

do not work: But you must burn in Hell, if with fear and diligence you *work not out your own salvation*, Phil. 2. 12. (for all that it is God that worketh in you). You must lie in prison if your debts be not paid: But you will be cast into outer darkness, if by the pardon of your sins, you be not discharged from your debt to God. You may become beggars if you be idle in your Callings: But you will be the prisoners of Hell, and shut out of all the Happiness of the Saints, if you labour not for the food that doth not perish, and strive not to enter in at the strait gate, and give not diligence to make your Calling and Election sure. John 6. 27. Matth. 7. 13. Luke 13. 24. 2 Pet. 1. 10. You must suffer hunger and nakedness, if you have not food and rayment: But you must suffer everlastingly the wrath of God, if you have not the *One thing necessary*. You will be the scorn and laughing-stock of men, if you fall under their contempt and lose your honour: But you will be the enemies of God, and hated by him, if you continue to contemn his grace.

O had you but seen the Life to come, you would say, There is a *Necessity* of attaining it! Had you been one hour in Hell, you would think that there is a *Necessity* of escaping it, and that there is no *Necessity* to this.

What say you to all this? Is it not of *Truth* and *Weight*? Can you *deny* it? Or should you *make light* of it? None but an *Infidel* can *deny* it; and none but a dead-hearted sinner can make light of it. Believe the Word of God, and the *Truth* of it will be past question with you: Consider but that you are *men* that have *immortal souls*; and the *weight* of it will appear inestimable to you; above contempt; above neglect. Believe it Sirs, you may as well see without light, and breath without air, and be supported without earth, or live without food, as be saved without *Holiness*, or happy without the *One thing necessary*. Heb. 12. 14. John 3. 3, 5. Matth. 18. 3. And when this is resolved of by God, and stablished as his standing Law, and he hath told it you so oft and plainly, for any man now to say, [*I will yet hope for better; I hope to be saved on easier terms, without all this ado*] is no better then to set his face against the God of heaven, and instead of believing God, to believe the contradiction of his own ungodly heart; and to hope to be saved whether God will or not; and to give the lie to his Creator, under the pretence of *trust*, and *hope*: It is indeed to *hope for impossibilities*: To be saved



saved without *Holiness*, is to see without eyes, and to live without life: And who is so foolish as to *hope* for this? Few of you are so unreasonable as to hope for a crop at harvest, without plowing or sowing; or for a house without building; or for strength without eating and drinking; or to sleep and play, when you have nothing to maintain your families, and say, You hope that God will maintain both you and them. And yet this were a far wiser kind of *hope*, then to *hope* to be saved without the *One thing necessary* to salvation; and without a heart that is set upon it, and a life that is imployed for it. It is the Holy Ghost that calleth you to answer the question, *Heb. 2. 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* If you know how, then enter the lists with God, and dispute the case with him: How will you escape, if you be neglecters of the *Only way* that he hath provided for your escape? Is there any device or shift of wit, that can procure your escape? Is there any power or interest of men or Angels that can procure your escape? How can that be done, that God hath resolved shall not be?

I beseech you now, beloved Hearers, to remember this urgent motive of *Necessity*, and use it when you are tempted to delay or trifle about the business of your salvation, as if it were some indifferent needless thing. Without worldly Riches you may be rich in faith: Without worldly honours, you may have the honour of being the sons of God: and without worldly pleasures, or health, or life, you may have the favour of God and Life eternal: But without the *One thing needful*, you have nothing that is durably or satisfactorily good, but are undone for ever. Without the things of the world, you will live in want for a little while, and then you will be equal to the greatest Princes: But without *this One thing*, you must live in endless woe and misery, and be far worse then the basest prisoner in the Dungeon, or than the toades and vermine that lie in the uncleanest holes or sinks of the earth. And yet dare you delay another day before you make so Necessary a change? You have hearts of stone, if your *Own Necessity* thus urged upon your Consideration will not awake you. If your hearts were not dead within you, while you hear these things, one would think *such a Necessity* should make you feel, and resolve upon a speedy change, and make you stir in the diligent performance. Can you go on in security, in negligence and worldliness, when you hear of your *Necessity*, that you

*must*



*must* change, or you are lost for ever? O stupid souls, that will not be moved with *Necessity* of everlasting consequence! O what hath God, or Christ, or heaven, or holiness, done against these men, that will rather lie in Hell for ever, then they will live in the love and service of this God, and in the practice of holiness, and in the hopes of Heaven! How meet are they for Hell, that will venture upon it deliberately and upon choice, to scape the trouble of living in the holy Love, delight and service of the ever blessed God? that is, to scape the trouble of Heaven. Is it so great a sin to shut up the bowels of compassion against our brother in his need? 1 *John* 3. 17. And is it not more unnatural to deny compassion to your selves in your own necessity? and in the greatest necessity? O poor sinners, remember your *Necessities*! Your own, your great, your absolute *Necessities*: When you hear men that gather alms cry [ *Remember the poor* ] doth it make thee think [ *What a poor necessitous soul have I to remember?* ] As *Paul* saith of Preaching to others, I may say much mote to you, of minding and practising this great work of your salvation [ *Necessity is laid upon you, and woe to you if you do it not.* ] 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. Woe to you that ever you were born, and that ever you were reasonable creatures, or rather, that ever you so abused your Reason, if you neglect and mis of the One thing necessary.

