

6. The very *Bodily infirmities* of Believers, are a constant help to keep them humble. They have all this *treasure but in earthen vessels*, 2 Cor. 4. 7. Their souls are here so poorly lodged in corruptible Tabernacles of earth, and so meanly clothed with frail, diseased, mortal flesh, that it is madness to be proud.

7. And the *many and great afflictions* of the godly, are medicines that are purposely given them by their Physician to cure Pride, and keep them humble. Why else must their sufferings be so many? and why must they daily bear the Cross? but that they may be conformed to the image of Christ.

8. And to the same end it is that God doth let loose upon them *so many enemies*. All Satans temptations, and the worlds allurements and vexations, and all their disappointments here, and all the scorns and mocks of the ungodly, and the censures and slanders of wicked tongues, and often bitter persecutions, what are they but the bitter medicines of God (permitted and ordered by him, though caused by the Devil and wicked men) to save the servants of the Lord, from the sin and danger of being lifted up? Do you say that their *Honour* will make them proud? Why *you* that thus oppose them and despise them, are *curing* them of their *pride*, and do not know it: as Scullions scoure the rust off the vessels for their Masters use; and as Leeches draw out the blood that causeth the disease; and as the Jews by their sin promoted the Redemption of the world by the death of Christ. When God seeth his servants in danger of being lifted up above measure, he oft sendeth a messenger of Satan (who may be an Executioner of Gods chastisements) to buffet them, (2 Cor. 12. 7.) Sometimes by slanders, sometime by reproaches, sometime by imprisonments or greater sufferings, and sometimes by horrid troublesom temptations.

9. The very *foresight* of death it self is a *humbling means*: and the last enemy Death, is yet unconquered, and our Bodies must corrupt in dust and darkness, and be kept in the grave as common earth, till the Resurrection, that the soul may not grow proud that hath such a body.

11. And the *Day of Judgement* is so described to us in the Scripture, as tends to keep the soul in awe and in *Humility*. To think of *such a day*, and *such a reckoning*, before *such a God*, me thinks should humble us.

11. And our *Absolution and Glorification* at that day, is promised us now but *conditionally* (though God will see that the condition be performed by all that he will save.) And therefore the poor soul is oft so far to *seek* about the *certain sincerity* of his own Faith and Repentance, that most of the godly are kept in *fears and doubtings* to the death. Yea and *Humility and Self-denial* are part of this Condition : And all their Honour and Glory with Christ is promised to the *Humble* only : *Humility* is commanded them in the Precept : *Humility* is it that they are exhorted to by the Ministers : And *Pride* is threatened with everlasting wrath, and described as the Devils image. So that Holiness hath all the advantages against Pride that can be here expected.

12. To conclude, the Godly know that as they have nothing but *from God*, so they have nothing but *for God* : so that their own Honour is *for him*, more then *for themselves* ; and it is *essential* to their Holiness, to make *God their end*, and set *him highest*, and referr all to his Pleasure and Glory. So that you see now that we *may Honour them that fear the Lord*, (*Psalms 15. 4.*) without being guilty of making *them proud*, and that we must not deny them the Honour that God hath given them as their due, for fear of their being proud of it. Though this, as all things else, must be prudently managed to particular persons, according to their various states.

And therefore let me here warn all you that profess the fear of God : Take heed lest you be *proud* of any thing that God hath *Honoured* you with : For if you be, you see what an Army of Reasons and Means you sin against ; and consequently how great your sin will be. And your consciences and the world shall be forced to justify God and his Holy wayes, and to prove against you, that it was not long of them that you were proud : and that none in the world was more against it then God and Holiness : and that it was not because you were so Religious, but because you were no more Religious. And if Pride of Knowledge, Gifts, or whatsoever, be *unmortified* in you, it will certainly prove that *you are none of the sanctified* ; when your profession of *Sanctity* will never prove that *Sanctity* was a cause or confederate in your sin.

And

AND now I have shewed you the *Honour of Godliness*, let us briefly, (and but briefly) consider of *your Honour* that reject it, and see then whether the godly or ungodly are *more Honourable*.

1. Ungodly men have the *Basest Master* in the world. Would you know who? Let Christ be Judge, *John 8. 44.* [*Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father you will do.*] *2 Tim. 2. 26.* They are taken captive by the Devil at his will; that is, to do his will: It is *he* that stirreth you up to filthy talking, to speak against Godliness, to curse and swear, and you *do his will*. His will is, that you should neglect a holy life, and you *do his will*. His will is, that you live not after the spirit, but after the flesh, and you *do his will*. O poor souls! Do you think it is only Witches that expressly Covenant with him, that are his miserable servants! Alas, it is *you also*, if *you do his will*. For (if you will believe either God or common reason) [*to whom you yield your selves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.*] *Rom. 6. 16.* The godly themselves were the servants of sin, till they obeyed from the heart the doctrine of the Lord, *v. 17.* And are you not come to fair preferment, to be the Devils drudges! Though he should cloath your Bodies with Purple and fine linnen, and feed you sumptuously every day, yet indeed you are no better, as the case of that miserable man may tell you, *Luke 16.* It is the greatest Baseness to have so Base a Master.

