

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 sown 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.



Psal. 119. 97. [ *O how I love thy Law ! it is my meditation all the day* ] v. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my tast ? yea sweeter then the honey, and the hony-comb* ] v. 14. 16. *I have rejoyced in the way of thy testimonies as in all riches. I will delight myself in thy statutes : I will not forget thy word* ] 24. [ *Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors* ] 47. [ *I will delight myself in thy Commandments which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes.* ] 72. [ *The Law of thy mouth is better to me then thousands of Gold and Silver.* ] 92. [ *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction* ] 93. *I will never forget thy precepts for with them thou hast quickned me.* ] 111. [ *Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever : for they are the rejoycing of my heart* ] 117. *I love thy commandments above Gold, yea above fine Gold :* ] 162. *I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great spoile* ] 165. *Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.* ]

I should but weary you to recite one quarter of the expressions of holy men in Scripture concerning the sweetness and Pleasures which they found, in the Law of God. In a word, it is the work and marke of the Blessed man, that *His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night*, Psal. 1. 1, 2. Do you think that an unpleasant tedious life that doth consist in such employment ?

2. Another Holy Duty is *Prayer*, both secer, and with others, in familie, and publike Assemblies. And do you think it is a grievous tedious work, for a needy soul to beg of God, that is so ready to relieve him ? For a guilty soul to pray to God that is so ready to forgive him ? for a sinful soul to return to God, (and confels his sins, and beg for mercy,) that is so ready to meet him and entertain him ! for a *Loving soul* to converse with God, when there is a mutual complacency between them ? Is it grievous for a child to speak to his *Father* ? ? or are you weary of the presence of your dearest friend ? What is there in holy prayer that should grieve or weary us ? sure it is not *his company* that we speak to: For it is *his presence* that makes Heaven ! And sure it is not the employment. For it is but *Asking*, and asking for the best and choicest thing, and asking in our necessities for that which we must have or we are undone for ever. And is it unpleasant to pray to a bounteous God, in our necessity,



and that for the *best* and *pleasantest* things? Perhaps there may be some of you that think *it is but labour lost, and that you could better spend those hours, and that God regardeth not our prayers, and that indeed we speed never the better for them, and therefore you have no pleasure in them.*] And no wonder! If you are Atheists and believe not that there is a God, you cannot love him, or rejoyce in him. If you believe not his Promises, how should they give you any comfort! If you believe not that he regardeth Prayers, no wonder if you have no heart to pray: They that say *It is in vain to serve the Lord, and it is no profit to us to keep his ordinances,* Mal. 3. 14. will also say, *what a weariness it is!* Mal. 1. 13. and will give him but a lame and lifeless service. If you did believe your friend to be your enemy, you would have small pleasure in him: Mis-conceits may easily make you loath the things that are most delightful. The thoughts of Heaven it self yield little Pleasure to them that believe not that there is a Heaven, or what it is. The Light is not pleasant to the blind: nor any object of our tast or smel to those that have lost these senses. Is musick unpleasant, because it delighteth not the deaf? For shame do not charge the sweet and blessed ways of God with that which is the fruit of your *own corruption*. If your lungs be rotten, you may be out of breath with speaking the most *delightful words*, or walking in the most *pleasant fields or gardens*; But the cause of the weariness is *within* you. If you have the hearts of Infidels, or graceless stupid worldly sinners, you are so unfit to approach the most Holy God in holy prayer, that I marvel not if you go to it as a Bear to the stake, as an Ox to the yoke, or as an offender to the stocks; For the God that you pray to, is a *hater* of all the *workers of iniquity*, and a *consuming fire*; and therefore no wonder if his terrours should meet you and leave you but little delight in prayer (Though its wonder that they do not follow you, and meet you in all your ways, and leave you *less delight* in the *omission* of it) But if you had the hearts of *believing holy men*, and had *tasted* in prayer what *they* have tasted, and had their experience of the success, you would then be easily perswaded that prayer is neither a *Vain* nor an *unpleasant* work. Surely it is not unpleasant to a burdened soul to dis-burden it self before the Lord: nor to a sinner that hath felt the weight, the smart, the sting of sin, to cry for mercy, and healing to him that is able and willing to shew mercy; nor is it



