

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

when thou condemnest or reproachest the holiness which he commandeth?

Quest. 9. *Dare you say that God is not only so unwise, but so unrighteous and tyrannical, as to give the world unnecessary Laws, and set them upon a needless work? What King so tyrannical as would require his subjects on pain of death to go pick straws against the wind? What Master or Parent so foolishly cruel as to command their servants or children, to weary themselves with hunting butter-flies, and following their own shadows? And darest thou impute such foolish tyrannie to the God of heaven? as if he had made a world, and set them upon a needless work? and commanded them to tire themselves in vain?*

Quest. 10. *Can a man be too diligent about that work which he was made for, and is daily preserved and maintained for, and for which he hath all the mercies of his life? Thou hadst never come into the world but on this business, even to serve and please God, and prepare for everlasting happiness: And are you afraid of doing this too diligently? Why is it, thinkest thou, that God sustaineth thee? Why dyedst thou not many years ago? but only that thou mightest have time to seek and serve him. Was it only that thou mightest eat, and drink, and sleep, and go up and down, and fill up a room among the living? Why beasts, and fools, and mad-men do all this, as well as thou. Why hast thou thy Reason and understanding, but to know and serve the Lord? Is it only to know how to shift a little for the commodities of the world? Or is it not to know the way to life eternal? Look round about thee on all the creatures, and on all the mercies which thou dost possess; every deliverance, and privilege, and accommodation; every bit of bread thou eatest, and every hour of thy precious time, are all given thee for this *One thing needful*: And yet wilt thou say that this *One thing is needless*, for which thou hast all things? Thou mayest then say, that God made the world in vain, and preserveth and governeth it in vain. For all this is but for his service, which thou callest *vain*.*

Quest. 11. *Doth not Reason tell thee, that the place in which thou must live for ever, should be more diligently minded (and prepared for) then this in which thou must continue but for a while? Alas, it is so short a time that we must be here, that it makes all the matters of this world (as such) to be inconsiderable things; as dreams and shadows. What great matter is it for so short a time,*

whether we be rich or poor, well or sick, in credit or in contempt ! whether we laugh or weep ! When our part will be so quickly acted, and we must go naked out of the world as we came into it. For *so short a time*, a poor habitation may serve the turn, as well as the most splendid Palace : A painful, obscure, afflicted life, may do as well as the most plentiful provisions, and the greatest ease and worldly honours. The purple and fine linnen, the silks and bravery will be soon forgotten ; and the soul in Hell will be no more the better for them, then the rotten carcase in the grave. The taste of the delicious meats and drinks will quickly be forgotten : and sportful youth will be turned into cold and languid age : and the most confirmed health into dolorous sickness ; and mirth and laughter into mournful groans. And is such a *transitory life* as this, more worthy of your care and greatest diligence, then life eternal ? O one would think that the *world* that you must be *ever, ever* in, should *never, never* be forgotten ! *There* is the company that you must live with for *ever* : *There* is the state that you shall *never* change : *There* is the Joy or Torment that shall have no end ; and while you forget it, you are posting to it, and are almost there. And can you be too careful for eternity ?

Quest. 12. Consider also but the infinite Joys of Heaven, and tell me, whether thou dost think, they are not worthy the greatest cost or pains that thou canst be at to get them ? Dost thou think that Heaven is not worthy of the labour, that is bestowed for it by the holiest Saints on earth ? Will it not requite them to the full ? Will any that comes thither repent that they obtained it at so dear a rate ? If now thou couldst speak with one of those Believers, mentioned in Heb. 11. that lived as strangers and pilgrims on earth, as seeking a better, even a heavenly Countrey, that preferred the reproach of Christ before the treasure of the world, and chose affliction with the people of God, before the pleasures of sin for a season, that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might receive a better resurrection ; that had tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, and of bonds and imprisonments, and were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented, though men of whom the world was not worthy : Would any one of these now tell you, that they did or suffered too much for Heaven ? Or that it was not worth ten thousand times more ? If
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thy tongue dare say that *Heaven is not worth the cost or trouble of a holy life*, (or if thy life say so, though thy tongue dare not) thou judgest thy self *unworthy* of it, and sentencest thy self unto damnation.

