

And here I am even amazed at that which I must give you an account of ; O wonderful astonishing thing, that ever such base unworthy trifles should by Reasonable men be put into any comparison with God ! Wonderful, that so much madness and wickedness can enter into the mind and heart of man, as to let go all this Glory for a toy ? And yet more wonderful, that this should be the case of the greatest part of men on earth ! And yet more wonderful, that so many make so mad a choice, even when the case is opened to them, and plainly opened, and frequently opened ; and when they are earnestly entreated to be wiser, and importuned to make a better choice !

In a word, All that is set against the Lord, and All that is preferred before this Everlasting Life, and All the Portion of ungodly men, is no more then this ; *The Pleasure of sin for a season : The satisfying of the flesh : A little ease, and self, and fair words from men as miserable as themselves ; and all this but for a little, a very little time, when Temperance is as sweet at least ; a little that is excessive or forbidden, in wealth, or meat, or drink, or cloathes, or lust, or other fleshly pleasures, is the Joy, and the Heaven, and the God of the ungodly. The fleshly pleasures which are common to the beasts, and a little vain-glory among men, and this for a short uncertain time, (and then to pass to everlasting punishment) this is the chosen portion of the wicked. This is All for which they refuse the Lord, and for which they refuse a Holy life : This is All for which they part with Christ, and part with their Everlasting Peace ! This is All that they have for Heaven and their salvation ! and All for which they sell their souls ! To the everlasting shame of sin and sinners, it shall be known that this was All ! To the abasing of our own souls, that sometime were guilty of this madness, I shall tell you again that this is All ! To the humbling of the best, and the confounding of the wicked, and the amazement of us all, I must say that this is All ! This dirt, this dream, this cheat is All, that the wicked have for God and Glory ! This Nothing is All, that they obstinately prefer and choose, before him that is All in All ! O wonderful madness, stupidity, and deceit ! so common ! so wilful ! and so uncureable ! till tender mercy and grace shall cure it, in them that shall be saved.*

Well, the ballance is now set before you : You see what is in the One end and in the other : You see the Part that believers choose,

choose, and the part that is chosen by the rest of the world; And are you not yet resolved which is Best? and which to choose?

TWO sorts I look to meet with here, to whom I shall apply my self distinctly, before I come to the comparative work. First some will tell me that all these are needless words; and that *there is no man so senseless as to think that Temporal things are better then Eternal, or the world then God, or sin then Holiness.*

Ans. O that this were true! how happy then were all the world? I grant that many are *superficially convinced*, that are not *converted*; and that many have a slight opinion that Heaven and Holiness is best, that yet have no Love to it, and will not seek it above All. But their *practical judgement* doth not go along with their *Opinions*. They *relish* the world as *sweetest* unto them. In the *prevailing deepest thoughts* of their *hearts*, they set most by the pleasures of this world; Why else is their *Heart* most towards them? Why else do they *choose* them, and *refuse* to *Live* a Holy life? Why have they no delight in God? and why have we so much ado with them, to bring them to a heavenly mind and life, and all in vain? What! will not men be perswaded to choose that which they *know is best for them*?

Object. *Temptations are strong, and men are weak, and so men go against their knowledge.*

Ans. 1. What do Temptations prevail with you to do? Is it not to *think well* of *sinful pleasures*, and to think more hardly of the wayes of God? Is it not to *like* a worldly fleshly life better then a Holy life? If not, how can you follow those temptations? And if it be so, then they draw you for that time to think that fleshly pleasures are the *better part*.

2. But if indeed it be as you say, you are the most unexcusable miscreants in the world. What! do you *know* that *God is best for you*, and yet will you fly from him? Do you *know* that heaven is the only happiness, and yet will you seek this world before it? Do you *know* what is Best for you, and will not have it? and what is worst, and yet will keep it? Will you go to hell, and *know* whither you are going? And will you run from heaven and damn your selves, and *know* that you do so? Yea, and that

that while we day by day entreate you to the contrary ? If this be the case of any one of you, the God of Justice shall teach you to know what you are doing, by his everlasting vengeance : Heaven and earth shall be witnesses against you ; your own Consciences , and such Confessions of your own shall bear witness against you, that you *justly perish* , and are damned, because you *would* be damned, and are shut out of Heaven, because you *would not* be perswaded to come thither.

Object. But we hope we may have Both, Pleasure here and Heaven hereafter : and that we may be saved by the mercy of God and the blood of Christ, without the sanctification of the Spirit, and though we do not live a Holy life.

Ans. And who gave you these hopes ? Is it God on whom you pretend to trust ? or the Devil that doth deceive you ? Certainly not God ; For he hath told you over and over, that he will save none but the sanctified, Acts 26. 18. and that except a man be born again, even of the Spirit as well as of water, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3, 5. and that without holiness none shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. And is it God that perswadeth you that his Word is false ? Doubtless it is the Devil. When God had told Adam and Eve, [That in the day that they did eat the forbidden fruit, they should die the death] was it not the Serpent that gave them hopes of living, and told them that they should not die ? If you be at that pass that you will take on you to trust in God, and yet will not believe him, but your trust is but trusting that God is a Liar, you are as sottish in your presumption, as Heathens are in their Infidelity : For who is worse ? he that believeth that there is no God (as Atheists do) or he that believeth that God is a Liar, which is to be no God and worse ?