I know you have other wants to be supplied, and other matters to look after in the world: But alas, how small are they! God will supply all your other wants, if you will first and faithfully look after this. *Phil.* 4. 19. *Matth.* 6. 33. 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. Or if life and all go, you will find all in heaven: But if you mis of this One thing, nothing in the world can make supply, or do you good. And though now your *feeling* tell you not these things, alas how quickly will God make you *feel*, and teach you by that sensible way that you would needs be taught by?

Awake then you sluggish careless souls! Your house over your heads is on a flame! The hand of God is lifted up! If you love your selves, prevent the stroke: Vengeance is at your backs. The wrath of God pursueth your sin; and woe to you if he find it upon you when he overtaketh you: Away with it speedily: Up and be gone, return to God; make Christ and mercy your friend in time, if you love your lives. The Judge is coming, for all that you have heard of it so long, till you believe it not: You shall



shall shortly see the Majesty of his appearance, and the dreadful glory of his face; and yet do you not begin to look about you, and to make ready for such a day? Yea, before that day, your separated souls shall begin to reap as you have sowed here. Though now the partition that stands between you and the world to come, do keep unbelievers strange to the things that most concern them; yet Death will quickly find a Portal to let you in; and then sinners you will find such doings there, as you little thought of, or at least did sensibly regard on earth. Before your Corpse can be wrapt up in your Winding-sheets, you will see and feel that which will tell you to the quick, that *One thing was necessary*. If you do die without this *One thing Necessary*, before your friends can have finished your funerals, your souls will have taken up their places among the Devils in endless torment and despair: and all the wealth, and honour, and pleasure, that the world afforded you, will not ease you. This is sad, but it is *true*, Sirs, for God hath spoken it.

Up therefore and bestir you for the life of your souls. *Necessity* will awake the sluggard. *Necessity* we say, will break stone walls: The proudest will stoop when they perceive *Necessity*. The most sloathful will bestir them when they feel *Necessity*. The most careless will look about them and be industrious in *Necessity*. *Necessity* is called the *Tyrant* of the world, that can make men do any thing that is possible to be done. And yet cannot *Necessity* make you cast away your sins, and take up a Holy and Heavenly life? *Necessity* will make men fare hard, and work hard, and travel hard, and go bare, and suffer much; yea it will even cut off a leg or an arm to save their lives: And yet can it not prevail with reasonable creatures, to cast away the poison of a fruitless, filthy, deceitful sin? and to be up and doing for their salvation! O poor souls! Is there, think you, a greater *Necessity* of your *sin* then of your *salvation*? and of pleasing your flesh for a little time, then of pleasing the Lord, and escaping everlasting misery? I beseech you consider your own *Necessities*.

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2. **C**onsider also, that, *It is but One thing which God hath made Necessary for you*. And I shewed you before, how that the means themselves though they are many, have a certain unity  
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in their harmony and connexion, and as they center in the ultimate end, which is *One*. If God had sent you upon such a multitude of errands as the flesh and the world doth; and set you on such disagreeing contrary works, then you had been excusable, if you had neglected some of them: But he hath sent you but upon *One* errand, even to seek and make sure of everlasting life; and therefore if you neglect *this One*, you are unexcusable. If the world be divided into a thousand opinions, or go a thousand several ways, they may thank themselves who are the Authors of this confusion; but God is no cause of it, or friend to it. He hath made them but *One work*, and set them but *One way* to heaven, and given them *One Master*, Jesus Christ, to *teach* that way; and written but *One Law*, even his holy Scripture, to be their sure and constant guide: And if men would stick to this *One Master*, and not make *flesh and blood* their master, or the *multitude* their master, or the *Rulers* of the world, or the *custom* of their *fore-fathers* the master of their faith: and if they would stick to this *One Word* of God, and not run after the *Traditions* of men, they would not be in such a maze, nor of so many minds as now they are: But they do in their doctrines as they do in their practice: God hath marked them out but *One way* in the holy Scripture, which is the *good* and the *sure way*, the way that *Peter* and *Paul* and the rest of the Apostles went to heaven in, and *this way* will not serve mens turns, but they will run an hundred waies instead of *this One*: and they must make *new ways* which the Apostles of Christ were never acquainted with.

If God had loaded your *memories* with *many things*, you might possibly have said [ *We cannot remember them all* ] but he hath set you *finally* but one thing to remember, even to lay hold on everlasting life, and press on to the Crown that is set before you; and he hath an ill memory that cannot remember *One thing*, and such a thing as this is too.