it unpleasant for him that knows the worth of grace and glory, to lie upon his knees in begging them of the Lord. All those that have felt how good it is to draw near to God, had rather have leave to pray in hope, then to please their senses with any delights that earth affordeth. There is force in Prayer (through the grace that hath appointed and doth accompany it) to procure comfort to the distressed mind, and safety to them that are in danger, relief to them that are in want, and strength to them that are in weakness. Prayer is good for all things that are good; and good against all things that are evil. It is good against temptations, dangers, enemies and sin: It is good against sorrows, fears, and cares: yea against poverty, shame and sickness. For the God that Prayer goes to, and makes use of, is sufficient against all, and our only help. Turn away now from God if you dare, and cast off earnest constant Prayer, as if it were a tedious unpleasant thing! but be sure the time is coming when thou, even thou that thus despisest it, wilt betake thy self to *Prayer*, and cry Lord, Lord, when it is too late, or when anguish and terror seize upon thee. Sickness, and death, and the terrors of the Lord will *teach* thee to pray, as *useless* and *tedious* as now you think it: Yea and *teach* you to do it *earnestly*, that now put off all with a few frozen heartless words. But O it is *seasonable believing prayer* that is *comfortable*: It is the prayer of *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Hope* that is *pleasant*: but the prayer of too late repentance in Hell, and the prayer of despair and horreur, that cannot procure a drop of water, afford no pleasure, as they procure no relief.

3. Another duty that Holiness consisteth in, is *Thanksgiving and Praise to the God of our salvation*. He that knows not that *this work* is *Pleasant*, is unacquainted with it. If there be any thing *Pleasant* in this world, it is the praises of God, that flow from a *believing, loving soul*, that is full of the sense of the mercies, and goodness, and excellencies of the Lord; Especially, the *unanimous conjunction of such souls*, in the high praises of God in the holy Assemblies. Is it not pleasant, even to Name the Lord! to mention his Attributes! to remember his great and wonderful works! to magnifie him that rideth on the Heavens, that dwelleth in the light that cannot be approached, that is clothed with Majesty and Glory, that infinitely surpasseth the Sun in its brightness, that hath his Throne in the Heavens, and the Heaven



of Heavens cannot contain him ; and yet he delighteth in the humble soul , and hath respect to the contrite , yea dwells with them that tremble at his Word. Is any thing so pleasant as the Praises of the Lord ! How sweet is it to see and praise him as the Creator, in the various wonderful creatures which he hath made ! How pleasant to observe his works of providence , to them that read them by the light of the Sanctuary , and in Faith and Patience learn the interpretation, from him that only can interpret them. But O how unspeakably *Pleasant* is it to see the *Father in the Son* ; and the *God-head* in the *man-hood* of our Lord , and the *Riches of Grace* in the *glass* of the holy *Gospel*, and the *manifest wisdom of God in the Church*, where the *Angels* themselves disdain not to behold it ! *Ephes. 3. 10, 11.* The praising of God for the incarnation of his Son, was a work that a chore of Angels were employed in as the instructors of the Church , *Luke 2. 13, 14.* There is not a promise in the book of God , nor one passage of the Life and Miracles of Christ , and the rest of the History of the Gospel , nor one of the holy works of the Spirit upon the soul, nor one of those thousand mercies to the Church, or to our selves, or friends, that infinite Goodness doth bestow, but contain such matter of Praise to God, as might fill believing hearts with Pleasure, and find them most delightful work : Much more when *all these* are at once before us, what a *feast* is there for a gracious Soul !

O you befooled fleshly minds , that find no pleasure in the things of God, but had rather be drinking, or gaming, or scraping in the world, awaken your souls and see what you are doing ! With what eyes do you see, with what hearts do you think of the Works, and Word, and Wayes of God, and of the Holy employments that you are so much against ! For my own part , I freely and truly here profess to you , that I would not exchange the *Pleasure* that my soul enjoyeth in *this one piece* of the holy Work of God, for all your mirth, and sport, and gain, and whatever the world and sin affords you ; I would not change the delights which I enjoy, in *one of these holy dayes and duties*, in the mentioning of the eternal God, and celebrating his praise, and magnifying his Name, and thinking, and speaking of the riches of his Love, and the glory of his Kingdom, no not for all the pleasure of your lives. O that your souls were cured of those dangerous diseases, that make you loath the sweetest things ! You would



would then know what it is that you have set light by, and would marvel at your selves, that you could taste no sweetness in the sweetest things ! Can you think that your work or your play, your profits or your sports, are comparable for pleasure to the Praises of the Lord ! If Grace had made you competent Judges, I am sure you would say, There is no comparison. Hear but the testimony of a holy soul, yea of the Spirit of God by him. [Psalm 147. 1. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises to our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. Psalm 149. 1, 2. Praise ye the Lord : sing unto the Lord a new song : and his Praise in the Congregation of Saints. Let Israel rejoyce in him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people : he will beautifie the meek with salvation. Let the Saints be joyful in Glory : let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high Praises of God be in their mouth, &c.] Psalm 95. 1, 2, 3. O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation : Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with Psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods.] Psalm 96. 1, 2, 3, 4. O sing unto the Lord a new song : Sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord : bless his Name : shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the Heathen ; his wonders among all people : For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised — Honour and Majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his Sanctuary. ] Did not this holy Prophet find it a Pleasant work to Praise the Lord ? Yea all that Love the Name of God should be Joyful in him, Psalm 5. 11. Every one of his upright ones may say with the Prophet, Isa. 61. 10. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord : My soul shall be joyful in my God : For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness, as a Bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth her self with her Jewels. For as the earth springs forth her bud, and as the Garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth : so the Lord will cause Righteousness and Praise to spring forth before all the Nations. ] It is a promise of Joy that is made in Isa. 56. 6, 7, 8. To the sons of the stranger that joyn themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the Name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my Covenant : Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful :



*in my House of Prayer.*] What a joyful thing is it to a gracious soul, when he may see the reconciled face of God, and feel his Fatherly reviving Love, and among his Saints may speak his Praise, and proclaim his great and blessed name, even in *his Temple*, where every man speaketh of his Glory! Psalm 29. 9. If the Proud are delighted in their own praise, how much more will the humble holy soul, be delighted in the Praise of God! When the Love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and Faith doth set us as before his Throne, or at least doth somewhat withdraw the veil, and shew us him that lives for ever, and when the force of Love doth open our lips, that our mouthes may shew forth his praise, it is pleasant both to God and us. The Lord himself doth put on joy, as delighting in his peoples praise; and when they joyn obedience with holy worship, they are pleasant in his eyes, Jer. 9. 24. Isa. 62. 4. & 42. 1. Zeph. 3. 17. He meeteth him that Rejoyceth and worketh righteousness, and that remembers him in his wayes, Isa. 64. 5. Would you taste of the sweetest life on earth? Learn then to Delight your selves in God. Do you want recreation? Be acquainted with his Praise. Is there not a better cure for Melancholy here among the servants of the Lord, then in an Ale-house, or in the company of transgressors? Their carnal pleasures are unwholsom for you, like luscious fruits that will make you sick: But the delights of Faith are safe and healthful. Fleishly pleasure is windy and deceitful, and weakeneth and befools the soul: But the Joy of the Lord is our strength, Neh. 8. 10. A little may be too much of fleshly pleasures; and it is of very hard digestion, and leaves that behind that spoils the sport: But the further you go in the Delights of Faith, the better they are, and the sweeter you will find them. You may quickly catch a dangerous surfet of your fleshly pleasures; but of spiritual Delights, the more, the better: For they are curing, reviving, and much confirm and exalt the soul. Our spiritual pleasures are so heavenly, and have so much of God and Glory in them, that they must needs prepare the soul for heaven, and be excellent helps to our salvation.

O therefore if you would live a Pleasant life, draw near to God, and by Faith behold him, and by Love adhere to him, and take a view of his infinite Goodness and all his perfections; and behold him in his wonderous works, and then break forth into his chearful praises, and you shall taste such pleasures as the earth affordeth not. Lanch forth into the boundless Ocean of Eternity,



ty, and let your hearts and tongues expatiate in the Praise of the Heavenly Majesty, and use this work and ply it close, and be not too seldom, or customary, or careless in it, and you shall find the difference between the Pleasures of Faith and of the flesh, of a Holy and of a sensual life, Psalm 135. 2, 3. *Ye that stand in the House of the Lord, in the Courts of the House of our God : Praise the Lord, for the Lord is Good : sing praises to his Name, for it is pleasant.* ] Psalm 71. 8. *Let my mouth be filled with thy Praise, and with thy honour all the day.* ] Psalm 96. 2. 6. *Sing unto the Lord ; bless his name ; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Honour and Majesty are before him : strength and beauty are in his Sanctuary.* ]

O that the Lord will but shine upon my soul with the Light of his countenance, and open my heart to the entertainment of his Love, and hold a gracious Communion with my soul, by his holy Spirit, and keep open these doors to me, and continue this liberty of his House and Ordinances which we enjoy this day, that I may joyn with a faithful humble people, in holy Communion, and in his Praise and Worship, and that with a heart that is suitable to these works ! I shall then say with David, Psalm 16. 6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places ; I have a goodly heritage. I will ask for no greater pleasures, or honours, or advancement in this world ! Let who will surfeit on the pleasures of the flesh ! Here doth my soul delight to dwell !* Psalm 27. 4, 5, 6. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the daies of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his holy Temple : For in the time of trouble he will hide me in his pavilion ; & in the secret of his Tabernacle shall he hide me : he shall set me up upon a Rock : And then shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me : therefore will I offer in his Tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea I will sing Praises to the Lord.* ] Till I come to the promised Everlasting Pleasures, I shall ask of God no greater Pleasures. These would be as much as my soul in the prison of flesh can bear. Till I come to the Land of Promise, may I but have these clusters of its grapes in my present Wilderness, I shall not repine : My heart here shall be glad, and my glory shall rejoyce, and at death, my flesh shall rest in hope. For as the Lord now sheweth me the path of life, so in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore, Psalm 16. 9, 11.