If therefore you do believe indeed that Heaven is Best, you must needs believe that Holiness is Necessary ; yea and Best too, when Heaven consisteth so much in perfected holiness. And therefore you must choose and seek with greatest diligence, that Happiness which you confels is Best, or never hope that it will be yours. O did you at the heart believe it to be Best, and that for you, you would love it, and seek it, and be a holy people without delay. You cannot so turn away from that which you heartily judge to be Best for you indeed.

But the most that I have to deal with, are they that cannot be perswaded at the heart, but that feasting, and drinking, and lust,

and

and wealth, and worldly honour are *Better for them* than a Holy life, with such promises of Heaven as God hath left us. For *all or most* ungodly men have this persuasion next their hearts, whether they observe it, and know of it, or not.

Now with such deluded unbelieving souls, I am next to plead this weighty cause. If thou that Readeest this be one of them, that takest a *worldly felicity*, with *Gods threatenings*, to be *Better and rather to be chosen*, than *Holiness* with his *Promise* of future happiness, I will now debate the case with thee, and undertake by the light of Christ, to open the horrible folly of thy mistake: And if I do not give thee such sound and weighty *undeniable* evidence, that no man of Reason should resist, to prove the *choice* of *Holy persons* to be the *wisest*, and their *part* the *best*, I will give thee leave to call me a Lyar, and a deceiver for ever.

CHAP. I I.

What in Reason he must do that would be certainly resolved which is the best part and way. And who shall be Judge.

But before we come to the debate, I have *two Questions* to put to thee, that in Reason must be *first resolved*.

The first is, *Whether thou art willing to know the Truth, and resolved to choose the best part when thou knowest it?* It is in vain for me or any man to Reason with thee, if thou *wouldst not know*; and to *shew thee the Truth*, if thou *hate it*, and *wilt not acknowledge* it when thou seest it; and to bring thee in the clearest light, if thou be before hand resolved to shut thy eyes. And if thou *wilt not choose* that which *thy conscience* shall be convinced thou shouldst choose, as being *absolutely best*, to what purpose then should it be revealed to thee? *Wouldst thou be a happy man or not?* *Wouldst thou have Joy or Sorrow?* *Good or Evil?* stop here, and before thou goest any further, make me this Promise, as before the Lord, [*That thou wilt not wilfully resist the light, and that thou wilt choose, and presently, and resolvedly choose that part that thy conscience shall tell thee upon certain evidence, is the Best.*] Promise but this, which no man of Reason should refuse, and

and then we may make something of our debate.

My second Question is, [*Who it is that shall be Judge between us in this debate? or whose witness it is that you will take for currant?*]

I am willing to stand to the *Judgement* of any that *understand* the case, and are *impartial*. I hope you will consent that we shall take the most competent witnesses and Judge. And if so,
 1. You know that *the Devil is no competent Judge*. It is he that perswadeth you that *present delights* are the *better part*, and rather to be chosen than a Holy life. But *he is Gods enemy*, and therefore no wonder if he speak against him: He is *your deadly enemy*; and therefore no wonder if he would deceive you: He is cast out of heaven himself, and would not have you possess the room that he hath lost: He is a wicked lying spirit: and therefore is not to be believed. He is a murderer from the beginning, and therefore will not speak for your salvation, *Joh. 8. 44.* If the *Devil* be to be believed, then none are wiser then the ungodly sensual worldly men; and none are in a worse condition then those that are despised by the world for Holiness, and that suffer all things for a Life unseen. But the enmity that is planted in your very natures against the *Devil*, I hope, will help you to confess, that *he* must not be the Judge.

2. And truly *Ignorant ungodly men are unmeet Judges*. And it is *they* that bawle against Religion, and speak against they know not what. 1. They are *Blind* by nature, and more blind by customary sin: And must a *Blind* man be your Judge or witness, in a case of everlasting moment? 2. They are *unexperienced* in the ways of God. How can they judge of a state that they *were never in*, and of a way that they *never went*? They *never tryed* the work of the new birth, nor *never tryed* the holy exercise of faith, or Love or any Grace; and therefore you may as well take the *Judgement* of a simple man concerning another cuntry that was never there, or concerning Navigation, that never was at sea, or concerning Learning that never read a book, or concerning Musick that never toucht an Instrument, as the *Judgement* of an un sanctified man concerning Holiness, and Communion with God: unless it be those that have a common convincing light, that causeth them to approve of that which they neglect themselves.

3. And certainly *your own sensuality and fleshy minds are unfit Judges*

Judges of the case: For they also are *Blind and unexperienced*: They are not suited unto spiritual things. To which I may add,
 3. That they and all ungodly men are *Partial* in the case, and therefore unfit to be witnesses, or Judges? All the Scripture speaks against the Devil, and the wicked, and the lusts of the flesh: and therefore they are a *party*, even the party that is to be ejected.
 4. Yea they are *enemies*, and therefore their testimony or judgement is not to be regarded. And what else will speak a word against a Holy life, but the *Devil*, the *flesh* and *wicked men*? Not any. And therefore let it be concluded that these are incompetent Judges in the case.