Quest. 13. *And are the torments of Hell so small and tolerable, that thou thinkest a holy life too dear a means for to prevent them? Dost thou believe the threatnings of the Lord, that he will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power! 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. and yet canst thou say, What needs all this ado, to scape such endless misery! Thou wilt take any medicine to cure but the gowt or stone, if once thou have felt them? Thou wilt draw out a tooth to prevent the pain of it. And is Holiness so hateful or grievous a thing to thee, that thou wilt venture on Hell it self to avoid it? If so much of Hell be in thy heart already, blame none but thy self if thou have thy choice.*

Quest. 14. *Why wast thou baptized into the Covenant of holiness, to God the Father, Son and Holy-Ghost, if thou think it needless to perform thy Covenant? A holy life is no more then in Baptism thou wast solemnly engaged too: There didst thou renounce the flesh, the world and the Devil; and tookest God for thy portion and absolute Lord, and gavest up thy self to be ruled by him, and saved by Christ, and sanctified by the holy Spirit; and dost thou now say, What needs all this ado? Are we all by our Baptismal Vow engaged to a needless thing? I tell thee, there is not the holiest man on earth, that doth any more then what he is bound to by the Covenant-Relations which he undertook in Baptism.*

Quest. 15. *Moreover, What an Hypocrite art thou to profess thy self a member of the Holy Catholick Church, if Holiness which is the life of the Church, seem needless to thee? Why dost thou profess to believe and desire the Communion of Saints, if the life of Saints seem needless to thee, and thou wilt not have Communion with them in their sanctity? Dost thou not plainly renounce thy Covenant, and faith, and duty, when thou renouncest a holy life as a thing unnecessary?*

Quest. 16. *Dost thou think, or darest thou say, that the bloody death, and holy life of Jesus Christ were more then needs in order to thy*

thy salvation ? Unless thou be a professed Infidel, I know thou darest not say so: And if thy soul were worth the sufferings of the Lord of Life, is it not worth all the cost and labour of thy duty ? Christ lived a life of perfect holiness : he never sinned : he fulfilled all righteousness : he prayed all night, and with greatest fervency : preaching and doing good was his employment. Though he hated Pharisaical superstition, and the teaching for doctrines the Commandments of men, and serving God according to mens traditions, yet was there never so holy, and pure, and precise, and strict, and heavenly a life as Jesus Christ's : And this was for our redemption, and our example. And darest thou say that this was needless ? Should we not endeavour to imitate our pattern ? Are they better that are likest Christ, or they that are most unlike him ? And which dost thou think is liker Christ, the holy or the unholy ? Sure we that fall so short of the example that Christ hath given us, are far from being more diligent then needs, when Christ went not too far, nor was too strict, that went so very far beyond us.

Quest. 17. Look upon all the institutions of the Lord : On Magistracy, and Ministry, and the great Works of their office : On prayer, and preaching, and Sacraments, and Discipline, and all other Ordinances of God ; and also on all the frame of the holy Scripture ; and also on all the workings and graces of the Holy Ghost ; and tell me whether thou darest say, that all or any of these are in vain ? and whether that Holiness which all these are appointed for, can be a vain and needless thing ?

Quest. 18. Darest thou say that Christ doth more then needs, in his Intercession for us with the Father now in Heaven ? It is he that sendeth the spirit to sanctifie us : It is he that prayeth that we may be sanctified by the truth ? We have no grace and holiness but what we have from him. And darest thou say he doth too much ? It is he that sends his Ministers to call men to a holy life : Look into his Word, and see whether the doctrine which they preach be not there prescribed to them ; and the duties of holiness there commended. If therefore it were erroneous or excessive, it would be long of Christ, and not of his Messengers or Disciples, that speak and do no more for holiness, then he bids them ; but fall exceeding short.

Quest. 19. Art thou wiser in this, and more to be believed, then all the antient Prophets, and Apostles, and servants of God in former
ages,

ages, and then all that are now alive on earth, that ever tryed a holy life? The Scripture will tell thee that *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David*, and all the rest of the Saints that were then most dear to God, were so far from thinking that a holy life was more then needs, that they thought they could never be *holy enough*, and blamed their defects when they excelled such as now thou blamest as too precise. And if thou wilt prefer the words and example of a worldling, or of a sottish sensual man, before the judgement and example of these Saints, the company that thou chooseth, and the deceivers whom thou followest, shall be also thy companions in calamity, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see the Saints from East and West, from North and South, sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you, and such as you thrust out: Even when the last in time (whom you here despised) shall be equal to the first and antient Saints, *Luke 13. 27, 28, 29, 30.* Why do you hypocritically honour the names and memorials of the Prophets, Apostles, and other former Saints, and keep Holy-dayes for them, and yet reproach their holy course, and prefer the judgement of a drunkard or a malignant enemy of godliness before theirs? For so you do when you argue against a holy life.