4. Another Pleasant Holy Duty, is, *Our holy Communion with Christ and his Church in the Lords Supper.*

This is a holy Feast that is purposely provided by the King of Saints, for the entertainment of his family; for the refreshing of the weary, and the making glad the mournful soul. The night before his bitter Death, he instituted this Sacramental Feast ! He caused his *Disciples to sit down with him*, and when they had partaken of the Pasover, the *Sacrament of Promise*, and had their taste of the old wine, he giveth them the *New*, even the *Sacrament of the better Covenant*, and of the fuller Gospel-Grace : He teacheth them that his *Death is Life to them* : and that which is his *bitterest suffering*, is their *Feast* : and his *Sorrows* are their *Joyes* ; as our *sinful pleasures* were his *sorrows*. The *slain Lamb of God* our Pasover that was sacrificed for us, that taketh away the *sins of the world*, was the pleasant food ; which *Sacramentally* he himself then delivered to them, and *substantially* the next day offered for them. *The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, John 6.33. He is the *Living Bread which came down from Heaven* : If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that he giveth is his *flesh*, which he hath given for the life of the world. ver. 50, 51. Except we eat the *flesh of the Son of man*, and drink his blood, we have no life in us : Who so eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, hath *Eternal life*, and he will raise him up at the last day : For his *flesh is meat indeed*, and his *blood is drink indeed* : He that eateth his flesh, and drinketh his blood, dwelleth in Christ, and Christ in him : As the *Living Father* hath sent the *Son*, and he liveth by the *Father*, so he that eateth him, shall live by him. This is that bread that came down from Heaven : not as the *Fathers* did eat *Manna* and are dead : he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.]

I know that to an unbelieving carnal wretch, the Sacrament is but a common thing. For Christ himself and his Gospel is no better in his eyes. He discerneth not the Lords body : He only quieteth and deludeth his conscience with the outward form. He hath not faith to feed on Christ : But to a lively faith, what sweetness doth such a Feast afford ?

We have here Communion with the *blessed Trinity*, in the *three parts* of this Eucharistical Sacrament ! As the *Father* is both our *Creator* and the *offended Majesty*, and yet he hath sent his *Son* to be our *Redeemer* ; so in the *first part*, which is the



the **CONSECRATION**, we present to our Creator the creatures of *Bread and Wine*, acknowledging that from him we receive them and all, and we desire that upon our *Dedication*, by his *Acceptance*, they may be made *Sacramentally* and *Representatively* the *Body* and *Blood* of *Jesus Christ*.

In the *second part* of the Eucharist, which is the **COMMEMORATION** of the sacrifice offered on the Cross, we *break the bread* and *pour forth the wine*, to Represent the breaking of Christs Body, and shedding of his Blood for the sin of man; and we beseech the Father to be Reconciled to us on his Sons account, and to accept us in his Beloved, and to accept all our sacrifices through him. So that as Christ now in Heaven, is *Representing his sacrifice to the Father*, which he once offered on the Cross for sin, so must the *Minister* of Christ Represent and plead to the Father the same sacrifice by way of *Commemoration*, and such *Intercession* as belongeth to his *Office*.

The *third part* of the Eucharist is the **OFFER and PARTICIPATION**: in which the *Minister* Representing Christ, doth by *Commission* deliver his *Body* and *Blood* to the penitent, hungry, believing soul! and with Christ is delivered a sealed pardon of all sin, and a sealed gift of life Eternal. All which are received by the true Believer.

An unbeliever knoweth not what transactions there are between the Lord and a holy soul in this Ordinance, where the appearances are so small. A bit of bread and a sup of wine are indeed small matters: But so is not this Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What a comfort is it that the offended Majesty will accept a sacrifice at our hands, and enter a treaty of Peace with the offendours? Yea that he will provide the sacrifice himself, and the preciouslest in the whole world: that he will signify this his acceptance of the sacrifice, and how he is pleased in his well-beloved Son! and that he accepteth his Sons Intercession in the Heavens, and his Ministers intercession, and his Churches prayers on earth *through Christ*! Seeing Christ must be glorified with his Father, and not continue visible among us, what could we desire more from him, then the *three-fold Representative* which he hath left behind him, to supply the room of his Bodily presence! Even the Representation of himself by the *Sacrament*, by his *Ministers*, and by the *Holy Ghost*, which is his *substitute within* for the efficacy of all. O what unspeakable mysteries