But who then shall be Judge? Let God be Judge, let Christ be Judge; Who can, who dare refuse this Judge? Refuse him not: for none but he is fit and competent: Refuse him not; for he will be Judge whether you will or no; and therefore your refusal will be vain. 1. He is *most wise*, and knoweth all things: and therefore cannot be deceived. 2. He is *Ininitely Good*, and therefore cannot do any wrong: He is *impartial* and respecteth not the persons of the greatest; He is *most just*, and therefore cannot pass an unjust sentence. 3. He only is the Judge that hath *full authority* to make a final decision of the case. 4. And in a word, he is so *absolutely perfect*, that he is lyable to no just exceptions, nor can men or Devils have any thing to say against his judgement. Are you agreed then that God shall be your Judge? Will you take that for the *better part*, which he calls *better*? If so, the controversy is at an end. The living God hath given us his judgement long ago. If you ask me, *Where*; He tell you anon, when I have examined some of the *witnesses* of the case.

And though I am resolved to own no proper final Judge but God, yet under him there are many *witnesses* that are worth the hearing. Indeed I am content to refer the cause to *any one* that doth but *know what he saith*, and is not *unfaithful*, (reserving to God the final judgement.)

And 1. Go to the *wisest* men on earth, and let them be *witnesses*. What think you of all the Prophets and Apostles, and of all the antient Fathers of the Church? Were not these men wiser then you, or then the sottish scorners that revile the ways which they never went, and speak evil of that which they understand not? If *Prophets* and *Apostles* were not for *Holiness* against

a *st. sly worldly life*, then I will be of your mind. But if they all as with one heart and mouth do cry down sin, and cry up Holiness, why should you then refuse their Testimony? Are you wiser then all these?

2. What think you of all the *godly able Ministers of Christ* that are *now alive*, or *ever were*? Are they not wiser then you, and a few drunkards that have scarce wit enough to do the Devils service without such sottishness as shames his cause? Have none of Christs Ministers, that spend their days in studying and searching after knowledge, more wit even in the matters of God, then a carnal Gentleman, or ignorant malicious wretch, that never used the means for Knowledge as these have done? In any other matter you will allow men that have made it the study of their lives to know more then you. If you want counsel for your *states*, you'l go to one that hath *studied the Law*. If you are *sick*, you will sooner seek advice of one that hath made it the business of his life to understand diseases and remedies, then to one that never studied it. You'l sooner take the judgement of every *tradesman* in his *trade*, then your *own* or anothers that never learned it. Allow but those men to be competent witnesses that have bent their thoughts and prayers and cares this way, and the controversie is resolved. For what is it that all our Sermons plead for but *Holiness* in order to *Everlasting Happiness*? What is it that so many thousand Books are written for, but for *Holiness*? Open the Books of the wisest men, and see which side it is that they are on? Go to the wisest ablest Ministers, and aske them which is the better part?

3. If *Wisdom* suffice not, let the *best* and *honestest* men be witnesses. Who *better* then Christ, then his Apostles, then all the holy Martyrs and Confessors of the Church, and all the Doctors and faithful Ministers of Christ? which side think you were they on that laid down their lives for the cause of Christ? sure they that would rather burn at a stake, or suffer all the scorns and torments of the world, then forsake a Holy heavenly life, did take it to be better then all the pleasures or profits of the world. Sure all the holy Doctors and Pastors of the Church that lived so Holy lives themselves, and spent their days in Praying, and watching, and meditating, and preparing for the life to come, contemning all the vanities of the world, did think that this was the Better

part, which they followed after with so much diligence and patience as they did.

Hear me a few words, you proud and self-conceited sinners, that will plead for your ungodly ways, and plead against a holy life, and quarrel with the most faithful administrations of your Pastors: It is a matter of Everlasting moment that *you* and *we* do differ about: and which of us is liker to be in the right? I confess I am a weak and ignorant man; but is the sottish ungodly quarreller any wiser then I am? How camest thou man to thy knowledge, that thou thinkest thy self wiser then me, and all the Pastors of the Church? My Knowledge that is but little, hath cost me almost forty years hard study? Hast thou read and meditated and studied more? Hadst thou better helps and means of Knowledge? God usually giveth his gifts in the painful use of means. If I should think my self wiser in thy trade, and able to control thee, thou wouldst judge me a self-conceited fool. What hast thou done for thy knowledge that I have not done? Hast thou prayed for it day and night? So have I. Hast thou had any private way of Learning that no man knoweth? Truly I have marvelled at the faces of many ignorant careless men, that they do not blush when we have thus expostulated with them, when they quarrel with their Teachers, and set against them with as brazen a face as if they were all Doctors, or had studied forty years, and we were as they are: Yea as if they were wiser then all the Apostles, Doctors and Pastors of the Church. Were it noe a wonder indeed if God should give more knowledge about the matters of salvation to a sensual voluptuous Gentleman, or to an idle droan, or a fellow that scarce ever read over the Bible, and to such as live a worldly fleshly and ungodly life, then to all his Ministers and Servants that love his Laws, and meditate in them day and night, and live in Prayer, and other holy exercises, and make it their daily care and business, to conform their hearts and lives to the holy Doctrine which they study? Surely God will sooner reveal his mind to a *diligent searcher*, that *seareth* and *loveth* him, then to a *lustful Epicure*, or a drunken, swearing, worldly sot. He that every day abuseth the *Holy Ghost* that should be his *Teacher*, is not so likely to come to Knowledge, as he that *humbly learneth* and *obeyeth* him. It is a strange evidence that most *wicked men* do give us to prove themselves *wiser then their Teachers*: when they can scarce give us a
wise