Quest. 20. *Dost thou think that there is now one soul in Heaven or Hell, that is of thy prophane opinion, and would say, that a diligent holy life is more ado then needs for mens salvation?* Certainly those in *Heaven* have more knowledge, and experience, and love to God and man, and goodness, then to be of so impious a mind, or once to entertain such beastly thoughts: And those in *Hell*, though still unholy, have learned to their cost to know the great *Necessity* of holiness: And would tell you, if they could speak with you, that the most strict and heavenly life for millions of ages were not too dear, for the escaping of the everlasting misery. Why else do we find one of them in *Luke 16.* described as so desirous, that one from the dead might be sent to his Brethren, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment? And what is it that he would have had them warned of, but that they should live a holy self-denying life, and with all their diligence lay up a treasure in the life to come, instead of living so sensual, and voluptuous, and ungodly a life as he had lived. The scope of the story tells us that this would have been his message, if he might have sent.

Quest. 21. *Dost thou think in thy Conscience that at the hour of thy death, or at least at Judgement, thou shalt think thy self that Holiness was unnecessary? Doth not thy heart tell thee that then thou shalt be of another mind? and wish with the deepest desires of thy soul, that thou hadst lived as strictly, and prepared for everlasting life as seriously, and served God as diligently, as ever did any Saint on earth? But alas, those wishes will be then too late. Now is thy day: and now thou takest thy work to be needless: And to see the Necessity when time is gone, will be thy torment, but not thy remedy. Not one in this Congregation, or Town, or Countrey, not one in England, or in all the world, but shall be forced at last, whether he will or no, to justify the wisdom of the godly, and the worst of you shall then with ten thousand fruitless groans desire, that you had imitated the holiest persons that you knew. Not a tongue then shall say, *What needs all this ado for heaven?* Not a man there dare call his neighbour *Puritane*, nor take up a contemptuous jeer, against the diligent servants of the Lord.*

Quest. 22. *Is not that man at the heart against the Lord, that reproacheth his serious diligent servants, and counts his work a needless thing? Men are more willing to please those that they love; and more ready to do the works they love. If your son or servant speak against your service, but as you do against Gods, what would you think of their affections? Doubtless it is no better then a secret hatred to the holiness of God, and a Serpentine enmity to his holy wayes, that causeth all these senseless cavils, and impious speeches, against the life that he hath commanded us to live.*

Quest. 23. *Is it not most unreasonable impiety, for that man to speak against too strict exact obedience, and against serving God too much, that hath served the world, the flesh, and the Devil in the vigour and flower of his dayes, and this with pleasure, and never said, *It is too much?* When thou wast drinking and sporting, thou wast not weary: When it comes to a matter of riches, or honour, or ease, or pleasure, to gratifie thy worldliness, pride, laziness and voluptuousness, then thou never saist, *It is too much!* And is all too little for sin and the Devil, and all too much for thy soul and God? Let Conscience tell thee whether this be just.*

Quest. 24. *Is it not a foolish wickedness, for that man to cry out against*

against making haste to heaven, and going so fast in the wayes of God that hath loytered already till the evening of his dayes, and lost so much time as thou hast done? If thou hadst begun as soon as thou hadst the use of reason, and remembred thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth, and never lost an hour of thy time since then till now, thou hadst done no more then what thy God, thy soul, and all right reason required of thee! For surely he that made thee, hath in wisdom proportioned thy time to thy work, and hath not given thee an hour too much. A long life is short enough to prepare for everlasting. And shall a loytering Rebelle that hath wasted so much of his little time, cry out, *What needs so much ado?*