mysteries and treasures of *mercy* are here presented to us in a Sacrament ! Here we have Communion with a Reconciled God, and are brought into his presence by the great Reconciler. Here we have Communion with our blessed Redeemer, as Crucified, and Glorified, and offered to us, as our quickning, preserving, strengthening Head : Here we have Communion with the Holy Ghost, applying to our souls the benefits of Redemption, drawing us to the Son, and communicating light, and life, and strength from him unto us : increasing and actuating his graces in us. Here we have Communion with the *Body of Christ*, his *sanctified people*, the heirs of life : When the Minister of Christ by his Commission *Representeth a Crucified Christ to our eyes*, by the Bread and Wine appointed to this use, we see Christ Crucified as it were before us ; and our Faith layeth hold on him, and we perceive the Truth of the Remedy ; and build our souls upon this Rock. When the same Minister by Christs Commission, doth offer us his *Body*, and *Blood*, and *Benefits*, it is as firm and valid to us, as if the mouth of Christ himself had offered them : And when our souls *Receive* him, by that Faith which the Holy Ghost exciteth in us, the participation is as true as that of our bodies receiving the Bread and Wine which represent him. O do but ask a drooping soul, that mourns under the fears of Gods displeasure, how he would value a voice from Heaven, to tell him that all his sins are pardoned, and that he is dear to God, and judge by his answer, what is contained and offered in a Sacrament ! Ask him how he would take it, if Christ should speak those words himself to him, which he hath given his Minister Commission in his name to speak ! [ *Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you* ] It is the same Christ, the same pardon, and salvation, that is offered us by the *Messengers of Christ*, and which he personally offered himself to his *Disciples*. When you must all appear at the Barr of God, O what would you not give for a sealed pardon, which in a Sacrament is given freely now, to the believing soul ! Judge now by this, whether it be a *joyous Ordinance* ! When the poorest Christian this day receiveth, that which the greatest Prince that is ungodly, would then give all the world for if he had it. For want of that pardon, Christian, which thou must now receive, many thousands will tremble at the barr of God, and be overwhelmed with his wrath for ever ! Ask a soul that groaneth under the languishings of his grace, and the burden



burden of any strong corruption, how he would value the mortifying and quickning grace of the Holy Ghost, that would break his bonds, and give him light and life and strength; and by his answer judge of the value of a Sacrament. We have here the greatest mercies in the world, brought down to us in *sensible Representations*, that they might be very neer us, and the means might be suited to the frailty and infirmity of our present state.

If the *sealed message of Gods Reconciliation* with us, and a *sealed pardon* of all our *sins*, and a *sealed grant* of *Everlasting life*, be not more pleasant and desirable to your thoughts, then all that earth and flesh can yield you, it is because you are alive to sin, and dead to God, and want that spiritual sence and appetite, by which you might be competent judges. If God, if Christ, if grace, if the foretaste of glory can afford no pleasure to the soul, then *Heaven it self* would not be pleasant. But if *these* are sweet, the Sacrament is sweet that doth convey them.

Well, poor stubborn carnal sinners! you have been invited to this feast as well as others! we are sent to call you, and even compel you to come in (though upon the terms and in the way of Christ!) but you have no great list; but somewhat else doth please you better! And will it prove better indeed to you at the end? Well, take your own choice! If an Alehouse be better then the Table of the Lord; if your merry companions do please you better then the Communion of the Saints, or if you cannot submit to the *order* and *discipline* of the family of Christ, that you may partake of his provision, you may follow your own corrupt desires, and see whither they will lead you! But here it is that I shall *choose my pleasures* till I reach the everlasting pleasures. And though in this low communion of imperfect Saints, we see but in a glass, and have but some small imperfect taste of the glorious things which Hope expecteth; yet this is more then all that earth and flesh can yield: and it is most perfect Pleasure that by these is revealed, sealed, and Represented. Sacraments can assure us of perfect joys, though they give us but little joy in hand.

Obj. But if Sacraments be so pleasant, why then (saith a disconsolate soul,) have I found no more pleasure or comfort in them?

Ans. Even in the soul thats made alive by Grace, diseases may



much corrupt the appetite, and make the sweetest thing seem bitter. Are not Sacraments sweet to you? and do you not delight in the communion of God and of his Saints? I will not say much to you, lest it seem degressive, but briefly ask you these few Questions.

1. Are the thoughts of God, of Christ, of Heaven sweet to you? If they be, me thinks the Ordinances should be sweet! If they be not, its no wonder that you set light by Sacraments, if you can set light by Christ and heaven it self.

Quest. 2. *Is not sin grown sweet to you?* If it be, the ordinances will not be sweet: no nor unless your sins grow bitter.

Quest. 3. Doth not the *world* grow sweet to you, and your condition or expectations, and your thriving state, more pleasant to you then heretofore? If so, no wonder if Sacraments and all spiritual things, do lose their sweetness.

Quest. 4. Have you been faithful in your preparation, by free confession, true humiliation, strong resolution, hungriing and thirsting after Christ, and all this furthered by diligent self-examination? An unprepared soul must blame it self, if it find not the sweetness of the Ordinance. The holy appetite and relish, that is necessary to your Delight, must be stirred up much in your Preparations.