It may be you are *Ignorant* and cannot learn *many things*; but God hath set you but *this One thing* to learn as of *Absolute Necessity*: And he is dull indeed that cannot learn *one thing*, and such a thing too. If you cannot understand the depths of Sciences, nor reach the height of learning that others do attain, yet learn this *One thing*, to know God in the Redeemer; and if you know this, you know all. *Paul* was not only contented with this knowledge, but resolved to know nothing else but *Christ and him crucified*; that



is, Nothing that is *wholly alien* to this : Nothing but what doth keep its *due subordination* to this, and so may be reduced to the knowledge of Christ, 1 Cor. 2. 2. He would not own any other knowledge as *knowledge*, but disclaimeth it as *Ignorance* and *Foolishness*, though it seemed wisdom in the eyes of the world, 1 Cor. 3. 19. This *seeming knowledge* and *wisdom* of the world, that is totally disjunct from Christ, is part of the [ *all* ] that we must sell to buy the Pearl, if we will obtain it. *Matth.* 13. 46. and part of the [ *all things* ] which Paul accounted *dung and loss*, that he might win Christ and be found in him. *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. For they that know not this *One thing*, know nothing, whatsoever they may seem to know : and they that would go *beyond* the knowledge of Christ, and think it too low for them, and trouble their brains and the Church with their speculations, they do not know indeed, but *dream*. And if they would see their faces in the glass of Scripture. 1 Tim. 6. 4. They are *prond knowing nothing*, but *doating about Questions and strifes of words* ; whence cometh *envy, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth.*

Moreover, if your *strength* be so small that it will not suffice for every thing, at least you should lay it out on this *One thing*.

Your *time*, I know, is small, your *lives* are short, and therefore you may say, *We have not time for many things* ; but when you have but *One thing* given you to do, that must be done, you may sure find time for *this* for which you have your time.

If you set your servant to work, and bid him be sure to do *one thing*, whatever else he do, you will not take it well if *that one* shall be neglected. If you send him on an errand, and bid him be sure to remember *one thing*, whatsoever he forget, you will not take it well if he forget *that one*. If you trust him but with *one thing*, and bid him be sure to keep that one, you will not take it well if that be lost ; especially if he wilfully throw it away.

O consider, Whether this be not your case. God hath sent you into this world but on *one errand*, even to make sure of everlasting life, and will you neglect *that one* ? He hath trusted you with *one thing*, and will you cast away that one ? He hath given you *one lesson* to learn, even to please him and to save your souls, and will you not learn and remember *that one* ? If you had for-



got your food and raiment, or forgot the houses you dwell in, it had been a small matter in comparison : but to forget that *one work* that must be done, that *one friend* that you must alwayes trust to, that *one place* that you must live in for ever, this is most unreasonable ; and when you have recovered your understanding, you shall confess it to be so.

3. **C**onsider further, that this *one thing is that good part* : You see it is here called so. [*Mary hath chosen that good part*] Other things *seem good to sense*, and to *perverted reason* that is blinded by sense ; but this is it that seemeth *good to reason* illuminated by the spirit of Faith. Other things *seem good for a while*, but this is *that good* that will *still be good*.

I may not only say, that the Good of other things is *small* in comparison of this, but that it is *nothing* at all, but as it is *related* unto this. This is *that good* that makes all things else good that are good. As they come from God, and reveal God to us, and lead us up to God, and are means to this eternal life, so they are *good* ; but otherwise there is no goodness in them.

And therefore, seeing that *Goodness* is naturally the object of mans will, one would think you should quickly be resolved of your choice. *Sensual good*, is but a *nominal good*, if it reach not higher. All that you hunt after so eagerly in the world, is nothing but real vanity and vexation, a shadow of good, a picture of profit, a dream of delight, which one frown of God will turn into astonishing horror and despair. Like a tender flowre that is nipt with one frosty night, or withered with one scorching day ; but it is only this one thing, that is the solid, substantial, and enduring good. The pleasure of the flesh is a *good* that is common to men with brutes ; *They* can eat, and drink, and play, and satisfie their lusts, and master one another as well as you. But it is the *spiritual good* that is proper to a reasonable creature. The pleasure of the flesh may melt you into foolish mirth, and make you like drunken men, that are gallant fellows in their own eyes, while sober men are ashamed of them, or pitty them, or they become a laughing-stock to others. But it is *this One thing* only which is *that Good* which *wisdom* it self will *justifie*. A man that is *rickled* may *laugh* more then he that is possessed of a Kingdom, or hath the desires of his heart ; but he is not therefore to be ac-



counted the *happier man*, nor will any wise man so account him. Oh Sirs, one would think, that to men that have read and heard what we have done, and have had that experience which we have had, these things should be plain and past all question; and that spiritual, heavenly, everlasting things should be confessed by us all to be that *good part* that should possess all the fervent Desires of the soul.