2. And it is but an ignoble *Base design* that the ungodly carry on in the world. What is it but to provide for, and please their flesh? It aimeth at nothing beyond this life. And a beast can eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, and satisfie his lust, as much as they. A swine can carry a mouth full of straw to his lodging, and a bird can build a nest for her young ones. And what do ungodly men more in the world! whether Gentlemen or Beggars, the flattered Gallants or the poor day-labourers, if they be not such as first seek Heaven, and live to God, what do they but make a pudder in the world, about a little dirt or smoak? and find themselves somewhat to do that is *next to nothing*, instead of that for which they were created; and busie themselves about *nothing* till their time is gone, and the night is come when none

can work? If you would judge of a mans *Designs*, fore-see his *Attainments*. If you can tell what *End* it is that they come to, you may know how to judge of their *intentions* and their *course*. Their corpses you know, have no greater a *Happiness*, (after a few foolish merry hours) then to lie in the earth as filth or dust. You can see no *Honour* attained *there*. It is a child indeed that thinks a gilded *Monument* over a rotten carcase, is any great matter of *Honour* or *Benefit* to it. And if you look after the soul, (by the prospective of the Word of God) alas, it goeth to far greater dishonour. And is this it that worldlings make such a stir for?

3. The *work* also that they are *employed* in, is like the *Design*. *Sin*, which is the *Basest* thing in the world, is their employment. The work of a Scullion, or the basest honest trade you can imagine, is a thousand times less dishonourable, then *sin*: Yet flattered Gallants believe not this, when they can please their flesh without losing the reputation of worthy Gentlemen! Nor will our common ungodly people be perswaded of it, that are more ashamed to be found praying then sinning, and to be called a *Puritan* then a *Good-fellow* or a *Swearer*: and that think they are as good men as others, when up to the ears in the drudgery of the Devil: As if the filth of sin were no dishonour to them, which nothing but the Spirit and blood of Christ is able to wash out. These are the men that *Paul* mentioneth with weeping; *Phil.* 3. 18. that *mind earthly things, whose God is their belly, and who glory in their shame.*

4. Moreover, it is a *Base disposition* that ungodly men are possessed with. Though their *Natures* are essentially noble as being the work of God, and capable of most glorious things; yet have they made them *Dispositively Vile*: They are fleshly-minded, earthly-minded, ignorant of Heavenly things, not favouring the things of the Spirit, but like the Serpent, crawling on earth, and feeding on the dust. Grass is sweeter to a horse then junkets; and a little money or vain-glory is sweeter to a fleshly mind then God and Glory, and all the treasures of Saints and Angels. A swine never thinks of God or Heaven, but of his drasse and stie: Ease, and good chear, and money, and the flattery of men, are the God and the Heaven of sensual men. And are not these men of *Base dishonourable spirits*? Unworthy men! might you have an Everlasting life, and will you pre-

preferre a few dayes fleshly pleasure? As surely as you may know the baseness of a swine or dog by what they feed upon, so surely may you know the baseness of a carnal mind, by the baseness of its desires and delights.

5. It is also a *Base Society* that ungodly men are members of. They are in the *Kingdom of darkness*, Col. 1. 13. Acts 26. 18. and are *dead in sin*, in which they walk according to the course of the world, according to the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now walketh in the children of disobedience, among whom they have their conversations, Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3. Devils are their invisible companions, and wicked men their visible: but they have none of the presence and favour of the Lord, nor any communion with him in the Spirit.

6. The greatest Dishonour of the ungodly is, that the God of Heaven refuseth to Honour them: yea he despiseth them: yea he dishonoureth them with most contemptuous titles. And certainly God knoweth what he saith of them; and it is impossible that he should do them wrong. Yet doth he call them the seed of the Serpent, that stand at enmity with his flock, Gen. 3. 15. he calls them his enemies, and accordingly will use them, Luke 19. 27. He calls them Dogs and Swine, and the Children of the Devil, John 8. 44. Matth. 7. 6. They dishonoured and despised him, and he will dishonour and despise them, and hath resolved that their very names shall rot, Prov. 10. 7.

7. But it is the Everlasting shame that will tell us what was the Honour of the ungodly. When Christ shall be ashamed of them before his Father and the Heavenly Angels, Matth. 8. 38. and shall tell them that he never knew them, Matth. 7. 23. When all their former pomp and splendour, will be turned into perpetual shame and sorrows, then where is the Honour of the ungodly world? Where then are their flatterers? Who boweth to them, and calleth them *Right Honourable* and *Right Worshipfull* any more? Where now are their sumptuous houses and attendance? Now they have other kind of servitours; and other language, and other usage then they had on earth. And the poor wretches that stormed at a faithful Minister for foretelling these woeful changes to them, and speaking so dishonourably of them, as to tell them of their sin, are at last say-

ing an hundred fold worse of *themselves*, then ever *we* did say against them. Then they shall need none to call them *fools*, and *vile*, and *wretches*, but their own Consciences, that will speak it out, and speak it again ten thousand times, and never be bribed to forbear. O how base a despicable Generation will the ungodly then be (that now speak so stoutly and look so high) when God shall everlastingly frown them into contempt and misery, and the glorified Saints shall look down upon them without compassion, even praising the Justice that for ever doth torment them! Then let the Kings and Nobles of the earth maintain their antient Honours if they can: Or let them take comfort in the remembrance of their former dreams: and try whether this will be to them instead of a drop of water.

