethren have confuted and defeated him many times. 'It is true his wiles are his worst weapons, and his wit is more than his might, yet 'tis true his ill-will and malice is more than his wit, and he hath been befooled many a time notwithstanding all his cunning devices, and put to shame for his malicious lying, as in Jobs case and many others.

5. You are provided with Armor of proof (Armor of God's making as well as of God's appointing) and 'tis such as there is none such, none like it. You have the same Sword that Jesus Christ, and the Young-men your Brethren have conquered the Devil by; and the same Shield of Faith to quench his fiery darts with; this Armor is mighty through God, 2 Cor. 10.3.

6. God will take care for your pay, you shall not war at your own charges, 1 Cor. 9.7, beside the glory of overcoming, you shall have a Crown of glory after you have overcome, 2 Tim. 4.7, 8. To him that overcometh God will give honor, for they that honor him he will honor; their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15.58.

7. God hath promised you success and Victory (*certus enim Promisit Apollo*) he will tread Saran under your feet shortly, Rom. 16.20. He shall be cast out, and you shall overcome him, Rev. 12.9, 10, 11. Read the 41, of Isaiah, from the eighth to the seventeenth Verse, that through the comfort of that, as other Scriptures also (written for our consolation) you may have hope and strong consolation.

Well then, be strong in the Lord and the power of his might, for by no other strength do any or can you prevail: though it be said that by strength shall no man prevail, yet by strength do all men prevail, 'tis an Orthodox Paradox. By strength no man nor Devil shall or can prevail against God, 1 Sam. 2.8, —10. Let no man therefore provoke the Lord to jealousy, for he hath no match, he is stronger than all, and none shall take his Saints out of his hand; whoever fought against God and prospered? But there is a strength of Faith and Prayer (like Jacob's) by which some prevail with God, and they are Princes the true Israelites, Hos. 12.3, 4, with Gen. 32.24, —28. When God yields we prevail with him; and when we yield not but are strong in the Lord, resisting the Devil, we prevail over him. 'It is by no strength but by Christ strengthening us that we can do all things, Phil. 4.13. 'It is not by strength of wit or reason, not by strength of hands or legs, or strength of our Spirit and courage, but by the strength of God, of his Word, Grace and Spirit abiding in us that we prevail.

2. As to the Young-men, I have no more to say but to exhort them to make good what hath been said of them in all particulars. Make it appear that you are strong, that the Word of God abideth in you, that you have overcome the evil one, which will prove that God is your God and Father, Rev. 21.7, and that none shall separate you from the Love of God in Christ, Rom. 8, ult. show the tokens and signs of your Victory, let the dispositions and conversations of Young-men be



apparent in your lives, holding forth the Word of Life and power in the works of your lives; that so you may grow up to be Fathers in Israel and gray-haired in righteousness, which will be to you a Crown of glory, as strength was your glory while you were Young-men. Live and thrive like them that eat, digest and concoct strong meat (that feed on the eternal Love of God, and the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ) which belongs to the little Children, to you and to the Fathers, who (all in your several measures) by reason of use (or habit) have your senses exercised to discern between good and evil, Heb. 5.14.

## **THE FOURTH CLASSIS, OR, FATHERS IN ISRAEL.**

From 1 John 2.13, 14.

Vers. 13. I write unto you, Fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.—

Vers. 14. I have written to you, Fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.—

The Fathers, it seems (if I may adventure to say anything of them) are usually such for Age as well as attainments, the Ancients and Elders of Israel, whose gray hairs are wise and found in the way, and filled with the fruits of righteousness, which is their Crown of Glory. The Word of God dwells richly in them in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in sense, experience and judgment, by which they discern persons and things that differ. They are <H&G> and <H&G>