But oh that we could see the Truth of this Belief in the choice of your wills, and the drift of your endeavours. If God would open your eyes and shew you things as they are, and save you from your wilful blindness, you would then see which is the *better part*, and you would be ashamed that ever you should make any question of it. That is the *good part*, which beareth the most lively Image of God, which is goodness it self, yea which possesseth us of this good: That is the *good part* which will make us good, and not that which deceiveth us and makes us worse: That is the *good part* which the *wisest* and *best* men judge to be so, yea which God himself doth judge to be so; and not that which the most blind deluded sinners do judge the best: That is the *good part* which is best at last, and which is an enduring Good, and not that which perisheth in the using, and flyeth from us when we have greatest need: That is the *good part* which all men will say is good in the Conclusion, which the wicked themselves that are now of another mind, will confess at last to be the best; and not that which is commended only in prosperity, while the frenzy or dream of sensuality doth beguile men, and which they will all cry out against at last. If you would know which is the best part, take counsel of God, and see what he saith, and ask men of wisdom and of greatest experience, that have *tried both*, and men that have *staid the end*, and seen what fleshly pleasures, and profits, and honours can do for them: For how can men make so true a judgement that do not either *stay the end*, or else *foresee the end* by faith? Do not take their judgements that are drunk with their sensual delights, and that will confess they must repent themselves, and therefore confess they must be of another mind: Take not their judgements that neither have seen nor yet foresee the end; the worst is yet to come with them: Their states and minds are near a change: The day is near when they will say, that *heaven was the better part*, and be convinced by *punishment*, that would not be convinced by *instruction*.

Surely:



Surely Sirs, it is so easie a Question to reason it self, where sin hath not blinded it, whether God or the world be the better part, that one would think there should be left no room for doubting. Dare any of you speak out and say, that earth is better then heaven, or sin then grace, or temporal pleasure then eternal happiness? I think you dare not: Shame will forbid you, and Conscience will contradict you, if you should say so: And will you commend God by your words, and discommend him by your lives? Will you say, *heaven is best*, and yet seek the world before it; and not let it have the best of your affections and endeavours? Shall it be highest in your mouthes, and lowest in your hearts and lives? Shall it have the first place in your prayers, and the last in your labours? Why then you commend God but to his dishonour, and your condemnation: You extoll heaven and heavenly things but to the confusion of your own faces, that your own confessions may be brought in hereafter as witnesses against you. In the name of God therefore I charge you, if you know which is the better part, condemn not your selves by making choice against your knowledge.

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4. Consider also, that, *this good part is offered you, and you have your choice, whether God or the world, whether heaven or earth shall be your portion.*

It is not Purchasing, or proper meriting, but choosing the good part, that you are called to: It is not [ *Mary hath purchased or merited the better part* ] but [ *hath chosen the better part.* ]

Two things are here contained. 1. That it is not matter of Impossibility that you are called to; you are not excluded from the hopes of salvation, by any exceptions that God hath put in against you, in his promise, but it is conditionally made as well to you as to others.

2. And the condition is not any thing unreasonable, but your own consent. Christ and salvation are offered to your choice: If you will but prefer them before the trifles of the world, you may have them. The door of Grace is open to you as well as to others; if you will but enter you may live: you are not left in a remediless case, nor given over to desperation: you cannot say, [ *Repenting and Believing will do us no good; we cannot have Christ though we were never so willing:* ]. You cannot say, [ *We would fain have*



*Christ and his Spirit to sanctifie us, but we cannot : we are willing to be his Disciples, but he is not willing to accept us, and to be our Saviour ]* you cannot say so, and say truly : you cannot say he is set to sale to you, and that he expecteth such a price as you are unable to give ; for you are called to *take him freely* ; and though this be sometimes called *buying* , yet it is a *buying without money and without price*, Isa. 55. 1; 2, 3, 4. And though you must *sell all you have* for this unvaluable pearl, Matth. 13. 46. yet that is but a Metaphorical selling , a parting with your sin and fleshly pleasure, as troubles and impediments that would keep you from salvation : As a sick man sells his diseases for health ; or at least, as he hath health by forbearing some hurtful things that please him : Or as a prisoner purchaseth the liberty that is freely given him, by consenting to come forth and cast off his fetters. Your hands are full of dirt, and God offers you gold, and you cannot receive it till you throw away the dirt. This is your Purchase : You give God nothing as a valuable price for his mercy, but you throw away the sin that is inconsistent with your happiness. Still I shall tell you, *[ you may have Christ if you will ]* pleasures and profits are flattering you to your destruction, and God calls you from them, and offereth you his son and everlasting life, and intreateth you to accept them. And here you have your choice. The offer is, *whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, Rev. 22. 17. And if you will but *chuse* that happiness that is offered you, and *Christ the way* to that happiness, all the world cannot bereave you of your choice : It is brought to your hand and urged on you. You have now your choice, whether you will have Christ or the flesh, grace or sin, heaven or hell : As you chuse, so you shall have : And if you *miss* of life, it will be because you did not *chuse* it : Even because you would not come to Christ that you might have life, John 5. 40. and would not have him to rule over you, Luke 19. 27. and would not have the Lord indeed for your God, Psalm 81. 11. and did not chuse the fear of the Lord, Prov. 1. 29. yea, when Christ would have gathered you, you would not be gathered, Matth. 23. 37. It is this turning away of the simple that doth slay them, because they refuse when Christ calls them, and regard not when he stretcheth forth his hand, but set at naught his counsel, and will have none of his reproof, Prov. 1. 24, 25, 32. See therefore that you refuse not him that speaketh ; for if you turn away from him that speaks from heaven, and neglect or make



make light of so great salvation, how do you think it possible you should escape? Heb. 12. 25. & 2. 3. Mar. 22. 5.