Well, Sirs, I have faithfully told you from the Word of God, of the *Honour* of the Godly, and the *Baseness* of the ungodly, that you may be resolved, which is the Better part. If yet you will not see, you shall see and be ashamed, *Isa.* 26. 11. When you have heard your last and dreadful doom, and seen the Lord make up his Jewels, then shall you discern between the Righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, *Mal.* 3. 17, 18.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Holiness the most Pleasant Way.

I Have proved beyond all reasonable contradiction that Holiness is the *Safe*, the *Honest*, the *Profitable* and the *Honourable* State and course: But my hardest task is yet to be done; and that is, to prove it the most *Pleasant* way. And the *difficulty* of this is not at all from the *matter*, but from the *persons* with whom I have to do. For nothing is *Pleasant* unto men, but what is *sutable* to their *natures*, and apprehended by them to be for their good, or in it self more excellent then their good. That is *Pleasant* to one man that is *loathsom* to another. As the *food* and *converse* is *delightful* to a *beast*, that is *loathsom* and as *bad* as *death* to *man*: So one mans *Pleasure* is anothers *Pain*. Even about the common matters of this life, variety of complexions, educations, customs, dispositions, doth cause a variety of affections; the difference between the sanctified and unsanctified, the spiritual and the carnal mind, doth cause a greater contrariety. If therefore the error of wicked minds, or the distemper of your souls, do make the *Best* things seem the *worst*, and the *sweetest* things to seem most *Bitter*, this is no confutation of my Argument, that proves the way of *Godliness* most *Pleasant*. If I would prove that wine is pleasanter then Vinegar, or Bread then dirt or ashes, I mean not to appeal to the appetites of the sick; It is the *sound* and *healthful* that must be judges. If a man will suffer his mind to be possessed with prejudice and base thoughts of God himself, no wonder if he cannot love him, nor take any delight in him:

And if men have a malignant enmity to Godliness, no reason will perswade them that it is most pleasant, but what perswades them from that enmity. No Reason will perswade a sloathful person that Labour is better then sleep and idleness; no Reason will perswade a drunkard, glutton, or voluptuous wretch, that abstinence and continence are the sweetest life. Could we change their Hearts, we should change their Pleasures. Such as men are, such are their delights. But the thing that I undertake, is, to manifest to any competent discerners, that *Holiness* is the most

Pleasant course; and that all the Pleasures of the Earth are Nothing to the Pleasures which the Godly find in God, and in a Holy life: and if any be not of this mind, it is because his souls diseases have made him an incompetent judge. And that *Godliness* is the Pleasant State of life, will appear to you, 1. From the Nature of the thing it self. 2. From the encouragements and helps with which it is attended. 3. From the effects and fruits.

I. The Nature of Holiness is to be found, 1. In the Understanding, 2. In the will and affections, and 3. In the Practice of mens lives. And in all these I shall shew you that it is the most *Delightful course*.

1. *Knowledge* in it self is a pleasant thing to humane nature. *Ignorance* is the blindness of the soul. It is not so pleasant for the eye to behold the sun, as for the mind of man to discern the truth. To *Know Good and Evil*, had never been the matter of so strong a *Temptation to Adam*, if *Knowledge* had not been very desirable to innocent nature. How hard do many even ungodly persons study to know the mysteries of Nature? And nothing hath more strongly tempted some wretches to witchcraft or contracts with the Devil, then a desire of knowing unrevealed things, which by his means they have hoped to attain. A *studious* man hath far more natural valuable *Delight*, in his reading and succesful studies, then a voluptuous *Epicure* hath in his sensual Delights.

But it is a special kind of Knowledge that Holiness doth (initially) consist in, which transeendeth in true Pleasure all the common wisdom of the world: For

1. How Pleasant a thing must it needs be to know things of so high a Nature? To know the Almighty, Living God: to behold his wisdom, goodness and power, in his glorious works, to be led to him by all the Creatures, and hear of him by every Providence, and find his Holy Blessed Name in every leaf of his sacred word, how sweet and pleasant a thing is this! To know the Divine Nature, Persons, Attributes, and Will, to know the mystery of the Incarnation, of the person, natures, undertaking, performance of the blessed Mediator Jesus Christ, to know his birth, his life, temptations, conquests, his righteousness, his holy doctrine and example, the Law and promise, the Law of Nature, and the Covenant of Grace, the sufferings, Resurrection, ascension,

sion, glorification and intercession of our Lord: to know his Kingdom, Laws, and Government, and his Judgement, with his Rewards and punishments; to know the sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost, by which we are prepared for everlasting life; and to know that life (though but by faith) for which we are here prepared, how high and pleasant a thing is this! If it be pleasant to know the course of nature, in those higher parts that are above the vulgar reach, what is it to know the *God of Nature*, and the true *use* and *End* of *Nature*? What high things doth the poorest Christian know? He knoweth the things that are invisible.