wife account of the *Principles* of Religion contained in a *Catechism*, they will prove themselves wise by *despising wisdom*, and railing at the *Wise*. They prove themselves *Learned* by reproaching the *learned*: They prove themselves *godly* enough to be *saved*, by *hating* and *scorning* them that are *Godly*; and prove themselves the *servants of Christ* by speaking against his *service*; They prove themselves wise enough to *Teach* or *quarrel* with their *Teachers*, by *refusing to Learn*, and to be any *wiser*, and by babbling out their *sinfull folly*. And when they have done, they prove that *their hearts* for all this are *as good as the precisest*, by prating against that *Holiness* which is the only health and goodness of the heart, and by shewing us to our grief that they neither know what *Goodness* is, nor what is in their *hearts*. They prove to us that they have *Hopes* for all this, of being saved and seeing the face of God, by *hating* them that are *Pure in heart*, that have the promise of *seeing his face*, *Mat. 5. 8.* and by reviling or forsaking the way of salvation, and by shewing us on their souls the open Marks of the wrath of God, and of a state of condemnation. This is the Devils Logick. And this is the wisdom of the wicked. They may next go further, and prove that they are *chaste* by reviling *chastity*; and prove that they are *sober* by speaking against *sobriety*, and by wallowing in their vomit: or prove that they *know* all *arts* and *trades*, and *sciences* by *reviling* them: And as they now prove that they are the *freemen* of Christ, by shewing us the *Devils fetters* upon them, so if they hold out, they will shortly have nothing to *prove themselves in Heaven*, but by shewing us the *flames of Hell* which they endure.

If therefore all the *Holiest* and *wisest* men on earth may be admitted to be witnesses, then *Holiness* must be your *Best*, and all things else be nothing worth in comparison of it.

5. Moreover, if yet you would have more witness, shall those be heard that *have tryed both states*; the state of *Sin*, and the state of *Holiness*? and that have gone *both wayes*; and therefore are able to speak to us by *experience*?

If you were to take advice about any worldly business, you would choose a man of *Experience* for your Counsellor; an *experienced* Physicion for your bodies: and an *experienced* Tradesman for your work. You will sooner believe a Traveller that hath *seen* the places that he speaks of, (if he be honest) then

another; godly men have tryed both wayes. Alas they have *known*, and *too much* known the way of sin; and they have tryed the Holy way that you dislike. I think therefore that they are competent Witnesses: And if their witnesses be worth any thing; the cause must go against the ungodly. For *their Lives* tell you *their Judgement*: Their hatred to sin, their diligent seeking after God, their constant endeavours in a Holy course, their suffering any thing rather then forsake this Holy way, when once they have sincerely chosen it; all these do fully acquaint you with their judgement. Do you think it is for *Nothing* that the holy servants of the Lord, do stick so close to him, and labour so constantly in his work? surely if they had not found that this way is beyond comparison the best, you might draw them from it, into a state of ungodliness again; at least fire and sword and torment might perswade them to forsake it. Something he findeth in it that is good, that will let go his life and all the world for it.

What say you now! have you any just exceptions against the testimony of these *Experienced men*? The *ungodly* cannot be competent witnesses; for they have tryed but one side: They have had *experience* of a *prophane*, a *fleshy*, *worldly* life: but they never yet tryed a *Holy* life. And therefore how should they be fit to tell you, what Good is in the way of God, which they never travelled in? Or what Gain is in the Heavenly Treasure, which they never traded for? Or what Beauty is in the face of Christ and Glory, which they never had an eye of faith to see? Or what sweetness is in the Hidden Manna, which they never tasted? If you say that *many that have tryed the way of Godliness, have turned from it, and are against it!* I beseech you weigh my answer.

1. It is not *One* of a hundred that doth so, no not in these *apostatizing times*, when all seducers are let loose. And is *one* mans judgement more regardable then a *hundred*, yea, *many hundred*?

2. Nay, it is no *One* at all! Those that you say turn off, are only such as tryed an *Opinionative Religiusness*, and some of the *Outward duties* of Christianity, but they never tryed the power of a *living rooted faith*, nor the *predominant Love of God* in the soul, nor a *Living Hope of the Heavenly Glory*, nor the *sweetness of a Heavenly life*; nor the *mortification of the fleshy interest*, and *true self-denyal*: These are the *vital parts* of Christianity, which

which these few Apostates never tried; though some of them have had some acquired counterfeits of them, and some good gifts of common grace, and think that none had more than they had.