Quest. 25. *Is it not the graceless miserable sort of men, that cry out, What needs all this ado?* Certainly it is: For Scripture, and Reason, and Experience tell us, that all that are godly, are of another mind: The more grace they have, the more they would have: The more they love God, the more they would love him. The more good they do, the more they would do. Do you not see how they labour after more grace? and hear how they complain that they are no better? O how it would glad them to be more Holy and more Heavenly! It is therefore the *strangers* and *despisers* of grace, that never knew by experience, the nature, and power, and sweetness of it, that say, *It is more ado then needs.* And is it not a most *unreasonable* thing for a man that hath *no saving grace* and *holiness* at all, to cry out against *excess of holiness*? And for a man that is in the *captivity of the Devil*, and ready suddenly to drop into *Hell*, if death do but strike the fatal blow, before he be regenerate, to talk against *doing too much for heaven*? And for a man that never did God one hours pleasing service, (*Heb. 11. 6.*) to prate against *serving God too much*? O poor wretch! were thy eyes but opened, thou wouldst see that of any man in the Town or Countrey, this language ill beseemeth thee. When God hath been so long offended; and thy soul is almost lost already, and death and hell is hard at hand; and may swallow thee up in endless desperation for ought thou knowest, before thou hast read this Book to the end, or before thou see another year, or moneth, or day, is it time for such a one as thee to say, *What needs so much ado?* One would think if there be any *life* in thee, thou shouldst stir as for thy life: and if thou have a voice to cry, thou shouldst cry out to God both day and night

in the fervour of thy soul, even now while mercy may be had, lest time should over-slip thee, and thou be shut up in the place of torment: If Hell-fire will not make thee stir, What will? Should a weak Christian that is cast behind hand by his negligence, but once speak against a diligent life, he were exceedingly too blame. But for thee that art yet in the gall of bitterness, and the misery of an unregenerate state, to speak against holy diligence for salvation, when thou art in such great and deep distress, and like a man that is drowning, or a house on fire, that must presently have help or perish, this is a madness that hath no name sufficient to express it by; which is a wonder that a rational soul should be guilty of.

Quest. 26. *Art thou not afraid of some sudden vengeance from the Lord, for thus making thy self his open enemy, and contradicting him to his face? Mark his language, and then mark thine. Christ saith, [Enter in at the strait gate: For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.]* Matth. 7. 13, 14. *[Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.]* Luke 13. 24. *[See then that ye walk circumspectly (or exactly) not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.]* Ephes. 5. 15, 16. *[For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharises, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven.]* Matth. 5. 20. *[Wherefore brethren, give all diligence to make your Calling and Election sure.]* 2 Pet. 1. 10. *[Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.]* Phil. 2. 12. *[Seeing then all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God.]* 2 Pet. 3. 11, 12. *[And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear.]* 1 Pet. 4. 18. *[Lay not up for your selves a treasure on earth, &c. but lay up for your selves a treasure in heaven, &c. For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.]* Matth. 6. 19, 20, 21. *[Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness]* Matth. 6. 33. *[Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life.]* John 6. 27. *[The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.]* Matth. 11. 12. *[Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth*

with the prize? So run that ye may obtain: And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things: Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.] 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25, 26, 27. [Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight it self in fatness; encline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you.] Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. [Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.] Rom. 12. 11. [For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; reaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and sanctifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.] Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. [Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.] Jer. 48. 10. [whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whether thou goest.] Eccles. 9. 10.

These and such like are the sayings of God, by which thou mayst easily understand his mind concerning the necessity of a serious, diligent, holy life. And shall a blind and wretched worm come after, and dare to contradict him, and unsay all this, and say, *what needs so much ado?* What! darest thou thus openly resist God to his face? What art thou? and what is thy word, that we should regard it before the Word of God?

Quest. 27. *Dost thou not know that by thy speaking against a diligent holy life, thou gratifyest the Devil, and openly servest him, and saist the very things that he would have thee say?* What can more please him, and advance his Kingdom, and suit his malicious ends, then to stop and cool men in the service of the Lord, and make them believe that holiness is but a needless thing? If the Devil might have leave to walk visibly among men, and speak to them in their language, he would speak to them as thou dost, and say the same things which he puts into thy mouth; and

would do all that he could to keep men from a holy life. And dar'est thou thus openly play his part ?

Quest. 28. *Canst thou think (When eternal life is at the stake) that a man so weak in the midst of so many hindrances and enemies, hath cause to count his diligence unnecessary ?* When Satan like a roaring Lyon, is seeking day and night to devour thee (1 Pet. 5. 8.) when his malice, subtilty, and diligence is so great, and so unwearied ; when his instruments are so many, so subtil, and so powerful ; when the world aboundeth round about thee with such dangerous enticing snares and baits ; when thy trayterous flesh so near thee is thy most perilous enemy, uncessantly drawing thee from God unto the creature, and when thou art so impotent to resist all these assaults ; art thou then in a condition fit to cry out against the greatest diligence for thy soul ? Should a man going up the steepest hill, when it is for his life, be afraid of going too fast ? When thou hast done all thou canst, it is well for thee that ever thou wast born if it suffice. If weakneses and enemies cause such a difficulty that the righteous themselves are scarcely saved (that is, with much ado) is it then time for thee to ask *What needs so much ado ?*