Think not that *faith* is so void of *Evidence* as not to deserve the name of *Knowledge*: We *Know* the things which we do believe. *Nicodemus* could say from the Evidence of *Miracles*, *Joh. 3. 2.* We know that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man could do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him. *Joh. 9. 29.* We know that God spake to Moses,] say the Jews. We know that the Scripture testimony is true, *Joh. 21. 24.* *2 Cor. 5. 1.* We know (even by believing) that if this earthly house of our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens] *1 Joh. 3. 2.* We know that when we shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is] *Joh. 14. 20.* At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you] We know that no Whoremonger or such like shall inherit eternal life, *Eph. 5. 5.* We know that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord, *1 Cor. 15. 58.* Many such passages of Scripture tell us, that *Faith* is a certain *Knowledge*, and that *Invisible* things revealed by God, are certainly known. We know what *Saints* and *Angels* are now doing in the highest heavens: for God hath told us. We know the most high and glorious things revealed by God, which we never saw. And is not the *Pleasure* of such knowledge greater then the *Pleasure* of all the wealth, the honour and sensual enjoyments in this world! I durst almost refer the case to one of you that are most befooled by your own sensuality. If you could go to morrow and meet with a soul from Heaven; or with an *Angel*, that could tell you what becomes of souls, and what is done in another world, Would you not rather goe to such a conference, then go as far to a drinking, or a bowling, or some such recreation? I think you would, if it were but to satisfy your curiosity and desire

desire of Knowing. Why then should not the servants of Christ more Delight, in the reading and hearing the words of Christ, that came from the bosome of the Father, that hath *seen God*, and *is with God*, and *is God himself*, that telleth them more certainly of the Invisible things then any Saints or Angels can tell them? Why should not this, I say be sweeter to them, then all the fleshly pleasures in the world? O that I could know more of God, and more of the mystery of Redemption, even of an obedient, crucified, glorified Christ; and more of the invisible world, and of the blessed state of souls, on condition I left all the Pleasures of this world, to sensual men! O that I had more clear and firm apprehensions of these transcendent glorious things! How easily could I spare the Pleasures of the flesh, and leave those husks to swine to feed on? O could my Soul get nearer God, and be more irradiated with his heavenly beams, my mind would need no other recreation, and I should as little relish carnal Pleasures, as carnal minds do relish the heavenly delights. As earthly things are poor and low, so is the knowledge of them. As things spiritual and heavenly are High and Glorious, mysterious and profound, the knowledge of them is accordingly Delightful [*And without controversie great is the mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Faith is the Evidence of things not seen, Heb. 11. 1.* It is far pleasanter by faith to see the Lord, then to see any Creature by the eye of flesh: and sweeter by faith to see Heaven opened, and there behold our Glorified Lord, then to see a horse-race, or stage-play, or any of the fooleries of the world.

2. The knowledge of things to Come is specially desired, and *Godliness* containeth that Faith which knoweth things to come. How glad would men be to be told what shall befall them to the last hour of their lives? The woman of Samaria Joh. 4. called out her neighbours with admiration to see Christ, as one that had told her all that *shee had done*: But if he had told her all that ever she would do, for the time to come, and all that ever should befall her, it might have astonished her much more. Believers know what hath been even before the world was made, and how it was made, and what hath been since then, and they know what will be to all eternity. A true Believer knows from Scripture,

pture, *whither mens Souls go after death*, and how their *Bodies* shall be raised again, and how *Christ* will come to Judge the world, and who shall then be justified, and who shall be condemned: and what shall be the case of the *godly* and the *ungodly* to all eternity. And is it not more *pleasant* to know these things, then to possess all the vain delights of the earth? Can the *flesh* afford you any thing so delightful?

3. Especially, it is desireable and *Pleasant* to *Know* those things that *most concern us*: Needless speculations and curiosities we can spare: There is a Knowledge that brings more pain then pleasure; Yea there is a Knowledge that will torment. But to know our *own* affairs, our *greatest* and *most necessary* affairs; to know our threatened misery to *prevent* it, and to know our offered Happiness to *obtain* it; to know our *Portion*, our *Honour*, our *God*, what can be more *Pleasant* to the mind of man! *Other* mens matters we can pass by: But to Know such things concerning our *own souls*, as what we must *be* and *do* for ever, and what course we must take to be everlastingly happy, must needs be a feast to the mind of a wise man. Ask but a soul that is haunted with temptations to unbelif, whether any thing would be more welcome to him, then the clear and satisfying apprehensions of a lively faith? Ask one that lyeth in tears or groans, through the feeling of their sin, and the fears of the wrath of God, and doubtings of his love, whether the satisfying Knowledge of pardon, and reconciliation, and divine acceptance, would not be more pleasant to them, then any of your merriments can be to you? Ask that poor soul that hath lost the apprehension of his Evidences of grace, and walks in darkness, and hath no light, that seeks, and cries, and perceives no hearing, whether the discovery of his Evidences, the assurance that his Prayers are accepted, and the light of Gods countenance shining on him, would not be *Better* to him then any Recreation, or any Pleasure the earth affords. Ask any man at the hour of death, that is not a block, Whether *now* the Knowledge of his *salvation* would not be *Better* and more *Pleasant* to him, then all the lust, or sport, or honours of the world.