But perhaps some of you will think to excuse your selves for want of *Free-will*, and say, *How is it in our choice when God must give us to will and to do? and we can do nothing of our selves? have we free-will or power to chuse the better part? You must not set up the power or will of man too high.*

*Ans.* No: its you that would set up your wills too high, in making us believe that you are not wilfully ungodly and impenitent, but omit all the good and do all the evil that you do, because you cannot help it. You cannot but know that he is the sinner to be blamed and punished, that *Can* and *Will not*, rather then he that *would* but *cannot* do good, and forbear the contrary. You know that it is *wilfulness*, and not *unwilling impotency* that the venome of malice and naughtiness lyeth in; and therefore you are excusing your wills, and laying all upon your *Impotency*, which is but to excuse your faults. I would make you know the *baseness* of your wills, and that it is long of your *badness* that you are like to be undone, if grace prevent it not by your through Conversion. I do not say that you have any power, but what you have from God; but I say you have the Natural and Legal Power, and more then Power, even a *Grant* and *Offer* of such a *mercy* from God: You have humane faculties, and leave, and offers, and entreaties, and you may have Christ and life as he is offered if you will. When I say, *It is in your choice*, I do not say that you have the wit or the heart to make a right choice. No: if you had but so much wit and grace, I need not use all these words to you, to perswade you to chuse the better part. Your Wills are free from any force that God puts upon them to determine them to sin; or from any force that Satan or any enemy you have, can use to determine them to sin: All they can do is morally to entice you. God doth not make you sin. If you chuse your death, and forsake your own mercy, it is not God that determineth your Wills to make this choice. Yea, he commandeth, and perswadeth, and urgeth you to make a better choice: And though Satan tempt you, he can do no more. You have so much power, that you may have Christ if you will: you cannot say, I am truly willing to have Christ and cannot. Thus much *free-will* undoubtedly you have.

But I must confess that your Wills are not free from the misguiding;



guiding of a *blinded mind*, nor from the seduction of a *sensual inclination*; nor from a *base and wicked disposition* of your own. *This kind of free-will* you *shew* us that you have *not*. But is your *wickedness* your *excuse*? and is your *wilfulness* your *innocency*? What then can be *culpable*?

Sirs, I would not have you abuse God, and befool your selves with names and words, saying, *You have not power and free-will*, as if you might thus *excuse your sin*: I have opened the matter in plain terms to you, that children may understand it, though learned men have endeavoured to obscure it. *God giveth you your choice*, though your own *wickedness* do hinder you from *choosing aright*. You have a *price in your hands*, but fools have not a heart to their own good, *Prov. 17. 16*. I know you want both wisdom and a sanctified will; and I know that your minds and wills are contrarily disposed. You need not tell me that you are *wilful and wicked*, when there must be so many words spoken, and so many Books written, and so much mercy and patience of God, and so many afflictions from his hand, and all will not serve to make you chuse the better part. But if you were *willing*, if you were *truly willing*, the principal part of the work were done: For if you are *willing*, *Christ is willing*; and if *Christ be willing*, and you be *willing*, what can hinder your salvation?

Having laid this ground-work from the plain Word of God, methinks I may with this advantage now plead the case, even with common Reason. *One thing is needful*; the *Good part* is that one; and this is *tended* to you by the Lord: What is it then that you do *make choice of*? and what do you *resolve*? May you have Christ, and Pardon, and Everlasting life, and will you not have them? Shall it be said of you another day, that you *had your choice*, whether you *would* have Christ and life, or sin and death; and you *chose* destruction and *refused* life? I beseech thee Reader, whosoever thou art that readest these lines, that thou wouldst a little turn thine ears to God, and withdraw thy self from the delusions of the flesh and world, and use thy reason for thy everlasting peace; and consider with thy self what a dreadful thing it will be, if thou be everlastingly shut out of the presence of God, upon thy own choice? And if thou lose thy part in Christ, and Pardon, and everlasting Glory upon thy own choice: And if thou must lie in Hell fire, and Conscience must tell thee there for ever, *Thou hast but the fruit of thine own choice: Heaven was set open*



to me as well as others. I had life, and time, and teaching, and persuasions as well as others; but I chose the pleasure of sin for a season, though I was told and assured that hell would follow, and now I have that which I made choice of; and taste but the fruit of my own wilfulness! Will not such gripes of conscience be a hellish torment of themselves, and an intolerable vexation, if thou hadst no more? Had you rather have sin then Christ and Holiness? Alas, I see by your lives you had! But had you rather have Hell then God and Glory? If not, then chuse not the way to Hell. Why do you give God such good words, and prefer your sin when you have done, before him? Why do you speak so well of Christ and Heaven, and yet refuse them? Why do you speak so ill of sin and the world, and yet chuse them to the loss of your salvation? Surely if you were soundly perswaded that Christ is better then the world, and holiness then sin, you would chuse that which you say is the best: For that which men think indeed to be the best, and best for them, they will chuse and seek after. And therefore, when you have said all that you can in commendation of Grace and a holy life, no wise man will believe that you are heartily perswaded of the Truth of what you say, as long as you run away from Christ, and follow the flesh, and take that course that is contrary to your profession. For that which you like best you will certainly chuse and seek with the greatest care and diligence. Now you have your choice; if you would have the better part, now choose it.