Quest. 29. *Dost thou not deal exceeding unthankfully and unequally with God ? When he thinks not the Sun and Moon and all the creatures too good to serve thee, nor all his mercies too great for thee ; no not the blood of his beloved Son, nor his Spirit, nor Heaven it self if thou wilt accept them in his way ; wilt thou think thy best too good for him ? and thy most diligent service to be too much ?* When thy *All* is next to *Nothing* ; and thy *Best* doth not profit the Almighty, but thy self, and the gain will be thy own. If a man should think it too much to put off his hat and thank thee, when thou hast given him a thousand pound ; or to go a mile for thee, when thou hast saved his life ; thou wouldst say he were not a man, but a monster of ingratitude. But thy unthankfulness is ten thousand-fold worse to God, who would deliver thee from everlasting torments, and give thee everlasting glory, and save thee from Satan and all thy sins, if thou wilt but take his safe remedies ; and thou churlishly refuselt, as if all were not worth so much ado.

Quest. 30. *Dost thou know what a life it is that thou accountest an unnecessary toil ?* It is a life of the greatest *Safety, Commodity, Honour, and Delight*, (besides the justice and honesty of it) of any
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in the world; and indeed thou canst not choose any other but at thy peril, and to thy greatest *loss* and *ruine*, and to thy present and everlasting *shame* and *sorrow*: It is the *sweetest* and *most pleasant* life on earth, that thou ignorantly accountest such a *tedious* *royl*. The manifestation of this shall be my work in the second Part of this Discourse.

And now I dare affirm, that when the dreadful God shall shortly judge thee who hast read or heard these words, it will be found indelibly written upon thy Conscience, that thou hadst here such Reasons laid before thee, to prove the *Necessity* of a *serious*, *diligent*, *holy* life, as all the wit in earth or Hell, is not able solidly to confute; and that an ungodly sensual life is most unreasonable; and that, if after this, thou continue in an unsanctified fleshly state, thou shall justly perish as one that wilfully refused salvation, as in despite of God, his mercies and his messengers, and of the plainest undeniable Truth and Reason: And that in refusing to be a *S A I N T*, thou madest thy self in the greatest matters no better then a *B R U T E*, wilfully subjecting thy *Reason* to thy sensuality, and judging thy self unmeet for everlasting Happiness.

BUT here I know the self-deceiving Hypocrite will object, *That all this that I am proving so diligently is confest, and nothing to the point in question: Which is not, Whether One thing be needful, and Holiness be of Necessity to salvation? For who denyeth this? But the question is, Whether it be this Puritanical precise way of serving God which only deserves the name of Holiness? and whether they be not as truly godly and sanctified that say their prayers morning and night, and go to Church on Sundayes, and follow their businesses the rest of the week, without any more ado?*

Ans. Either it is the substance of holy duties, or but the circumstances, which you quarrel at as Puritanical and precise. If it be only the circumstances, (as Whether we should receive the Lords Supper standing, or kneeling, or sitting? Whether we should pray publicly without Book, or on the Book? and Whether a Scripture-form or another be better? and Whether a continued speech, or verses, anthems, and oft-repeated words and sentences be better? What form of Church-Government is best? by Diocessane

Bishops, or by all the Pastors ? and the like) It is not of such things as these that I am pleading with thee : Though some of them are matters of considerable moment, for the helping or hindring men in godliness ; yet it is greater matters then these, that I am now contending for. Agree with us practically in the substance, in Faith, Repentance, Love, Obedience, Mortification, Heavenlyess, Humility, Patience, and serious diligence and zeal in all, and then I am none of those that will condemn or censure you ; but one that will rejoyce in you, as those that I hope to rejoyce with for ever.