Sinner, I beseech thee for the Lords sake, deal faithfully with thy poor soul, when all lies at the stake. Wilt thou take the judgement of a swaggering Gallant, or a scoffing, worldly or ungodly Sor, that none of them ever truly tried a state of Holiness: And wilt thou refuse the judgement of God, and of all his servants that have tryed it? Go to any Godly man, and ask him which of these wayes he hath found by experience to be best? and hear what he will say to thee? He will be ashamed to hear thee make a Question of it. He will tell thee [*Alas friend, I was once deceived by sin, and deceived with the pleasures of my flesh, and the glittering glory and riches of this world, as you are now! I once was a stranger to the life of faith, and the Hopes of Heaven, and the Holiness of the Saints. But it was by the meer delusion of the Devil, and it was the fruit of the blindness, and deadness of my heart. I knew not what I did, nor where I stood, nor what I chose, nor what I set light by! I never well considered of the matter, but carelessly followed the sway of my fleshly inclination and desires! But now I see I was the Devils slave, and my Pleasures were my fetters, and my own corrupt affections were my bondage; and I now find that I did but delude my soul; I got nothing by all that the world did for me, but provision for my after-sorrows: I had been now in Torments if I had but dyed in that condition. I would not be again in the case that I was in for all this world, or a thousand such worlds! That life that once I thought the best, hath cost me dear, even the breaking of my heart: and a thousand thousand fold dearer would have cost me, if the dearest blood, and recovering Grace of my dearest Lord had had not prevented it. O had I not been unspeakably beholden to the Mercy of the Lord, even to that Mercy which I then made light of, I had been undone for ever; I had been laid under Everlasting desperation before this. Now I find that there is no life so sweet as that which I then was so loth to choose! Now it is my only grief that I was holy no sooner, and can be no more Holy then I am. O that I had more of that quickning, comforting, saving Grace! O that I were further from my former sinful fleshly state? O that I could get nearer God, though I parted with all the pro-*

perity of this world ! I now find what I lost by my continuing in sin so long : but then I knew it not. O friend, as you love your soul, take warning by me, and make use of my experience, and give up your self to God betimes !] This, or to this purpose, would the answer of an experienced person be, if you should ask him, Which is the better way ?

But if you say, that thus we would be our selves the Judges, and bring the matter into our own hands, I answer you, 1. It is true, we would be our selves your Helpers, and do the best we could for your salvation : And if you will neither help your selves, nor give us leave to help you, take what you get by it ; we have done our part.

But, 2. I will not yet so part with you. I will further make you this reasonable offer. I demand of thee, whoever thou art that Readest these words, Whether thou know of any man on earth that thou thinkest to be a wiser man then thy self ? If not, thou art so like the Devil in Pride, that no wonder if thou be near him in malignity and misery. If thou do know of any wiser then thy self, go with me, or with some faithful Minister to that man, and ask him, Whether a diligent holy life, be not much Better then any other life on earth ? and if he do not say as I say here, and as Christ saith in my Text, that [the godly choose the better part] or else if I prove him not a very sot before thy face, I will give thee leave to brand my understanding in thy esteem, with the notes of infamy and contempt.

Yea more then so, I will allow thee to go to one that differeth from me in the way of his Religion : Ask an Anabaptist, if thou think him more impartial, whether A Holy and Heavenly heart and life be not the best ? and try whether he will not say as I do. Ask those that you call Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Independents, or Separatists : Ask an Arminian, or one of the contrary mind : Yea ask a Papist, and see whether he will not say as I do ? It is true, they are every one of them of minds somewhat different about some points in the order and manner of their seeking God. But all of them, that are but sober men, will confess as with One mouth, that God should be loved above all, and sought and served above all, and that all should live a Holy, Diligent, Heavenly life.

2. But yet if all this will not satisfie you, I will come yet lower : Who is it that you would have to be Judge or Witness in this case ?

case? Is it thy *malignant*, or *worldly*, or *drunken*, and *ungodly* friend? I am contented that the case be referred *even to him*, and to *as many* of them as thou wilt, upon condition that he will but first *Try* the way that he is to judge of. Let him but make an *unfeigned* tryal of a life of *Holy Faith*, and *Love*, and *Obedience*, and *Self-denyal*, as long as I have done, and we will receive his Testimony: Nay more, let him thus try a life of *Holiness*, (inwardly and outwardly) but one year, yea or but *one moneth*, or day, or hour, and we will take his Testimony: But to be judged by a man in a matter of salvation, that speaks of what he *never knew nor tryed one hour*, but speaks against he knows not what, this is a motion too bad to be made to a very *Bedlam*.

6. If yet you are not resolved which is the *Better part* and *way*, to whom do you desire to refer it? Shall *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Infidels* be Judges? Why if they be, they will give the cause against you. *Jews* and *most* of the Heathen world do profess to believe a *life to come*, where some are happy and some are miserable; and they commonly profess that all men should obey their Maker, and make it their chiefest care and labour in this life, to be happy in the next: *Heathens* will confess *this*. And yet I suppose you will easily confess that *these* men are none of the fittest Judges. The way to Life by Jesus Christ *they* do not understand: But that the *world is vanity*, and nothing to be preferred *before* our *happines*s in the world to come, this they will commonly acknowledge. And if the *lives* of the most of them contradict this profession, yet still they are forced to confess the truth: and truth is not theless truth, because they that confess it will not obey it. Nay what greater testimony can you wish to silence your unbelieving thoughts, then the witnesses of the *enemies of the truth*, who as they *condemn themselves* by bearing witness to that which they refuse to practise, so shall their witness aggravate your condemnation, if you will live below it. What, are you Christians? and yet refuse to come up in your choice and lives to the doctrine of Heathens and Infidels?