4. The Knowledge of the *Best* and *joyfullest* matters, must be the *Best* and *Pleasantest* Knowledge. And nothing can be *Better* then *God* and *Glory*. Nothing can be *sweeter* then *salvation*; and therefore this must be the *sweetest* Knowledge. I had rather have

the pleasure of one hours clear and lively Knowledge of *my salvation*, and of the special Love of God, then to be exalted above the greatest Prince, and to have all the Pleasures that my senses can desire. The Delights of the flesh are base and brutish, and nothing to the spiritual Heavenly Delights of the renewed mind.

5. The manner of our Holy Knowledge, maketh it more Delightful. 1. It is a *Certain* and *Infallible* Knowledge. It is not a [*may be*], or bare possibility: It is not, *It is possible there may be a Heaven and Happiness hereafter*: But it is as true as the Word of God is true: We have his own hand, and seal, and earnest for it: Even his precious promises, and oath, confirmed by miracles, and fulfilled-prophecy, and bearing his own image and superscription, and shining to us by its own light: We have in our hearts the spirit which is Gods earnest, by which we are sealed up to the day of our final full redemption. And if the soul yet stagger at the promise of God through the remnants of unbelief, that shall not make the promise of God of none effect; but his foundation shall still stand sure: His word shall not pass till all be fulfilled, though heaven and earth shall pass away. A message by one that were sent to us from the dead, were not more credible then the Word of God. And this *Certainty* of Holy Faith and Knowledge is a very great contentment to the soul. When the Glory of the Saints is a thing as sure as if we saw it with our eyes, and as sure as these things which we daily see; it is a great pleasure to the soul, when it can but apprehend this joyful *Certainty*.

2. And that there is a certain easiness and plainness in the great and necessary points of faith, as to the manner of Revelation, doth add much to Faith's, Satisfaction and Delight. The points that life and death lie on, are not left so obscure as might perplex us, lest we did not know the meaning of them. But they are so plain, that he that runs may read them; and the simple, that are but honest-hearted, may certainly understand them: Which quiets, and pleaseth, and satisfies the mind.

3. And yet there is an exciting Difficulty in many things that are offered to our Knowledge, which doth but make our holy studies the more delightful. If the Word of God were so plain and obvious to all, that it might be all understood at the first reading, the plainness would bring our Sacred Knowledge into contempt,

tempt, as being an easie common thing. Things common and easily got, are little set by : But when the plainness is such as may prevent our despair and dissatisfaction, and yet the Difficulty such, that it may hold us in study, and prevent our contempt, it makes the most delightful Knowledge. It is Pleasant to find some daily addition to our Light, and to be on the gaining and thriving hand, and this upon our diligent search : Successes are as pleasant as a present fulness of supplies : The daily blessing of God upon our studies, and humble learning, addeth to our delight. So that all this set together, may shew you how pleasant a thing it is to have the Knowledge of a Saint.

Especially if you add that he hath an *Experimental*, and so a *sweeter Knowledge*, then the most learned men have that are ungodly. He hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, and he hath tasted the sweetness of his Love, and of all the Riches of his Grace in Christ, and of his full and precious promises, and of the inward powerful workings of his spirit. His experimental Knowledge is the most Delightful Knowledge.

The Pleasure of Natural Knowledge is great, but the Pleasure of saving Knowledge is much greater. I do not believe that ever any of the Ambitious troublers of the world, that let go Heaven that they may Rule on Earth, have half the Pleasure in their Greatness and usurped Dignities, as an honest Student hath in his Books, and studious exercises and successes : But if you compare the Pleasures of their Greatness and Commands, with the Pleasure of a true Believing soul, in his life of Faith, and sweet forethoughts of his Heavenly Inheritance, I must plainly tell you that we disdain the comparison. Again I say, that if you will compare the Drunkards, the Fornicators, or the Ambitious or Covetous mans delight, with the solace that I find in my retired studies, even about natural common things, I disdain the comparison : But if you compare their Pleasure, with that little, alas too little, pleasure that I find in the believing thoughts of Life Eternal, I do not only disdain your comparison, but detest it.

Were I minded to be long, I would shew you from these twelve particular Instances, the abundant Pleasure of Holy Knowledge.