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5. **I** Have one other Motive yet from the text to perswade you to chuse the better part. If you chuse it, it shall never be taken from you. You hear this is the Resoulution of Christ himself concerning Marie's choice, and that which is spoken of her will be as true of you, if you make the same choice. If all the enemies you have in the world should endeavour to deprive you of Christ and your salvation, they cannot do it against your choice. If by Power or by Policy they would rob you of your Portion, they cannot do it: For which way should they do it? They cannot turn the heart of God against you, nor make him break his Covenant with you, nor repent him of his Gift and Calling which he hath extended to you. For he is unchangeable, and loveth you with an everlasting love. *Mal. 3. 6. Jer. 31. 3. Isa. 54. 8. Jer. 33. 20, 21, 23. 50. 5. Rom. 11. 29.* They cannot under-



mine the rock that you are built upon, nor batter the fortress of your souls, nor overcome your great Preserver and Defence, nor take you out of the hands of Christ. *Psal. 73. 26. & 31. 2, 3. & 62. 2. & 59. 9, 16. Job. 10. 28. Cast not away the salvation that is offered you, and then never fear least it be taken from you. See that you chuse the better part, and resolutely chuse it, and it will be certainly your own for ever. For man cannot take it from you, nor Devils cannot take it from you, and God will not take it from you. Rust and moths will not corrupt this Treasure; nor can thieves break through and steal it from you, Mat. 6. 19, 20.*

But you cannot say so of worldly riches. If you chuse to be Lords and Princes on the earth, you cannot have your choice; but if you could, you cannot keep it. If you chuse the wealth and credit of the world, and were sure to get it, you were as sure to leave it: For naked you came into the world, and naked you must go out, *Job 1. 21.* If you chuse your ease, and mirth, and pleasure, these will be taken from you: If you chuse the satisfying of your fleshly desires, and all the delight and prosperity that the world can afford you, yet all must be taken from you; Yea quickly and easily taken from you. Alas! one stroak of an Apoplexy, or a few fits of a Fever, or the breaking of a small vein, or many hundred of the like effectual means, are ready at the beck of God, to take you from all that you have gathered for your flesh: And then, whose shall all these things be? None of yours, I am sure; nor will they redeem your souls from death or hell. *Luke 12. 20. Psalm 49. 7.* If you be in honour, you abide not in it, but are (as to your body) as the beasts that perish. If you think to perpetuate your houses and your names, this your way is but your folly, though your posterity go on to approve your sayings, and succeed you in your sins. *Psalm 49. 11, 12, 13. The worldly wise man doth perish with the fool: as sheep they are laid in the grave, Death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have Dominion over them in the morning, ver. 10, 14. They shall soon be cut down like the grass, and whether as the green herb. Psal. 37. 2. I have seen the wicked in great prosperity, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and he was not; yea I sought him, but he could not be found. v. 35, 36.*

You think it a fine thing to have the fulness of the creature, to be esteemed with the highest, and fed and cloathed with the best, and fare deliciously every day, as the rich man, *Luke 16.* but  
hath



hath he not paid dear think you for his riches and pleasure by this time ? His feeding and fulness was quickly at an end ; but his torment is not yet ended, nor ever will be. You think it a brave thing to clamber up to riches, and that which you call greatness and honour in the world : but how quickly , how terribly must you come down ! Go into the Sanctuary of God and understand your end : Surely God hath set them in slippery places, and casteth them down into destruction : How are they brought to desolation as in a moment ! They are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awakeneth, so at the awaking, shall their Image ( or shadow of honour ) be despised, Psalm 73. 17, 18, 19, 20.

How short is the pleasure, and how long is the pain ! How short is the honour, and how long is the shame ! What is it under the Sun that is everlasting ? You have friends, but will they dwell with you here for ever ? You have houses, but how long will you stay in them ? It is but as yesterday since your houses had other Inhabitants, and your Towns and Countries other Inhabitants, and where are they all now ? You have health, but how soon will you consume in sickness ? You have life, but how soon will it end in death ? You have the pleasure of sin ; you say unto your selves *Eat, drink, and be merry*, but how soon will all the mirth be mar'd, and turned into sadness, everlasting sadness ! When you hear, *Thou fool, this night shall they require thy soul, and then whose shall these things be ?* Luke 12. 20.

Oh miserable wretch ! If thou hadst chosen God instead of thy sin, and the everlasting Kingdom instead of this world, thou wouldst not have been thus cast off in thy extremity : God would have stuck better to thee : Heaven would have proved a more durable Inheritance : For it is a Kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. 12. 28. The day is near when thy despairing soul must take up this lamentation, [ *My dearest friends are now forsaking me, I must part with all that I laboured for, and delighted in : I have drunk up all my part of pleasure, and there is no more left. My merry company, and honours, and recreations are past and gone ; I shall eat, and drink, and sport no more : but God would not have used me thus, if I had set my heart upon him and his Kingdom. Oh that I had chosen him, and made him my portion, and spent these thoughts, and cares, and labours, for the obtaining of his love, and promised Glory, which I spent for the pleasing and providing for my flesh. Then I should have had a happiness that death could not deprive*



me of, and a Crown that fadeth not away. Neither life nor death, nor any creature could have separated me from his love. I need not then have gone out of the world as a prisoner out of the Gaol, to the barr and to the place of execution. My departing soul should not then need to have been afraid of falling into the hands of an unconciled God, and so into the hands of the Devils as his executioners, nor of passing out of the flesh to hell.