7. I know you will think at least that *those Hereticks* that are daily here bawling against us, will not be partial on our side: If you think that this Doctrine is contrived by us for any *ends* and *interests* of our own, hearken then to our *enemies*. These railing *Quakers* that can scarce tell how to speak a word of the Mini-

sters of Christ, but what is the spawn of venomous, fiery, bitter malice, do for all this cry up *Holiness of life*. Though they corrupt the doctrine of Christ so odiously, and speak like Heathens in many of their extasies and writings, yet do they openly cry down your sensual worldly wayes. Do you not hear how they rail at us for your sakes that are vicious and ungodly, and tell us that you are the *fruit and shame of our Ministry*? Though these words be the *fruit and shame* of their malicious Heresie (for all the world may know that it is our daily work to procure your Conversion, and that you keep your sins, and refuse a holy heavenly life, in despite of us) yet I must tell you, that these wretches shall condemn you. The streets and Congregations have heard them cry out against your ungodly lives: and yet you will not turn to God. Must good and bad, must Ministers and raging Hereticks give in their testimony against you, and yet will you not be satisfied and come in?

8. If yet you know not the *better part*, to whom will you appeal? Will you go to the *Multitude* and put it to the vote, not only among Christians, but throughout the world? Truly there is no great reason for this, when most men are so blind and wicked: but yet if you should, they would go against you, twenty, if not an hundred to One. I know well enough that when it comes to *practice*, they will not *live a holy Life*, and shew thereby a root of bitterness: But if you ask them what their judgement is, *Whether God or the world*, whether *Heaven or earth*, whether *Holiness or sin* be best and to be chosen, most men are against you, and would give it you as their judgement under their hands, that God and everlasting life should be first sought: Though by this *Confession* they condemn themselves, yet is it their *Confession*. As I told you before, the *Jews* are for this doctrine; the *Turks* and other Mahometans are for it; most of the *Heathen world* is for it, doctrinally, though they will not practice it: Only there are three sorts against it in the world, that ever I heard of. One sort are the *Cannibals* that eat mens flesh, and go naked, and live like beasts, and never heard of another life; and some such savages as they. Another sort is a few of the *Heathen Philosophers* and and their followers, that differ in this from *all the rest*. A third sort is here and there a *debauched apostate*, that by the righteous judgement of God are so far forsaken by his Grace, for their pride and falshood against the truth, that they have lost the be-
- lief

lief of a Life to come, and live under the visible plagues of God upon their souls, as men that have sinned wilfully against the truth, and have *no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgement and fire that shall devour the adversary*, Heb. 6. 6, 7. & 10. 26. and are near the state of the Devils themselves, that are reserved in the chains of spiritual darkness to the judgement of the great day, *Jude 6. Job 21. 30.* And will you take the judgement of here and there a forlorn wretch, a deplorate apostate, an Epicure, or a Countrey of inhumane Cannibals, before the judgement of the most wise and godly, and of almost all the world? What excellency hath the understanding of these singular men, that it should be so valued above all others? You know partly in *this place*, who they be that are of this Opinion: And is their Number, or Wisdom, or Conversation such as should move you to be of their Opinion? Shall half a dozen desperate apostates of ungodly lives, seem wiser to you then all the world? And yet I am perswaded that if you go to any even of *these few* apostates, whatever they *think*, they will *confess* that a *Holy life is best*: And yet have you not witnesses enough against you?

9. Who then shall be the Judge? Shall we appeal to the very *Things themselves*, and to the daily *experience* of the world? You see that worldlings labour for the wind. You see that all their care and pains will not avoid the stroak of death, that turneth the proudest flesh into a clod, and maketh dirt of the greatest Prince. You see that wealth and honour do but mock men, and leave them in the grave, to darkness and corruption. And when you are sure that this will be the upshot of all your fleshly pleasure and worldly gains, are you not satisfied past all doubt, that the smallest hopes or possibility of another life should be sought with far more care then this?

10. If none of these witnesses be regarded by thee, I know not whom to appeal to, but *thy self*! And wilt thou needs *thy self* decide the case? Hast thou knowledge and experience, honesty, and impartiality enough to fit thee to be judge: If thou hadst, thou wouldst make no doubt of it, but have been resolved for Heaven and Holiness ere this. Thy *unresolvedness* proves thee blind and partial, and very much forsaken by the spirit of light: And should such a one be judge? But go to, I will much

referre thy case to thy self (reserving still the final judgement to the Lord) upon these just and resonabl conditions.