I. What a Pleasant thing is it to know the Lord, the Eternal God, in his blessed Attributes ! The dimmest glimmering Know-

ledge of God, is better then the clearest Knowledge of all the mysteries of nature.

2. How Pleasant is it to know the works of his Creation? How, and why, and when he made the world, and all that is therein?

3. How Pleasant is it to know the blessed Son of God, and to behold the face of his Fathers Love that is revealed in him as his fullest Image?

4. How Pleasant is it to know the Law and Gospel: the Matter and the Method: the literal and spiritual sense: to see there the mind and will of God: and to see our Charter for the Heavenly Inheritance; and read the Precepts, and the Promises, and the Examples of the faith and patience of the Saints?

5. How Pleasant is it to know the Heavenly operations of the Holy Ghost, and the nature and action of his several Graces, and the uses of every one of them to our souls; and especially to find them in our selves, and to be skilled in using them?

6. How Pleasant is it to know the nature and frame of the Church of Christ which is his Body, and to know the difference and use of the several members? To understand the office of the Ministry, and why Christ hath set them in the Church, and how much love he hath manifested therein: that they should preach to us, and offer us Reconciliation in *his name and stead*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. and *marry us unto Christ* in Baptism, receiving us in *his name* into the Church and holy Covenant: and that in *his name and stead* they should deliver us his *body and blood*, and *absolve* the *penitent* sinner from his sins, and deliver him a sealed pardon, and receive the returning humbled soul into the Church of Christ and Communion of the Saints!

7. How Pleasant is it to know the nature and use of all Christs Ordinances: The excellencies of his Holy Word: the use of Baptism, and the refreshing, strengthening use of the Supper of the Lord: the use and benefit of Holy prayer, and praises, and thanksgiving, and Church-order, and all parts of the Communion of the Saints!

8. Yea there is a holy *Pleasure* in knowing our very *sin* and *folly*. When God bringeth a sinner to himself, though his *sin* be *odious* to him, yet to know the *sin* is *Pleasant*; and therefore he prayeth that God would shew him the bottom of his heart, and the most secret or odious of his sins.

9. And it is *Pleasant* to a Christian to *know* his *Duty*. It very much quieteth and delighteth his mind; when he can but *know* what is the will of God: When the way of *Duty* is plain before him, how chearfully can he go on, whatever meet him? and how easie doth it make his labour and his suffering?

10. Yea it is *Pleasant* to a *Believer* to understand his very danger: Though the *Danger* it self be dreadful to him, yet to *know* it, that he may avoid it, is his desire and his delight.

11. And how *Pleasant* is it to understand all the *Helps*, *Encouragements* and *Comforts* that God hath provided for us in our way? and how many more are for us, then against us?

12. But above all, how *Pleasant* is it to *know* by faith, the life that we must live with God for ever? and what he will do for us to all eternity, in the performance of his holy Covenant.

I do but briefly name these Instances of Delightful Knowledge, which are sweeter to the holy soul then all the Pleasures of sin to the ungodly. Do you think that any of you hath such solid Pleasure in your sins, as *David* had in the Law of God, when he meditated in it with such delight, and saith, *How sweet is it to my mouth? even sweeter then the honey and the hony-comb*. Surely you dare not compare with him in Pleasures.

2. Another part of *Holiness* that is *Pleasant* in the Nature of it, is that which is subjected in the *heart* or *affections*. And here is the *chiefest* of its sweetness and delights.

1. The very *compliance* of the *Will* with the *Will* of God, and its Conformity to his Law, doth carry a quieting Pleasure in it. That soul is *happiest* that is *nearest* God, and *likest* to him; and that soul may well be fullest of *Delight*, that is most *Happy*: And that soul is *nearest* and *likest* unto God, whose *Will* is most conformed to his *Will*: The trouble of the *Heart* is its *unsettledness*, when it is not bottomed on the *Will* of God: When we *feel* that *Gods Will* doth *Rule* and *satisfie* us, and that we would fain be what he would have us be, and *rest* in his *Disposing Will*, as well as *obey* his *Commanding Will*, this gives abundant Pleasure and quietness to the soul.

2. The holy workings of *Charity* in the soul, are exceeding *Pleasant*. All the acts of *Love* to God and man are very sweet. This is the holy work, that is its own wages.

1. The *Law* of God is so sweet an exercise, that verily my soul had

had rather be employed in it with sense and vigour, then to be Lord of all the earth. O could I but be taken up with the *Love of God*, how easily could I spare the *Pleasure of the flesh*? Might I but see the Loveliness of my dear Creator, with a clearer view; and see his glory in his noble works; Might I but see and feel that saving Love which he hath manifested in the Redeemer, till my soul were ravished and filled with his Love, how little should I care who had the Pleasures of this deceitful world! Had I more of that blessed spirit of Adoption, and more of those filial affections to my heavenly Father, which his unutterable Love bespeaks; and were I more sensible of his abundant mercy, and did my soul but breath and long after him more earnestly, I would pity the miserable Tyrants of the world, that are worse than Beggars while they domineer, and tast not of that Kingdom of Love and Pleasure that dwelleth in my breast. All the Pleasures of the world, are the laughing of a mad man, or the sports of a child, or the dreams of a sick man, in comparison of the Pleasures of the Love of God.