Oh poor sinners, for how short a pleasure do you sell your hopes of everlasting Blessedness, and run your selves into endless pains ! O what comparision is there between the time of your pleasure, and the everlastingness of your Punishment ! How short a while is the cup at your mouthes ? or the drink in your bellies ? or the harlot in your embracements ? or the wealth of the world in your Possession ? And how long a time must you pay for this in hell ? How quickly are your merry hours past ! but your torments will never be past. When your corpses are laid in the grave, men can say, [ *Now he hath done his satisfying the flesh and following the world* ] but never man can truly say, [ *Now he hath done suffering for it.* ] Your *life of sin* is passing as a dream, and your honours as a shadow, and all your business as a tale that is told : but the *life of Glory* which you rejected for this, would have endured for evermore. Suppose as many thousand years as there are sands on the Sea, or piles of grass on the whole earth, or hairs on the heads of all men in the world, yet when these many are past, the Joy of Saints and the Torments of the wicked are as far from an end as ever they were : The eternal God doth give them a duration, and make them eternal.

When our joyes are at the sweetest, this thought must needs be part of that *sweetness*, that their *sweetness* shall never have an end. If our short fore-taste be *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, what shall we call that *joy* which flows from the most perfect fruition and perpetuation ? 1 Pet. 1. 7, 8. We have *joy* here, but alas how seldom ! Alas how small in comparison of what we may there expect ! Some *joy* we have, but how oft do *Melancholy* or *crosses*, or *losses* in the world, or *temptations*, or *sins*, or *desertions* interrupt it ! Our sun is here most commonly under a cloud, and too often in an *Eclipse* ; and we have the *night* as often as the day. Yea our state is usually a *Winter* ; Our dayes are cold and short, and our nights are long. But when the flourishing state of glory comes, we shall have no *Inter-scissions* nor *Eclipses*. The  
path



path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. 4. 18. And the perfect day is a perpetual day, that knows no interruption by the darkness of the night. For there shall be no night there, nor need of candle or Sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. 22. 5. This is the life that fears no death; and this is the feast that fears no want or future famine; the pleasure that knows nor fears no pain; the health that knows nor fears no sickness; this is the treasure that fears no moth, or rust, or thief; the building that fears no storm nor decay; the Kingdom that fears no changes by Rebellion; the friendship that fears no falling out; the Love that fears no hatred or frustration; the Glory that fears no envious eye; the possessed Inheritance that fears no ejection by fraud, or force, or any failings; the Joy that feels or fears no sorrow; while God who is Life it self is our life; and while God who is Love, is the fountain and object of our Love, we can never want either Life or Love: And while he feeds our Love, our Joyful praises will never be run dry, nor ever go out for want of fuel. This is the true perpetual motion, the circulation of the holy blood and spirit from God to man, and from man to God. Being prepared and brought near him, we have the blessed Vision of his face, by seeing him; and by the blessed emanation of his love, we are drawn out perpetually and unweariedly to Love him and Rejoyce in him; and from hence incessantly to praise and honour him. In all which, as his blessed Image and the shining reflections of his revealed glory, he taketh complacency, which is the highest end of God and man, and the very term of all his works and wayes.

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I Thought here to have ended this First Part of my Discourse; but yet compassion calls me back: I fear lest with the most I have not yet prevailed; and lest I shall leave them behind me in the bonds of their iniquity. I daily hear the voice of men possessed by a spirit of uncleanness, speaking against this Necessity of a holy life, which Christ himself so peremptorily asserteth. I hear that voice which foretelleth a more dreadful voice, if in time they be not prevailed with to prevent it. One saith, *What need all this ado?* This strictness is more ado then needs. Another saith, *You would make men mad, by poring so much on matters that are*  
above



above them. Another saith, *Cannot you keep your Religion to your selfe; and be Godly with moderation, as your neighbours be?* Another saith, *I hope God is more merciful then to damn all that be not so precise.* Another saith, *I shall never endure so strict a life, and therefore I will venture as well as others.* The summe of all is, They are so far in love with the world and sin, and so much against a holy life, that they will not be perswaded to it; and therefore to quiet their consciences in their misery, they make themselves believe that they may be saved without it, and that it is a thing of no Necessity, but their coming to Church and living like good neighbours may serve the turn without it, for their salvation. And thus doth the malicious Serpent, in the hearts of those that he possesseth, rise up against the words of Christ. Christ saith that this is *The One thing needful*: And the Serpent saith, *It is more ado then needs*: and *What needs all this ado?* Though I have fully answered this ungodly objection already in my *Treatise of Conversion*, sect. 36. pag. 284. &c. and more fully in my *Treatise of Rest*, Part 3. Chap. 6. yet I shall once more fall upon it. For death is coming, while poor deluded souls are loytering: and if Satan by such senseless reasonings as these, can keep them unready in their sin, till the fatal stroak hath cut them down, and cast them into endless easeless fire; alas, how great will be their fall? and how unspeakably dreadful will be their misery? Whoever thou be, whether high or low, learned or unlearned, that hast disliked, opposed or reproached *serious godly Christians*, as *Puritans*, and too precise; and that thinkett the *most diligent labour for salvation* to be but *more ado then needs*, and hast not thy self yet resolvedly set upon a holy life, I require at thy hands so much impartiality and faithfulness to thy own immortal soul, as seriously to peruse these following Questions, and to go no further in thy careless, negligent, ungodly course, till thou art able to give such a rational answer to them, as thou darest stand to now at the Barr of thine own Conscience, and hereafter at the Barr of Christ.