But if it be the substantial duties of godliness that you resist, while you own but the Name of godliness in the general, I must tell you that it is not Names and Generals that will save you ; nor prove that you have your selves one spark of Grace. Nothing more easie and common then for the most ungodly to say, they are all for a godly life ; and God forbid that any should be against it ; when yet they hate and reject it indeed, when it comes to the practice of those particular duties in which it doth consist. It is not godliness that they hate and reproach, but it is fervent prayer, holy conference, meditation, self-denial, mortification of the desires of the flesh, heavenly mindedness, &c. In general, they will say that Gods Law must be obeyed, and his Will preferred before their own : But when it comes to the particulars, they Love him not above all, they take his name in vain, they keep not holy his day, they disobey superiours that would reform them, they are envious, malicious, covetous, lustful, and break all the Commandements in particular, which in general they profess to keep. As if your servant should promise to do your work ; and when you set him to it, one thing is too hard, and another he is not used to, and so he hath his exceptions against the greatest part which he undertook. As if one should wound one of you in the head, and stab you to the heart, and cut off an arm or a leg, and say, I wish the man no harm ; It is not the man that I hate or hurt, but only the head, the heart, the arm, &c. Even so, it is not holiness that these men hate, and speak against ; but it is so much praying, and meditating, and reading the Scriptures, and making such a stir about Religion, when less ado may serve the turn.

But wretched soul, if thou have not the wit to see the contradictions of thy deceitful tongue, and the venome of thy malignant heart, dost thou think that such sottish shifts as these will

will blind the eyes of heavenly Justice, and save thee from the vengeance of a Holy God, which he hath denounced against rebellious hypocrites? But come on; let us try whether the several parts of godliness which thou questionest, or callest Puritanism or preciseness, are not most expressly and peremptorily commanded in the Word of God.

1. Is it so much preaching and hearing Sermons that thou quarrellest with? Hear then how Christ and his Apostles preached, and how they required men to hear. Mark 1. 35, 37, 38, 39. [And in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed: And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and when they had found him they said unto him, All men seek for thee: And he said, Let us go unto the next Towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth: and he preached in their Synagogues throughout all Galilee.] Mark 2. 2. [And straight-way many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them; no not so much as about the door, and he preached the Word unto them.] Mark 3. 19, 20, 21. [And they went into an house, and the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread: and when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said, He is beside himself.] Acts 5. 42. [And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.] Acts 4. 4. [They that were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word.] Acts 20. 20, 28, 31. [I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly and from house to house — Take heed therefore to your selves and to all the flock over which the Holy-Ghost hath made you Over-seers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood — Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.] Rom. 10. 14, 15. [How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher?] Phil. 1. 18. [Every way whether in pretence or in truth Christ is preached, and I do therein rejoyce, yea and will rejoyce.] 1 Cor. 1. 21. [It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.] Col. 1. 28, 29. [Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, &c.] 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. [I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord

Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.] I Cor. 9. 16. [*Necessity is laid upon me; yea woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*]

What say you now? do we not fall much short of those that we should imitate, rather than do *too much* in preaching? But what need we more than the text it self, where for hearing, *Mary* is so commended, and her sister blamed for neglecting it, though it was to make provision for Christ himself and those that were with him? Acts 20. 7. [*And upon the first day of the week when the Disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, being to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.*] Jam. 1. 19. [*Let every one be swift to hear.*] Rev. 2. 7. &c. [*He that hath ear, let him hear.*] Luke 8. 21. [*Jesus said, My mother and my brethren are those which hear the Word of God and do it.*] I hope you see this duty is past question.

2. Is it the reading of the Scripture that is the Puritanism or *too much ado* that you blame? Or is it the frequent meditating on such high and holy things? Hear what the Spirit saith of this: Psalm 1. 1, 2. [*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night — The ungodly are not so —*] Psalm 119. 97. [*O how I love thy Law! it is my meditation all the day.*] 99. [*Thy testimonies are my meditation.*] v. 148. [*Mine eyes prevented the night watches, that I might meditate on thy Word.*] Job 23. 12. [*I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*] Psalm 119. 72. [*The Law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*] Mark 12. 10. [*Have ye not read the Scriptures?*] John 5. 39. [*Search the Scriptures.*] Acts 8. 28. [*The Eunuich sitting in his Chariot read Esaias the Prophet.*] 1 Tim. 4. 13. [*Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*] I hope you see also that this part of godliness is past question.