2. And the *Love of Holiness*, the *Image of God* hath, its degree of *Pleasure*. And so hath the Love of the Holy servants of the Lord. There is a sweetness in the soul in its goings out after any Holy object, in spiritual Love. Yea more, our very *common Love of men*, and our *Love of Enemies*, hath its proportion of pleasure, far better then the sensual Pleasure of the ungodly. To feel so much of the operations of grace, and to answer our holy pattern, in Loving them that hate us, doth give much ease and pleasure to the mind. The exercises of Love to God and man, and that for his sake, are the exceeding Pleasure of a gracious soul.

And here by the way, you may take notice of one reason why Hypocrites and ungodly men find no such sweetness in the exercises of Religion; Because they let alone the *inward Pleasant work of Love*, which is the soul and life of *Outward duty*: This *inward work* is the *Pleasant work*: while they are strangers unto this, their outward duties will be but a toil, and seem a drudgery or a wearysome employment.

There is a *Pleasure* even in *Holy Desires*: When a Christian feeleth his heart enlarged, in longing after the wellfare of the Church and the good of others. Though the absence of the thing desired be a trouble, yet the exercise of holy desire, (which

(which is an act of Love) is pleasant to us. If the *Lustful* have a pleasure in their *vile Desires*, and the *Ambitious* and the *Covetous* have a pleasure in their *vain and delusory desires*, the wise well-guided desires of a true believer must needs be pleasant.

4. Especially when *Desire* is accompanied with *Hope*. All the Pleasures of this world, are far short of affording that Rest and quiet to the soul, as the *Hope* of Glory doth to the believer. O happy soul that is acquainted by experience, with the lively Hopes of the everlasting Happiness! It is not the Hope of corruptible Riches, nor of a fading inheritance, but of the Crown that fadeth not, and of the precious, certain, durable treasure! It is not a Hope in the promise of a deceitful man, but in the word of the everliving God! The soul that hath this Anchor, needs not be tossed with those fears and cares and anxieties of mind, that worldly men are subject to. This Hope will never make them ashamed. If a man were in a consumption, or sentenced to Death, would not the Hopes of Life, upon certain Grounds, be pleasanter to him, then sport, or mirth, or lustful objects, or any such present sensitive delights? Much more if with the hopes of *Life*, he had the hopes of all the *felicities* of Life, and of the *perpetuity* of all these? O may I but be enabled by faith to lift up the eye of my soul to God, and view the everlasting mansions, and by hope to take possession of them, and say, All this is mine in Title, even upon the Promise of the faithful God! what greater Pleasure can my soul possess, till it enter on the full Possession of those eternal Pleasures! O poor deluded worldly men! What is the Pleasure of your wealth to this? O brutish sinners! what is the Pleasure of your mirth and jollity, your meat and drink, your pride and bravery, your lust and filthiness in comparison of this! O poor Ambitious dreaming men, that make such a stir for the Honour and Greatness of this world! What is the Pleasure of your Idol-honour, and short vainglory in comparison of this! while you *have it*, you have no Hope of *Keeping it*: you are troubled with the thought of leaving it: Had we no higher Hopes than yours, how miserable should we be?

5. The *Trust and repose* of the soul on God, which is another part of the life of grace, is exceeding *Pleasant* and *quieting* to the soul. To find that we stand upon a *Rock*, and that under us

are the everlasting arms, and that we have so full security for our salvation, as the promise and Oath of the immutable God, what a stay, what a Pleasure is this to the Believer? The troubles of the godly are most from the remnants of their unbelief: The more they believe, the more they are comforted and established: The life of faith is a Pleasant life. Faith could not conquer so many enemies, and carry us through so much suffering and distress, as you find in that cloud of testimonies, *Heb. 11.* if it were not a very comfortable work. Even we that see not the salvation ready to be revealed, may yet greatly rejoyce, for all the manifold temptations, that for a season make us subject to some heavyness, *1 Pet. 1. 5, 6.* And we that see not *Jesus Christ*, yet Believing can love him and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory, *v. 8.* The God of Hope doth sometimes fill his servants with all joy and peace in believing, and makes them even abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost, *Rom. 15. 13.*

