
A Discourse of the Nature and Excellency of the Grace of Patience.

SERMON II.

JAMES I. iv.

*But let Patience have her perfect Work,
that ye may be perfect and entire,
wanting nothing.*

I Have shew'd you when Patience hath her perfect Work, and am enter'd upon the Use.

I. Of Information.

(1.) Such a one is a Lover of God and Christ.

(2.) He hath the Joy of the Spirit, &c. Now to Proceed.

3. He hath the Peace of God, *Phil.*

4. *17. The Peace of God which passeth all*

*Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and
 Minds through Christ Jesus.* Hence through
 the Apprehension of a Man's Peace with
 God, his Heart is kept from Repining,
 and his Mind and Spirit quiet and still :
 Christian Patience springs from the
 Knowledge of his Reconciliation to God
 through Christ: An awakened Sinner
 could have no Satisfaction, If he still
 look'd upon God as his Enemy and un-
 reconciled, but would remain disquieted
 and restless in the midst of abundance of
 outward Enjoyments ; but when with an
 Eye of Faith he looks on God, as recon-
 ciled by the Blood of the Cross, and now
 his Friend and on his side, he easily en-
 counters with the greatest Difficulties and
 Oppositions in the World, and values
 not the Power and Policy of his worst E-
 nemies, reasoning as *Paul*, Rom. 8. 31.
If God be for us, who can be against us ?
 If he be on our side, who hath Power e-
 nough to ruine all our Enemies only with
 a look of Indignation ; what Cause have
 we to be afraid of the strength and num-
 ber of them that are against us ? *If we*
are of God, 1 John 4. 4. Then greater is
he, that is in us, then he that is in the World.
 He that is our Friend, can not but Pity
 us when in Distress, and if God be for
 us,

us, and our Friend, he wants not Bow-
 els to Pity us, nor Love to help us; and
 though he doth not presently deliver us,
 yet affords present Strength to uphold
 us; and he that is Omniscient cannot but
 see and observe what our Adversaries are
 about to do; yea what they are acting
 and designing to act against us: He that
 is the searcher of the Hearts and tryer of
 the Reins, is well acquainted with the
 Thoughts and Counsels of their Hearts,
 and he being Wisdom it self wants not
 Skill to Counter-work them in all their
 evil Purposes: He that hath given his
 Word, and is Truth it self cannot fail
 us, who hath promised not to leave us,
 nor forsake us: He will not break his
 Word, to gratifie the Devil and his Peo-
 ples Enemies; neither can he, *for faith-
 ful is he that hath promised, who also will do
 it*; God can as soon cease to be, as cease
 to be faithful: Now I say, the Consid-
 eration of this, that God is at Peace with
 a Person, through the Blood of the Cross
 is a strong ground of Patience: This
 shews that a patient Christian, is one
 that hath not only Faith in the Habit,
 but also in Exercise; that he acts Faith
 in God through Christ, believing he is
 reconciled and at Peace with God: And

this occasioneth that quiet and peaceable frame that is seen in him, &c.

4. A patient Christian is one well freight with Grace; he is a Man of a precious and singular Temper, long-suffering, gentle and meek, yea abounding in gentleness and meekness. Anger and rashness bewrays a Mans weakness, and are the contraries to gentleness and meekness, but Patience under the Rod, declares the gentleness and meekness of the Person exercis'd therewith: And the Grace of long-suffering when he continues quiet under great and continued Afflictions and Provocations from his Enemies, such a one hath learnt of Christ to be meek and humble or lowly-minded: He considers, the Wisdom and Sovereignty of God is concerned in every Providence, all things that God does are well done, because wisely done, according to the Counsel of his own Will; and therefore 'tis highly reasonable that he should submit and be at quiet, for the Lord wisely orders every Providence; therefore (1.) A patient Christian gives a careful Attention unto the Voice of the Rod, for there is a Voice from God in every Affliction. Affliction riseth not out of the Dust. God hath afore appoin-

ted and measured out the Afflictions and Trials of his People; and the Man of Patience and Wisdom considers this, *In the World ye shall have Tribulation.* It must be so, for God has ordain'd it shall be so, for gracious and wise Ends; *Micah 6. 9. The Lords Voice crieth unto the City, and the Man of Wisdom shall see thy Name, bear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.* Such a one meekly and patiently endures the chastenings of the Rod, because it is in such a Hand that can design no evil against a Believer; but God seeks his own Glory and his Peoples good, in every stroke of his Hand: And therefore he attends to, and hearkens out the Voice of God in it, he knows he deserves this and more, and when the Hand of God is upon him, it stirs up the Spirit of Prayer; and he goes to God saying, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;* he desires to know his Sin, that he may be humbled for it, and take heed to avoid it for the Future; though his Enemies curse him and cast Dirt in his Face, he does not presently fly in their Faces, but considers the Hand of God in it. When *Shimei* railed at, reproached and cursed *David*, *Abishi* would have gone over and cut off