3. Is it *much and fervent prayer* that is the preciseness or *too much ado* that you make question of? Hear then what the Holy Ghost doth say of that: Phil. 4. 6. [*In every thing by Prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known*

to God.] 1 Thes. 5. 17, 18. [Pray without ceasing : In every thing give thanks : for this is the will of God concerning you.] Luke 18. 1. [And he spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought alwayes to pray, and not to wax faint, &c.] Luke 11. 8, 9. [I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth : And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.] Luke 6. 12. [He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.] Daniel would not give over praying three times a day in his house, for thirty dayes space, at the Kings command, no not to save his life from devouring Lions. David saith, Psalm 119. 164. [Seven times a day do I praise thee.] Lam. 2. 19. [Arise : cry out in the night : in the beginning of the watches pour out thy heart like water before the face of the Lord :] Psalm 14. 4. it is part of the wicked Atheists description, that [They call not upon the Lord.] Jer. 10. 25. [Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and the families that call not on thy name.] Psalm 145. 18. [The Lord is nigh to all that call upon him ; to all that call upon him in truth.] When Paul was converted, the Lord lets Ananias know it by this token, Acts 9. 11. [For behold he prayeth.] Acts 1. 14. [These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.] Acts 2. 42. The three thousand Converts [continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.] Col 4. 2 [Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving ; withall praying also for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mysterie of Christ.] Rom. 12. 12. [Continuing instant in prayer.] Jam. 5. 16. [The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.] 1 Tim. 4. 5. [For (every creature) is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.] 1 Tim. 5. 5. [She that is a widdow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.] Jude 20. [Praying in the Holy Ghost.] 1 Thes. 3. 10. [Night and day praying exceedingly.] Ephes. 6. 18. [Praying alwayes with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints ; and for me, &c.] 2 Chron. 6. 29. [What prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief, and shall spread forth
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his hands in this house, then hear thou from Heaven, &c.]

I hope by this time, if you have eyes you see, that more frequent and fervent prayers than any of us use (and that without Book) were used by the antient servants of the Lord, and were not thought too much ado, nor more ado than God requireth of us.

4. Is it constant, diligent teaching, instructing, and catechizing your families, and labouring that your selves and they may understand and practise the Law of God? Hear also what the Spirit saith of this: and then judge whether it be too much preciseness.

Prov. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. [*My son, if thou wilt, receive my words, and hide my Commandements with thee; so that thou encline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding: yea if thou cryest after knowledge, and listest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*] Deut. 6. 5, 6, 7. & 11. 18, 19, 20. [*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might: And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up: And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*] Gen. 18, 19. [*For I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.*] Josh. 24. 15. [*But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.*] Prov. 22. 6. [*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*] Eph. 6. 4. [*Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*] These and many such passages shew you that the most diligent instructing of your families, is not more ado than God requireth, but a most weighty needful part of godliness.

5. Is it the meeting of divers neighbours together (distinct from Church-meetings) that you question? Why, if it be Schismatical in opposition to the publick meetings, or to do any unlawful work, we are against it as well as you. But if it be but for the redeeming of their time, for their spiritual advantage, and orderly

derly, peaceably, and soberly observed, by some that have more time, or care of their souls, then the rest of their neighbours; sure you will not for shame imagine, that neighbours may lawfully meet to make merry, and feast, and sport, and conferr about their worldly business, and yet may not meet to pray, and praise God, and repeat what instructions they have received of their Teachers, and prepare for and improve the publick Ordinances? Hear what the Spirit saith also in this. In the *text* here you find *just such a meeting*, where Christ was teaching, and *Mary* and his Disciples hearing, and *Martha* cumbred with providing for the company, and blamed for neglecting the advantage for her soul. *Acts 12. 12. Peter came out of prison to the house of Mary, where many were gathered together praying.* *Acts 10. 24. [Cornelius called together his kinsmen and near friends]* to hear *Peter*; who there preached to them, converted and baptized them. I need to instance in no more, because this was the ordinary practice of Christ and the Apostles. If you say, *Those were times of persecution*: I answer, True: But, 1. yet such times in which publick Assemblies were ordinarily held, and publick preaching used. 2. And as the good of mens souls required it in times of persecution, so when the good of souls requires it, in times of liberty, it is from the same general reason a duty; but *never forbidden* by Christ in any times of greatest prosperity and peace.