spiritual and perfect in the third and superlative degree. They have gone through all the former States and Degrees, having (like Enoch) a continual intercourse and conversation with, as well as knowledge of him that is from the beginning from the first to last: and by reason of this their knowledge and experimental wisdom, Jam. 3.17, 18, they are able to speak to all the Cases of Conscience (and the various dispensations) which belong to the whole Christian course: they can divide the Word aright and speak words suitable (and in season) to all; giving everyone their portion. They bring out of their treasures things new and old; they know how to speak to the saint and weary, to the broken-hearted, and them that are cast down, to the deserted and tempted ones, knowing also how to discern between form and power, hypocrisy and sincerity, pretensions and realities, &c But—*Haec desiderantur*. Of this State let days speak, and multitude of years teach this wisdom, Job 32.7. I am but few of days and durst not show you mine opinion (that I may borrow more of Elihu's words) in relation to this State, beyond what I have now hinted in the general. To conclude therefore, my design being to help Christians to discover their States, attainments and growths, I shall to all that hath been said add but a few things more to further this design.

1. That a Christian may know his state, in what Classis and Degree he is. As it may be known whether in the Faith, 2 Cor. 13.5. So it may be known how far a man hath proceeded in the Faith. For though there may be some *Heteroclita* (*quae genus & flexum variant*) some random-Saints, if I may so speak, that are not fixed but fleeting; yet these also may be reduced (as to their state in general) to one or other Classis for the most part.

2. 'It is a great advantage (in many respects) to know where one is: to know ones place, rank and station: as 'tis for a Servant in a Family, or a Soldier in an Army. They that know not what their work is, know

not how to do their work; but if we know our station, our work (both what and how to be done) is clear before us, and we may up and be doing.

3. Though a Saint should be content with his present state, yet but for the present; he should desire and pray, breath and pant, he should hunger and thirst, endeavor and labor after progress and preferment. Though he should not forget to bless God for, yet he should forget (what is behind) to rest in, what he hath; and not think that he hath attained so much, or were already so perfect, as if there were no more to be attained; reaching and pressing forward (as Paul did) is the duty of all, till they attain to the Resurrection of the Dead. There's no state on earth so satisfying as should take a man off from looking & hastening to the coming of Christ, that we may be always with him and altogether like him, Phil 1.23. 1 Job. 3.2. 2 Pet. 3.11, — 13. The good and bad things and conditions in this world call upon us to long to be above in Heaven; For, if it be bad to be here, 'tis good to be there; if it be good to be here, 'tis better to be there, to be sure: though we may have enough sometime to say, 'It is good to be here, yet we have never enough to say, 'It is best to be here.

4. We should all take heed and beware that we do not place our growth and advance, only in knowledge (head and Book learning) nor only in gifts and parts, nor only in common graces; no, nor in going from one opinion to another, or one form of Church-Government to another, from one profession to another; this I fear hath been a great mistake, as if it were a going on to, when (alas! if this be all!) 'tis a going from perfection: for to be tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine, is but babish, Ephes. 4.13, —16. Alas! What is it to be Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, &c. our Religion lies not, much less our perfection, in these or any other opinions, and forms of Government. I doubt not but there are Saints

in all these Forms, yet withal I believe and affirm that none of these Forms make them Saints; a man may be in any of these and yet be but a Babe, yea and not be a Babe but carnal. This is but like them that go up and down the Streets of London, crying, Old Satan and ends of Gold and Silver, by which they never grow rich, nor get any considerable estate.

5. We should be as careful to mind and discharge the duties as to enjoy the privileges and dignities of our state; and mind not only to be in Christ but to walk in him and as he walked. Study commands as well as promises, and look after light that ye may walk in the light; for if we walk in the light (as children of light) we have fellowship one with another (i.e., God and we have.) Thus as God glorifies us, we glorify him, for which we should have a great ambition; yea, and to let our light so shine before men, that they also may glorify our Father which is in Heaven, Matth. 5.13, —16. Let us live in love, and truth it in love, for oh how good and pleasant a thing it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity! Let us not be like Ephraim and Judah, to envy and vex, to bite and devour one another; but love one another with a pure heart fervently. In fine, let us make it our business (and our pleasure too) to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior, and to walk worthy of God to all-well-pleasing: to which end, Let us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that to him (and to the Father by him) there may be thanks and glory given, both now and forever. Amen.

FINIS.

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