that dead Dogs Head, as he worded it. But says *David*, *Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him curse David*, 2 Sam. 16. 10. The main thing that a Believer Eyes in every Affliction is the Hand of God: *They that seek after my Life, lay snares for me: And they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceit all the Day long, but I as a Deaf Man heard not; and I was as a Dumb Man that openeth not his Mouth*, Psalm 38. 12, 13. But why was *David* so quiet; see ver. 15. *For in Thee do I hope, &c.* Thou hast gracious Ends in permitting all this, 'tis to humble me no doubt for my Sins, and was this effected in and upon him? See ver. 18. *For I will declare mine Iniquity; I will be sorry for my Sins*: Yet he could not but think of the Strength and Malice of his Adversaries, ver. 19. *But mine Enemies are lively, and they are strong: And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied, they also that render evil for good are my Adversaries, &c.* Yet the Believer is patient and dare not open his Mouth by way of Murmuring; why? because the Lord hath a Hand in it, &c. Thus he attends to the Voice of the Rod.

(2.) Such a one opens his Heart to receive what God speaks to him by the Rod,

Rod,

Rod; 'tis true, 'tis the Work of God to open the Heart; but you must know, that God Works upon Men, as upon rational Creatures, and he makes them to be active in opening their Hearts; when the Soul has found out the end and gracious Design of God in afflicting, his Heart then yields and willingly submits: He doth as it were strip himself, lie down at the Foot of God, and gives him a fair stroke, &c. He is so far from repining at the Rod, that he thankfully receives these fatherly Corrections, &c. Hereby is discovered his meekness and humility; and this casts a great lustre and beauty upon his Profession, &c.

5. A Patient Christian is strong in Faith. *Abraham* could not so patiently yield to God in Sacrificing his only Son *Isaac*, had he not been Strong in Faith. He believed, altho he had no sensible ground of Hope; he doubted not, but that God would be as good as his Word, tho' he consulted not with Flesh and Bloud, but considered Him, who commanded him to offer up his Son, his Power and Faithfulness; he thought it unbecoming him to reason with God about the Righteousness and Equity of his Precept: It sufficed him, that it was

Justice and Truth it self, that requir'd this of him; and his Commands are not to be disputed, seeing 'tis not possible for God to countenance any unrighteous and unjust Action. So the patient Christian, 'tho God brings him into the deep Waters of Afflictions remembers the Promise of God, Isa. 43. 2. *When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee, and through the Rivers they shall not over flow thee, &c.* Such a one hath right notions of God, that he is a God of Truth; and tho' he passes through the Waters of Affliction, yet, God having given him his Word to be with him in a special manner, in such a Condition he briskly wades through and presseth forward; he had rather be in Adversity, with the Promise of the Divine Presence, than in Prosperity without it, for he seeketh God, not himself; his Glory, not his own carnal ease, &c. Such a one, like a Child, is willing to venture any where with its Mother, or Nurse, but dare not venture in a dark place without them: If the Mother says I will go with thee, give me thy Hand, Child, thou shalt come to no hurt, then the Child goes contentedly. So a Patient Christian, having Gods Promise

mise to be with him, is content to
 wade through deep Afflictions, especially
 because he hath his Word, *Rivers of
 Troubles shall not overflow him*, had he
 not Faith in the Promise, he would not
 with Patience, endure Tribulation.
 There is nothing grieves and troubles
 the Spirit of a Christian so much as his
 Sin; this being his greatest burden, he
 would gladly be rid of it, and under-
 standing that Affliction is that by which
 his *Iniquity shall be purged, and this is all
 the fruit to take away his Sin*, Isa. 27. 9.
 That which dishonours God, Wounds
 and Troubles his own Conscience.
 Certainly he would patiently endure a
 Cut tho' somewhat deep, for the leting
 out the Corruption and taking away
 the Core, than that it should further
 infect his Soul, and continually Knew
 his Conscience. Our Journeying to Hea-
 ven, cannot be over-pleasant while Sin
 lies as a heavy burden on our Souls.
 Tho' God be reconciled to the Sinner
 by the Blood of the Cross; yet to walk
 in the Dark without the Manifestations
 of this Reconciliation is dismal. Astho'
 a Child in Raggs, may be rightful Heir
 to a vast Inheritance, and shall certainly
 hereafter taste the sweetness of it, yet
 being