1. Wilt thou first thy self but use those necessary means for knowledge, in Reading, Fasting, Praying, Watching, Meditation, Conference with the wise, and such like, as all those do that come to ripe and saving Knowledge? If I referr my health to thee as my Physicion, thou must not refuse to try my pulse, and see my urine, and use the means to find out the disease. Wouldst thou be my Lawyer, and refuse to read my Evidences, and study my case? And wilt thou needs be judge thy self of the matters of thine own felicity or misery, and yet refuse to read and hear and pray and meditate, and use the necessary means of understanding? Wilt thou lie in bed and work out thy salvation? Wilt thou make use of no ones eyes but thy own, and yet wilt thou wink or draw the Curtains, or shut the windows, and cast away thy spectacles, and neither come into the sunshine, nor use a candle? This is but to say, I will willfully condemn my soul, and none shall hinder me.

2. But yet another condition I must propose. If thou wilt but (as I said before of others) a while make *Tryal* of a holy life, and try in thy self what *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Charity* are, and try what *selfdenyal* is, I will then referr the matter to thy self. Go back from God if thou find any Reason for it: and turn from Christ and Heaven and Holiness if thou do not like them. But if thou wilt needs be the judge, and wilt not be perswaded to *try* the thing, thou art a partial self-deceiving judge.

3. But if this much cannot be obtained, at least be Considerate in thy judging. If thou wilt but take thy self aside from the noise of worldly vanities and deceits, and commune seriously with thy heart, and bethink thee as before the Lord, and as one that knows he must shortly dye, Whether Heaven or Earth should be sought most carefully, and Whether God or thy flesh should be served most resolvedly and diligently; and if thou wilt but dwell so long upon these manlike thoughts till they are digested, and Truth have time to shew its face, I dare then leave the question to thy self. The next time that the Sermon or any affliction comes near thee and awakeneth thy Conscience, do but withdraw thy self into secret, and soberly bethink thee of the matter, what *hopes* thou hast from the *world*, and what thou *maist have* from *God*: what *Time* is, and what *Eternity* is, and give but
Conscience

Conscience leave to speak, and then I will venture the issue upon thy *Conscience*: For *thee* I mean, though I must stick to a better judge my self. Doth not *Conscience* sometime tell thee, that the Holyest persons are the wisest, and that thy labour is liker at last to be lost and repented of, than theirs? Doth not *Conscience* sometime make thee wish that thou wert but in as safe a case as they: and that thou mightest but die the death of the Righteous, and that thy last end might be as theirs?

4. But if all this will not serve the turn, thou shalt be Judge thy self: but it shall be when thou art more capable of judging. If God by *Grace* shall Change thy heart, I will stand to thy Judgement: If he do not, when thy graceless guilty soul shall pass out of thy pampered dirty flesh, and appear before the dreadful God, I will then leave the case to thy *Conscience* to judge of. To all *Eternity* it shall be partly left to the judgement of thy *Conscience*, whether sin or Holiness be better? and whether *Saints* or careless sinners were the wiser? and whether it had not been better for thee to have spent that life in preparing for thy Endless life, which thou spentst in slighting it, and caring for the world and flesh. Then thou shalt be Judge thy self of these matters: but under a more severe and righteous judge: And so as shall make thy tearing heart to wish with many a thousand groans, that thou hadst judged wiselier in time.

But because that Judgement will be to desperation, and too late for hope or any help, let *Conscience* speak when thou lyest sick, and seest that thou art a dying man! Then judge thy self whether a Holy or a worldly life be better? and whether it had not been thy wiser course to have sowed to the spirit, that so thou might reap everlasting life, then to have sowed to the flesh, from which thou now lookst to reap no better then corruption. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap, Gal. 6. 6, 7.

But because it will be very late to stay till thy own Death draw so neer thee, go but to thy neighbours that lie in sickness, looking for the stroak of death; Yea to thy companions in sin and folly, and ask them then which way is better? Ask them then which is the better part? Whether now they had rather be the Holyest Saints, or such as they have been? Whether now they had not rather they had spent their time in the most careful seeking for Everlasting life, then in doing as they have done? Say to thy old
companion

companion now, [“ Brother, I see you are near your end! the
 “ mortal stroak of death is coming! you are now leaving all the
 “ pleasures of this world: I pray you tell me now your Judgement,
 “ whether mirth, and sport, and feasting, and drinking, and
 “ wealth, and honour be more to be sought then life eternal? and
 “ whether Hearing and Reading the word of God, and Praying,
 “ and meditating, and flying from sin, be as bad or as needles a
 “ thing as we have formerly taken it to be? Had you rather appear
 “ before the Lord in the case of those that we derided as Paritans
 “ and too precise for making such a doe about salvation, or in the
 “ case that you and I have lived in?] Ask but this Question to
 thy old companions, and try whether the Consciences of almost
 all that approach their end, do not bear witness against ungod-
 liness, and do not justifie the holy diligence of the Saints. It
 is but two days since a poor drunkard of a neighbour Pa-
 rish, being ready to pass out of this world, did send hither
 (and to other Parishes) in the terrours of his soul, to *desire*
our Congregations to take warning by him, and to strive with
God if possible, for some mercy for his soul, that was passing
in terrours into another world, because of the guilt of his odious
sin.]