Quest. 5. Are you careful and conscionable, humble and holy in *your lives*? If you neglect God in your *ordinary conversations*, and walk not with him on other daies, you are unlike to meet him comfortably here. And if you are slight and careless in your ordinary duties, you will find here that God took notice of it.

Quest. 6. Do you faithfully endeavour to exercise Faith, Repentance, Love and all Sacramental Graces in the use of the ordinances? You come not to a *meer receiving* but to a *work*. Have your souls been adorned with the wedding garment? and do you come hither for a meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you see him by faith, and take all that is here Represented to you, as if you had seen the things themselves! Do you remember that your Lord is coming, and do you lift up your heads in the expectation of your Redemption, and do this in remembrance of him till he come? An idle loytering in Gods work is not the way to find the sweetness of it.



*Clemens Alexandrinus Strom. l. 1. init.* gives it as a Reason why every one took his own part of the Bread of the Sacrament in those times, because man being a free agent must be the chooser or refuser of his own happiness: The Papists on the contrary do but gape, and the Priest doth pop the bread into their mouths (having first perswaded them that it is not bread.) Do you not expect to receive the spiritual benefits, just as the Papists do receive the Bread? as if you had nothing to do but gape? As if your presence here were as much as is to be expected from you for your edification! How can you *tast* the *sweetness* that is offered, when you do not *exercise your spiritual senses*.

Quest. 7. Do you exercise faith, as well as feeling, in judging of the benefit of Sacraments? Pardon, and Justification, and Title to Salvation are benefits which in themselves you cannot feel. It is by Believing the promise that you must know them. If God have promised a blessing on his Ordinance, it is sure to the faithful soul as if we felt it, though perhaps we may seem long without it. Heaven it self which is the principal end of Ordinances, will not be attained in this life: and yet the Ordinance is not in vain.

Quest. 8. Have you the true understanding of the use of Sacraments? of the abundant Love that is here set forth? and the freeness and fulness of the Promise here sealed? If not, no wonder if you taste not the sweetness, when you know not how to break the shell, that you may feed on the kernel of the Ordinances.

Quest. 9. Have you not troubled your own souls, and muddied your comforts by causeless doubts and ignorant scruples, about the gestures, or manner, or persons that you joyned with, or some such circumstances as these? If so, no marvel if you lose the comfort.

Quest. 10. Or at least, have you not been negligent in the review and after improving of the Ordinances? and have you not thought that all was done when you had received? Any one of these miscarriages may make this pleasant duty bitter, or at least deprive you of the most of the delight. But if your hearts be suted to the work, and you deprive not your selves of the offered consolation, you shall find that God deals bountifully with you, and will feast you even with Angels food.



5. The *publike worship* being all thus *sweet*, how *sweet* are the *Lords days*, these holy seasons that are wholly consecrated to this work? How light is the Christian, that hath this day cast off his worldly cares and business and cogitations, and hath set himself apart for God, as if there were no world to mind? On *the week days* he doth *walk with God*: But so that his necessary worldly business doth frequently divert and distract his mind. But what a sweet and happy day is this, when he may strip himself of these distractions, as he doth of his work-day courser cloaths, and may wholly apply himself to God? As the Bee goes from flower to flower, labouring at all, but with a Pleasant labour, to gather Honey, and prepare for winter, so doth the Christian, especially on the *Lords day*, employ himself in *labour and delight*; and the more he *laboureth*, the more is *his delight*: From *Prayer* he goeth to *Reading*; and to the *instructing his family*, if he be a superiour; or *learning* if he be an inferiour and have helps: From *private worship* to *publike*; and from *publike* to *private* again; and gathering *Honey* (*food and sweetness*) to his soul from all.

Tell me you childish brutish wantons; Do you think in your heart, that you have as much solid joy and pleasure, in a *play day*, or in your *idle games*, or in spending the *Lords day* in *idleness* or *sports*, as we have in the *holy works of God*? Do you think our Delight is not more then yours? To our shame, but to the praise of God, we must say, that we have tryed both ways. We know what it is to *play away* much of the *Lords day*, and what it is to *employ it* in waiting on the Lord. But since we knew the later, we wish we had never known the former. That's our recreation which is your toile: and that would be our prison, and stocks, and toile, which is your sport and recreation.

6. Another *Delightful* portion of our work, is *Holy Conference* with the experienced servant of the Lord. There are many things considerable in holy conference that maketh it delightful.

1. It is the conference of *dearest friends*: the *special Love* that all the Godly have to one another, doth exceedingly sweeten their communion. The very *presence* of those that we most dearly love, is a pleasure to us: Much more their *sweetest edifying discourse*.



2. Their conference proceedeth from the *spirit of grace*, and therefore is *gracious*, savouring of that *spirit*: and all the breathings and manifestations of that blessed spirit, are very acceptable to those that have the spirit themselves, and so can favour spiritual things.