6. Is it the *holy observation of the Lords day* that is the *preciseness* that you cannot away with? Of *all men*, it beleeems not them to quarrel at this, that own our Homilies, and with the *Common-prayer*, use after the *fourth Commandment* to say, [*Lord have mercy upon us, and encline our hearts to keep this Law;*] When they have heard, [*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day, thou, thy Son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates.*] You see all the foresaid duties must be performed, and publick Assemblies for Gods worship and our instruction continued: And therefore there must be *some known appointed time* for these. And do you know *any other day* that is fitter? I think you will not pretend to that: You would not have another day instead of this, but you would have no day at all for such holy works; but a day for ease, and idleness, and sports, and vain discourse, and pleasures, with some little formal publick worship intermixt to cheat your souls. It is not then *the Day*, but the *serious, diligent, holy employment*

and duty that you are against ; and that I have proved to be Gods will before. Doubtless if you leave all men to serve God when they will, without any stated time, his worship will soon be brought to nothing, and they that pretend to keep every day holy, will keep none. Look upon the *places* where the *Lords day* is kept holy, and see whether *godliness* flourish not *there* incomparably above all other places. And I think none can doubt but that more souls have been converted and brought home to God on *that day*, then on any day of the week, if not then *all the rest* beside. And there is not the peevishest malignant soul of you, that can with any shew of reason prove that the holy observati^on of the Lords day is *unlawful*, if it were *not necessary* : So that we are at least on the *safest side of the hedge* : For we can say that we take a *most happy opportunity* for the good of our own souls, and the worshipping of God ; and that we are sure we do that which is *no sin* ; our adversaries themselves do not charge us with doing that which is *forbidden*, but that which they conceit *unnecessary* : But if we should do as they, and neglect this day, we are not sure but it may be a great sin ; (nay indeed we are sure it would be so.)

But what saith the Holy-Ghost now to this question ? To pass by the fourth Commandement, at this time, the letter of it, and the equity and reason of a seventh day ; the advantage of reason why there should be no less under the Gospel, and such like, I shall only now say these two things. 1. It is *plain in Scripture* that (*de facto*) the Apostles and Churches used to meet for holy Communion in Gods worship on the Lords day : And consequently that this was appointed by the Apostles, or immediately by Christ himself, there being then no other that pretended to any such authority : and that Apostolical allowance no man questioneth. The Apostles then having the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which they were enabled infallibly to make known the will of God, and being commissioned as well as enabled hereunto ; as their writing of the holy Scriptures, so their constitutions for the ordering of the Church, being the effects of that *Authority* received from Christ, and that *Ability* given them by the Spirit, are Divine, and principally the acts of Christ and the Holy Ghost, whose agents the Apostles were. Now that the first Churches did by their appointment, observe the Lords day for holy actions, is apparent. As Christ first laid the ground-work by *Ri-*
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ing on that day, so he began that very day to preach unto *Mary* the comfortable doctrine of his *Ascension*, in words that deserve to be written in gold, or rather in the deepest room of every true Believers heart: [*John 20. 17. Go to my Brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God*]; The first Sermon that ever was preached on a *Lords day*, even on the first *Lords day* by *Christ* himself, even to a beloved penitent woman, whom he chose to be as it were his *Apostle* to his *Apostles*, to deliver them this Message as from him.

On the same day the *Disciples* being *Assembled*, he owned and blessed their *Assembly*, and gave them the *Holy Ghost* and *Apostolical* power.

When *Thomas* being absent from the *Assembly* the first *Lords day*, did miss the sight of *Christ* and was unbelieving, *Christ* left him a whole week in his unbelief, and would not heal him till the next *Lords day*, which he honoured with that cure. Then the *Disciples* being met again, *Christ* came among them, and convinced *Thomas*.

On another *Lords day*, they were all with one accord in one place, and the *Holy Ghost* was in the extraordinary measure given them. And *Acts 20. 7.* it is mentioned as the custom of the *Disciples*, to come together on the first day of the week to break bread; and *Paul* then preached to them even till midnight. And *1 Cor. 16. 1, 2.* the *Collections* for the *Saints* were made every first day of the week in all the *Churches* of *Galatia*, and at *Corinth*, because they had then their holy *Assemblies*. And therefore *Rev. 1. 10.* it is called peculiarly the *Lords day*.

2. But to clear this past all rational doubting, we find in all the writings of the antients, and historie of the Church, that all the Churches through the world unanimously observed the *Lords day* as instituted by *Christ* or the *Holy Ghost* in the *Apostles*; none ever questioning or contradicting it, that ever I read of. He that hath read the writings of the Antients, and denyeth this, is unworthy to be disputed with. The practice of the universal Church is a full exposition of the fore-cited Scriptures; and though it be no Law to us it self, yet is it a full discovery of the fact (telling us what was the primitive practice) and so a discovery of the Law. And shall any private ignorant man, come in after one thousand six hundred and twenty six years, and say the *Apostles* and all the Churches in the world have been deceived till this day,