6. Yea Joy is it self a part of the Holy qualification of the Saints, and of the renewed state that grace hath brought them into. For the Kingdom of God consisteth as in Righteousness, so in Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, *Rom. 14. 17.* Believers receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear, that is, they are not under the bondage of the Law, nor have the spirit or state of mind which is suited to those Legal impositions and terrible comminations: but they have received the spirit of Adoption by which they cry *Abba father*, that is, As they are brought under a more gracious dispensation, and a better Covenant and promises, and God is revealed to them in the Gospel as a Reconciled Father through his son, so doth he treat them more gently as reconciled children, and the spirit which answereth this gracious Covenant, and is given us thereupon, doth qualifie us with a child-like disposition, and cause us with boldness, Love and confidence, to call God Father, and fly to him for succour and supply, in all our dangers and necessities. And how Pleasant it must be to a believing soul, to have this spirit of Adoption, this childlike Love and confidence, and freedom with the Lord, methinks you might conjecture, though its sensibly known by them only that enjoy it, *Gal. 5. 22.* The fruit of the spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, &c.] when the word is first received by Believers, though it may be in much affliction, through the persecutions and crosses that attend

attend the Gospel, yet is it ordinarily *in the Joy of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thes. 1. 6. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter of true Believers: And if he have taken it upon him as his work, he will surely do it, in the degree and season fittest for them. And if Joy it self be part of the state of Grace and Holiness, you may see that it is the most delightful Pleasant course.

7. Yea that we may have a *Pleasant* and comfortable life, the Lord hath *forbidden* our distracting cares and fears and doubts, and our inordinate sorrows; and commanded us to *cast our care on him*, and promised to *care for us*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. and he hath bid us *be careful for nothing*, but in all things make our wants known to him, Phil. 4. 6. And can there be a course of life more Pleasant then that which doth consist in faith, and Love, and hope, and Joy, thats built on God, and animated by him, and that excludeth inordinate cares and sorrows, as health doth sickness? where it is *unlawful* to be miserable and to grieve our selves, and no sorrow is allowed us, but that which tendeth to our joy; where it is made our work to *Rejoyce in the Lord*, yea *always to Rejoyce*, Phil. 4. 4. A servant or tradesman will judge of the pleasure of his life by his work. If his work be a drudgery, his life is tedious and filled with grief: If his work be Pleasant, his life is Pleasant. Judge then by this of a Holy life. Is it care, and fear, and anguish of mind that God commandeth you? no: it is these that he forbiddeth. [*Care not: Fear not*] are his injunctions, Isa. 35. 4. & 41. 10. Do you fear *Reproach*? Why, you do it contrary to the will of God, who biddeth you, [*Fear not the reproach of men*, Isa. 51. 7.] Do you fear the power and rage of enemies? Why it is contrary to your Religion so to do: God biddeth you, *Fear them not*, Isa. 43. 5, 13, 14. & 44. 2, 8. Do you fear *persecution* or *death* from the hands of cruel violence? why it is contrary to the will of God that you do so, Matth. 10. 26, 28, 31. *Fear not them which kill the body, &c.*] O blessed life! where all that is against us is forbidden: and all that is truly Joyous and delightful, and necessary to make us happy, is commanded us, and made our duty: which is contrary to misery, as life to death, and as light to darkness. Come hither poor deluded sinners that fly from care, and fear and sorrow: If you will but give up your selves to Christ, you shall be exempted from all these, except such as is necessary to your joy. You may do any thing, if you will be the servants of the Lord,

except that which tendeth to your own and other mens calamity. Come hither all you that call for pleasure, and love no life but a life of mirth. Let *God* be your master, and *Holiness* your work, and Pleasure then shall be your *business* : and holy Mirth shall be your employment ; While you serve the flesh, your pleasure is small, and your trouble great : vexation is your work, and unspeakable vexation is your wages. But if you will be the hearty servants of the Lord, *Rejoycing* shall be your work and wages : If you understand not this, peruse your lesson, Psal. 33. 1. *Rejoyce in the Lord O ye Righteous, for Praise is comely for the upright.*] Psal. 97. 11, 12. *Light is shewn for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart : Rejoyce in the Lord ye Righteous : and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*] Phil. 3. 1. Psal. 5. 11. [*Let all those that trust in thee rejoyce : let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them : let them also that Love thy name, be joyfull in thee.*] Psal. 32. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.*] Psal. 132. 9. 16. [*Let thy Priests be clothed with Righteousness, and let thy Saints shout for joy : 16. I will also cloath her Priests with salvation, and his Saints shall shout aloud for joy*] such precepts and promises abound in Scripture, which tell you if you will be Saints indeed, that Joy and gladness must be your life and work. I know objections will be stirring in your minds : But forbear them but a while, and I shall fully answer them anon.

2. I have told you wherein the *Inward* part of Holiness is *Delightful* ; I shall briefly shew you that the *Outward* part also is very *Pleasant*, and fit to feed these inward joys. And 1. let us view the Duties that are more directly to be performed unto God : and 2. The works of charity and righteousness unto men.

1. How sweet is it to be exercised in the word of God ? In hearing or reading it with serious meditation ? For the man that hath been revived by it, renewed, sanctified, saved by it, to hear that powerful heavenly truth, by which his soul was thus made new ! For the soul that is in Love with God, to hear or see his blessed name, on every leaf ! to read his will, and find the expressions of his Love, his great, eternal, wonderful love, how sweet this is, experience tells the Saints that feel it : If you that feel no sweetness in it, believe not them that say they feel it, at least believe the word of God, and the professions of his ancient Saints,
Psal.