3 Their conference is about the *bighest*, the *most necessary*, the *most excellent* things: About the most Blessed God and his several *Attributes*; his *Will*, and *works*, of *Creation*, and *disposing-Providence*, of *nature* and *Grace*; about the wonderful mysteries of *Redemption*, the *person*, *life* and *sufferings* of the *Redeemer*, his *Offices* and the *performance* of them, on earth, and in Heaven, in his *Humiliation* and his *Exaltation*; and of the *sweet Relations* that we and all his Church do stand in, to Christ our *Head*, our *Saviour* and *Redeemer*; as also about the gracious workings of the Holy Ghost, in first begetting and increase of holiness; To open to each other the powerful workings of that Grace that hath raised them above all the creatures, and brought them to a contempt of earthly glory, and set their hearts on the invisible God, and on eternal things, that hath renewed them in the inner man, and made them hate the things they loved, and mortified their oldest strongest sins, and quickned them in the exercise of every grace; all this is edifying sweet discourse to gracious souls.

4. And the rather because it is about the most *pertinent affairs*: They are things that do so *neerly concern us*, that we are glad to speak with those that understand them. It is our *own case*, which we hear our brethren open: They speak our very hearts, as if they had seen them; because it is the same work of the same spirit that they describe. Yea when they complain of their *Infirmities*, it is with our complaints, and they tell us of that which we are troubled with our selves; and we perceive that we are not singular in our troubles, but that our case is the case of other servants of the Lord.

5. And it is the more pleasant to converse with the Godly, because they speak not by *hearsay only*, but by *experience*: They tell us of the discoveries that illuminating grace hath made to their own souls; and of the many evils they have been saved from; and the communion they have had with God, and the prayers which he hath heard, and the many and great deliverances he hath granted them; They relate their conflicts with temptations,



and their conquests; their strivings against their ancient lusts, and how they have overcome them; and the sweet refreshings which their souls have had in the exercise of Love, and faith, and hope! They can dive into the Ocean of mercy, and speak of the abundant kindness of the Lord, and earnestly awaken and invite each other to praise him for his Goodness, and to declare his wondrous works for the children of men; They can direct each other in their difficulties, and encourage each other in holy ways, and strengthen one another in holy resolutions, and comfort one another with the same comforts that they themselves have been comforted with by the Lord! And may not our hearts rejoyce and burn within us, while we discourse of such *important things* as these, in such a *serious, experimental, edifying manner*? They can discourse together of their meeting before the throne of Christ, and of the blessed converse which they shall have in Heaven, with the Lord himself, and with the holy Angels, and *where* they shall be, and *what* they shall do, to all eternity, in the presence of God where is fulness of joy, and before him where are the eternal pleasures.

O Christians, did not your graces languish by your own neglects, and your souls grow out of relish with these spiritual and most excellent things, your speeches of them would be more favourable; you would be more frequent, lively, and cheerful in your discourse of holy things; and then your converse would be more edifying and delightful to each other. We shew so little of *Grace* in our conference, that makes it to be but little different from other mens; And (which is the commonest case, and very doleful) we most of us remain so ignorant and imprudent, that we *marr* holy conference by our mixtures of *unwise* expressions, and disgrace it to others by our *injudicious weakness*: This is the bane of Christian discourse; even the want of *holy skill* and *wisdom*, and of understanding to speak of the things of God, according to their transcendent worth and weight, as much (and more) than the want of *zeal*. But if we could discourse of these holy matters *aright*, with *wisdom* and with *seriousness*, how *sweet*, how *fruitful* would the company of holy persons be! We should be still among them, as in the family of God, and should hear that which our souls do most desire to hear; and we should preach to one another the riches of grace in our familiar discourse; and souls might be converted by the conference



of Believers, and not all left to the publike ministry : Every man would be a helper to his neighbour. *For the tongue of the just is as choice silver, though the heart of the wicked is little worth: the lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom, Prov. 10. 20, 21. The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, Prov. 15. 7. Righteous lips are the delight of Kings, Prov. 16. 13. and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning, v. 21. The lips of Knowledge are a precious Jewel, Prov. 20. 15. A mans belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled, Prov. 18. 20. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgement; the Law of his God is in his heart, Psal. 37. 30, 31.*

Tell me I beseech you, you that can be so merry in an Ale-house, or in any vain and idle company, why should you think that it is not to us a far sweeter thing to talk of holy edifying matters, then it is to you to talk of vanity? Is the *subject of your discourse more fit to delight a man of wisdom!* Do you talk of *better things then God, or of higher things then Heaven?* or of things that nearly concern you, then the matters of everlasting consequence?

When I have heard such people talking and laughing, as if they had been the merriest people in the world, I have sometimes hearkened to their discourse, to hear what talk it was that made them so merry; and it hath been nothing but impertinency and folly, like a mans talking in his sleep; enough to make a mans head ake to hear them: I should be quickly tired with *their delights*: The blowing of the wind, or the falling of the rain, or as Solomon saith, the crackling of thorns in the fire, hath as much in it to please my ear, and much less to displease it, then such mens discourse.