being Ignorant hereof, at present he looks upon himself no better than a Beggar, and in a poor and miserable Condition. Nothing can hinder us from sweet Communion with God in his Ordinances but Sin; nothing can take our Hearts off from Spiritual Dutys but Sin; either we must leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off Praying: Therefore God by Affliction hedges up our way of sinning, that so we may glorifie Him, and He Comfort us, that we may be brought to humble our selves at his Feet, confess and forsake our Sins, and that he may Hand forth his Pardoning Graces, and manifest his Love to us thereby; that He may say, *Be of good cheer, your Sins are forgiven you.* And that we may be in a posture to receive his gracious Smiles, the shinings of his Face and sweet communion with him. And it being reveal'd to the Soul, that these are the gracious ends which God proposeth, in Afflicting his own Children; Acting Faith in the Truth hereof, he not only patiently, but most heartily wades through the Waters, that are of so great Use and advantage. Besides this, he believeth that Word in *Habb. 1. 13.* where the Prophet saith, speaking of God, *Thou art*
of

*of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not
 look on Iniquity, &c.* If God did not
 shew himself displeased at Sin, where
 ever it is, how would his Purity and Ho-
 linefs be manifested? tho' He be recon-
 ciled to the Persons of his People, He
 cannot be reconciled to their Sins; for
 he cannot approve of that which is con-
 trary to his own divinely Holy Nature;
 God would seem to countenance Sin in
 his People, if he used no method with
 them to shew his dislike; and what better
 and likelier means could he use than by
 Correction, to let them know their
 Faults and thereby discover his Purity,
 that he cannot look on Iniquity with any
 approbation? would he to manifest his
 Indignation against the Sins of his Elect,
 punish his own sinless Son, (who had
 Sin only sticking to him by Imputation)
 yea, Punish him with Hell Torment;
 and yet tie up his own Hands, from
 Chastising them whose Sin occasioned His
 Sons Sufferings? Tho' Christ hath took
 out of the Hand of God, the Sword of
 his vindictive Justice, that he may not
 punish the Elect with Hell Torments,
 he hath not took from him his Rod, that
 he may not Correct them as their Father:
 God hath more kindness for his People,
 than

than to spoil them, by suffering them to grow Headstrong; which they would be apt to do, did he not sometime chastise them. It may be said of the best of God's Children as Solomon speak, *Pro.. 22. 15. Foolishness is bound in the Heart of a Child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.* Now the Patient Christian, believes that God takes this course to shew him his Folly and make him Wise; and therefore repines not at the Rod, &c.

6. A Patient Christian, is a moderate and temperate Christian: Was he not moderate and of an even temper, how could he pass through various changes in his condition in the World, and not be put out of Humour? his desires and Affections are not immoderately set upon the World and the things thereof; were it so, he would be restless and dissatisfy'd, till he attain'd his carnal Wishes and Desires, and he could not be quiet without them. Therefore for a Man to be fallen from a plentiful Estate, to a low Condition, from a state of bodily Health and outward Tranquility, to a condition of Sicknes and Misery, and yet to keep in an even temper of Mind, declares him to be a moderate Man: To lose outward

Enjoyments and yet remain quiet and satisfy'd, shews that not those carnal Enjoyments, but God in them, was the Basis of his Comfort : And so tho' he hath lost his Enjoyments, yet not having yet lost his God, he is as quiet and Patient as before : Tho' such a one may desire this, that and the other worldly Good ; yet not so much to satisfie his sensual Appetite, as that God may be Glorifi'd thereby : But if God sees fit to deprive him of these, or not to Answer his Desires, he is Content, why ? Because he perceives it makes more for God's glory that he be without them : Seeing his Wise Providence hath so ordered matters ; he is willing that God should have the ordering of his Affairs ; who is Wisdom and Goodness it self, and knows what is best for him, and wherein he may Glorifie himself. An immoderate Desire after any thing we have not in Possession, declares us dissatisfied with our present Condition, and discontented with God's allowance, and therefore bewrays the weakness of Grace and strength of corruption, and to run after that which God intends for us in his time. To ride Post before God's Providence in Desire ; Speaks aloud