Quest. 1. *Canst thou possibly give God more then is his due? Or love him more then he deserveth? Or serve him more faithfully then thou art bound, and he is worthy of?* Art thou not his creature? made of nothing? and hast thou not all that thou art and hast from him? and if thou give him all, dost thou give him any more then what is his own? If thou give him all the affections of thy soul,



soul, and all the most serious thoughts of thy heart, and every hour of thy time, and every word of thy mouth, and every penny of thy wealth ( in the way that he requireth it ) is it any more then is his due ? Should not he have all that is Lord of all ?

Quest. 2. Is it not the first and great Commandment, [ *Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might?* ] And do not *heathens* confess this by the light of nature : And hath not thy tongue confest it many a time ? And doth not thy conscience yet bear witness that it is thy duty ? And is it possible thou shouldst thus Love him, with all thy heart, and soul, and might, and yet not seek and serve him with all thy heart, and soul, and might ? Or can the most sanctified person do any more, if he were perfect ?

Quest. 3. *Dost thou not confess that we are all sinners ? And that the best is still too bad ? And that he that loveth and serveth God most, doth yet come exceeding short of his duty ? And yet wouldst thou have such men come shorter ? and dardest thou persuade them to do less ? Must not the best confess their daily failings, and beg pardon of them from the Lord, and be beholden to the blood of Christ, and lament their imperfections ? And yet wouldst thou have them be such odious hypocrites, as to think they serve God too much already, while they confess that they come so short ? Shall they confess their failings, and reproach those that endeavour to avoid the like ? Shall the same tongue say, [ Lord be merciful to me a sinner ] and [ Lord, I am good enough already : What need there so much ado to please and serve thee any better ? ] What would you think of such a man ?*

Quest. 4. *Is it not an unquestionable duty to grow in grace ? and to press towards perfection as men that have not yet attained it ? 2 Pet. 3. 18. Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. And must Paul, and Peter, and the holiest on earth, still seek to grow and labour to be more holy ? and shall such a one as thou say, What need I be any more holy ? that art utterly unsanctified.*

Quest. 5. Is it not one of the two grand Principles of faith and all Religion, without which no man can please God, Heb. 11. 6. *Whoever cometh to God must believe, first, that God is ( that there is a God, most powerful, wise and good ) secondly, that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him ? ] yea this is one of*  
*natures*



natures principles. It is the *Diligent seekers of God* that he will reward. And yet dare a fleshly negligent sinner, reproach the *diligent seeking of God*, and take it for a *needless thing*, and say, *What needs all this ado?* Are not these the *Atheists seconds*; even next to them that deny that there is any God, or that blaspheme him? And indeed, if he be not worthy of all the Love and service that thou canst give him, he is not the true God! Consider therefore the tendency of thy words, and tremble.

Quest. 6. *Doth not that wretch set up the flesh and the world above the Lord, that thinks not most of his thoughts, and cares, and words, and time, and labour for the world to be too much ado, and yet thinks less for God and heaven to be too much?* And dost thou think in thy conscience that the flesh is better worthy of thy Love, and care, and labour, then the Lord? or that earth will prove a better reward to thee then Heaven? Who, thinkest thou, will have the better bargain in the end? The fool that *laid up riches for himself*, and *was not rich to God*, and shall lose all at once that he so much valued, and so carefully sought, ( *Luke 12. 20, 21.* ) or he that *laid up his treasure in Heaven*, and there set his heart, and sought for the never fading Crown? *Matth. 6. 20, 21, 33.* and counted all as loss and dung for the excellent knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, *Phil. 3. 8.* Do you think that there is any thing more worth your care, and time, and labour, or can you more profitably lay it out?

Quest. 7. *Have you not immortal souls to save or lose?* And are not your *bodies* for their service? and to be used and ruled by them? And should not your souls then have more of your care and diligence, then corruptible flesh that must turn to dirt?

Quest. 8. *Dare any one of you say that you are wiser then the All-knowing God?* Is not thy wisdom less to his, then a glow-worms light is to the Sun? And hath not God most plainly and frequently in his Word commanded thee a holy life? Yea every part and parcell of it, is nothing else but the *obeying of that Word*: For if it be not prescribed by the Lord, it is not *Holiness*, nor that which I am pleading for. And when the living God hath told the world his mind and will, shall a sinful man stand up and say, *I am wiser then my Maker?* *I know a better way then this?* *What need there all this stir for Heaven?* What dost thou less then thus blaspheme, and set up thy folly above the wisdom of the Lord,  
when