Go to a company of *merry fellows*, as you take them, and to a company of *serious, godly, prudent people*, and secretly write down *all the words* that you hear from both companies; and read them over together when you come home, and tell me which is the *pleasanter discourse*. What a hodge-podge of non-sense, impertinency, levity, immodesty, worldliness, pride, and folly shall you find in *one*; and what savoury, necessary, edifying, encouraging and comforting speeches will you find you have gathered from the other!

It is far pleasanter to be among the singing birds, the bleating



sheep, yea the chattering daws, then these idle, prating, foolish companions. For with the *former* you shall have some *natural good*, without any mixture of *sinful evil*: But in foolish, prating company, what shall you perceive, but how *Nature* is *depraved*, how sinners are beside themselves, how Satan doth bes fool them, and how God is forgotten while he is present with them, and they are laughing in the Devils chains, and at the very brink of death and hell! And can a man be merry to hear such mirth as this? It is a sad spectacle to see men *laugh in Bedlam*: but much more to see them merry in the fetters of *their sin*, and under the threatnings and wrath of God. Were you but men of right composed minds, I durst referre it to your selves, whether holy company and discourse be not like to be much *pleasanter* then yours.

Do you think that the discourse of *Learned men*, about Arts and Sciences, History and the like, is not more *pleasant* then your *idle talk*? Much more is the *holy discourse* of *Saints* about the things of their salvation. Whether do you think the company and discourse of *Christ*, and his *Prophets* and *Apostles*, or of your *merry companions*, should be the more delightful? Can you for shame say, that the *later* were the *best*? Why, you know that *Christ*, and his *Prophets* and *Apostles*, had no such *idle talk* as yours. It was *holy things* that they discoursed of.

Can you for shame say that you Love God above all, and yet have more pleasure in prating over a pot of Ale, then in speaking reverently of God? Or would you be believed when you say, that your hearts are set on Heaven, when you have more delight in talking of any earthly trifle? Well! I shall leave it to your consciences, and to the judgement of any that will speak with Reason, whether the holy converse and conference of the godly, be not in it self a more *Delightful* thing, then all the merriments, the dotages and fooleries of the ungodly. If you think not so, it is because your relish and appetite is depraved, the Devil hath deluded you, and sin bereaved you of your wits.

2. I have told you of the *Pleasantness* of the *Duties* of *Holiness*, which are to be performed more directly toward God. Let us now consider of the rest of a *Christian life*: Which consisteth in our *duties* to be performed towards men: And these are all comprehended in the works of *Charity* and of *Justice*.



1. And certainly the works of *Charity* are *Delightful*. There is not a pleasanter work in the world then to *do good*. Even *proud men* find a great delight in the *Reputation* or *Name* of *doing good* : that they may be accounted the great *Benefactors* of the *world*, that is, to be as *earthly gods* among their neighbours, and as the *Sun* is to the lower world, that all may be below them, and live by their influence. This is the top of that prosperity that sinful ambition doth aspire to. And if the *Name* of *Well-doing* be so pleasant to the *Proud*, the Conscience of the thing it self should be more pleasant to the upright. *Open bounty* is the *hypocrites glory* : But to do good in *secret* is the *believers pleasure* ; for their *Father which seeth in secret*, shall reward them *openly* : Yea the very delight of doing good, and especially a great or publike good, a spiritual and everlasting good, is a reward unto it self. It is the speech of Christ recited by *Paul*, *Acts 20.35.* that it is more blessed to give then to receive.

There are many things concurring that make it very *Pleasant* to do good. It proceeds from the power of *Love* : and the exercise of Love is pleasant. And Love makes our Brethren to be to us as our selves, and consequently their welfare is as our own, and rejoiceth us as if our selves received, all that they receive. And what abundant pleasure then hath a Believer ? When so many thousand of his brethren, do receive so many thousand benefits daily from God himself : and all these are to the Christian, through the union and power of Love, as if he had received them all himself. But especially when he himself is the instrument of conveyance. The poor have comfort in receiving of relief ; but nothing in comparison of his that gives it, if it be done for the sake of Christ, in uprightness of heart. A poor man receiveth from the giver perhaps but an outward small commodity : But the upright giver receiveth from God, the sense of his acceptance, and peace of conscience, with the promise of an everlasting recompence : A mite, or a cup of cold water, given to a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, or to a Disciple in the name of a Disciple, shall certainly be rewarded, *Matth. 10. 40, 41, 42.*

A true Believer is *Covetous* to do good, as others are to receive it : and studyeth for opportunities of laying out his gifts and wealth for God, as others study to gather it for themselves. As a worldling studyeth for a good bargain, that he may grow rich ; a