Well sirs, I have gone along with you to all the creatures in
 this world, that have any fitness to judge in this case: and if all
 these will not serve, we must go to another world for Judgement,
 or stay till you come there.

11. And really do you think if we could speak with *Angels* or
departed Souls, that they would not consent with *God* and all *Be-*
lievers in their Testimony? O how they would rebuke their
 madness, that make *any doubt* of so great, so plain, so sure a
 truth, as this of the necessity and the excellency of a Holy
 life. None are so fully resolved of this question as they that
 have tasted the End of both, and past the righteous judgement
 of the Lord. They that are feeling the anguish of their Con-
 sciences, and the tormenting displeasure of Almighty *God*, are
 satisfied by this time: whether the Godly or ungodly were the
 Wiser men, and whether sanctity or sensuality were the *Better*
 course? They that are rejoicing with *Christ* in *Glory*, are satis-
 fied perfectly of this question, and are far from repenting of their
 choice. *Luk. 16.* *Christ* tells you enough, in the case of the Rich
 man and *Lazarus*, how men judge in the life to come.

12. But

12. But if all these witnesses will not serve you, what shall we say to you? Whom will you choose to be your Counsellor? There is none left that I remember, unless you will go the *Devil* for advice. But against this I have told you enough before. Will he speak for *Holiness* that is a spirit of *uncleanness*; and will he shew thee *Heaven* that laboureth purposely to *hide it from thee*, till thou have lost it? Or will he let thee see the odiousness and danger of thy sin, when it is the snare and bait by which he hopeth to undo thee; But yet for all this, let me tell thee, that thou mayst learn even from the *Tempting Enemy* himself, the Truth of that which I am now asserting. For as the Devil himself believeth it, when he persuadeth thee not to believe it; so the very *nature* and *manner* of his *Temptations*, may help thee to perceive that *Heaven* is attainable, and *Holiness* is the only way. Would he make so much ado about it, to keep thee from the believing it, and seeking it, if there were not a *Heaven* for thee to find? why is he so eager to draw thee unto sin, if sin be not *hurtful* to thee? Dost thou not *feel* the importunity of his *Temptations*? Its easie to observe them. Why is he so much against a Holy doctrine, and a Holy life, and a Holy people, if it were not that he knows the Necessity and worth of *Holiness* for thy good? The actions of a *Knowing Enemy*, may do very much to acquaint us with the truth. Besides this, he hath oft appeared in bodily shapes (as I am able to prove by undeniable evidence;) sometime to entice men to sin, and sometime to be *Gods* executioner to afflict them for it, and sometime to make a *Covenant* with witches and *Conjurers* for their souls, as many a hundred of them have confessed at their death. And why should he be so desirous of thy soul, if thou hadst none to lose? or so desirous to deceive thee, and deprive thee of salvation, if there were none for thee to lose? and if this were not the chief concernment of thy soul, why should thy chief enemy so much regard it? Thou seest that he is not so careful to deprive thee of thy *fleshy pleasure*; He careth not how much thou hast of this: The more the glutton is pleased with his *chear*, and the more the drunkard delighteth in his cups, and the more the fornicator is pleased in his filthiness, and every voluptuous person in his voluptuousness, the Devil is pleased so much the more. He cares not if thou have all the *Kingdoms of the world*, if he can deprive thee of the *Everlasting Kingdom*; Nor will he grudge thee the *glory and honour* of

the world, if he can but keep thee from the heavenly Glory. He will allow thee the Hypocrites Reward, which is the applause of men, if he can but keep thee from the Saints Reward, which is the favour of God. He cares not how much of thy Good things thou hast here, if he can deprive thee of the Everlasting Good. It is his desire that thou have thy *Portion in this life*, that thou mayst miss of the *Believers Portion* in the next. Certainly the Devil himself by his Temptations, Apparitions, and Contracts, doth plainly tell us of a life to come, and what it is that conduceth most to our Good or Hurt, our Joy or Torment; and consequently teacheth us what to *choose*, by tempting us so palpably and eagerly to refuse it.

You see now what a Jury of Witnesses I have brought in, to testify which is the *Better part*: The Devil and the wicked are added to the rest, because you will hear no better witnesses. If you will, here are enow whose testimonies are unquestionable.

But when all is done, it is the Lord that is and will be Judge. All these are but *witnesses* to dispose thee to receive his sentence. Thou art *no Believer*, till the Authority of the Word of God, will serve to satisfy and resolve thee.

CHAP. III.

Full proof (in twentie Queries) from Reason itself that there is a Life to come, and Holiness is the way to it; and the Better Part: And that the Gospel is the certain Word of God (in fifteen Queries more) with Answers to the Infidels Objections.

AND by this time I come somewhat nearer to the *Infidel*, and am ready to answer his fore-going Question, [*Where shall I find the Judgement or Testimony of the Lord?*] O, saith the *Unbeliever*, if I were but sure that there were a life hereafter, where the goodly and the wicked shall be differently Rewarded, as the Scripture speaks, then I must confess he were no better then a mad man that would prefer this world, or wilfully live in sin, and would not seek Heaven with all his might, and be as earnest in Holiness as
the