aloud our impatience, and the unquietness of our minds; it declares we take not matters kindly at God's hands, when we are in haste to be delivered out of our Troubles when He seems not to be willing; it is sinful, when it is so, tho' Men perceive it not, but more sinful, when it is apparent to them that converse with us: Because it is a bad Copy for weak Christians to Write by, and no Encouragement to those that are entering upon a closure with Christ. And as God is hereby dishonoured, weak Christians staggered, convinced Sinners discouraged. So prophane Persons take an Advantage hereby to ridicule Religion: Seeing we discover our selves to be like them in our Immoderation: And it is no ways for our own Credit and Reputation, Phil. 4. 3. *Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand.* We are not to deceive, or play the Hypocrite, by appearing to be what we are not; and therefore not to make shew of that which we have not. But yet, if we are Men of Moderation it will be for God's Glory, that it appears so to all Men. And our Sin of Immoderation, would be aggravated and heightened; if it appear
even

even then when God is at Hand to help us, and coming to answer and deliver us, *The Lord is at Hand.* And as Moderation, so Temperance shines in a patient Christian; for when our Commons are cut short, and to have hardly enough to keep Life and Soul together (as we say) yet to be satisfy'd, argues we have no small degree of Patience; or to have abundance, and yet to be temperate. For Persons that had their Cellars full of Wine, their Tables set with choice Varieties, to be brought to a morsel of Bread, and a Draught of Water, and yet quiet and patient, argues their Moderation, and Temperance; that they were not Belly-gods, and did not dote on what they had, and that their Happiness did not Centre in those things; and for Persons to have Plenty of that which naturally they Love and Delight in, and yet to reduce their Appetite to a low Ebb in the desire and use of these, argues that the Heart is not set upon these things; for a Poor Man to be satisfy'd with his Condition, and a Rich Man willing to be reduc'd to Poverty, and that God should take the greatest Part of what he hath for his Glory, argues not only a Man to be temperate, but that his

Heart

Heart Centres in God and not the Creature: If a Man is willing to part with that which God is taking away, though it suits his carnal Appetite: It declares such a one to be much wean'd from the Love of the World. *The Lord gives, and the Lord takes* (says Job) *Blessed be the Name of the Lord,* Job 1. 21, &c.

II. *Use of Exhortation,* To labour after Patience in Affliction, and in every Condition to be satisfied. Be much in the Contemplation of the Attributes of God, which are all laid in Covenant, for the Use and Encouragement of the Lord's People; let me speak of some of them.

I. *The Power, Alſufficiency, and Almightyneſs of God.* Indeed, when a Man is in Distress, and beſet with a ſtrong Adverſary, having no Friend with him to help him, he cannot but be ſurprized with Fear in ſo great a Danger, and helpleſs; and if he had ſome Friend with him that was unable to defend himſelf or aſſiſt him, his Caſe would be no better: But at ſuch a Time to have in Company a Friend of conſiderable Strength and Courage, this bears up his Spirits and keeps his Heart from fainting; even ſo

to Christians when you meet with Op-
 position from powerful Enemies, if you
 consider your own Strength, and the
 weakness and insufficiency of your car-
 nal Friends and Relations; you would
 be discouraged: But if you consider that
 the Lord is with you, and on your side;
 who is a God of Power and Might, you
 shall not be dismay'd; the Considerati-
 on of this, made *Paul* to break forth in
 these Words: *If God be for us, who can*
be against us, Rom. 8. 31. If he who with
 the breath of his Nostrils, can scatter
 Millions of Giants, and drive them away
 as Chaff before a strong Wind, *be for*
us, who can be against us? if he be for us,
 lies it not in his Power to dispirit all our
 Adversaries, and make them as weak as
 Water? Cannot he soon change their
 Minds, and turn their Hearts as the Ri-
 vers of Waters are turned; that of Ene-
 mies they may become Friends? Is he
 not able to confound them, and make
 them ashamed of all their Impieties and
 Slanders? Cannot his Voice soon effect
 his Pleasure? *Isa. 65. 13. Therefore thus*
saith the Lord God, my Servants shall eat,
but ye shall be hungry; behold my Servants
shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold
my Servants shall rejoyce, but ye shall be
ashamed,

ashamed, ver. 14. Behold my Servants shall sing for Joy of Heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of Heart, and shall howl for vexation of Spirit, ver. 15. And ye shall leave your Name for a Curse unto my chosen. Is it not sinful to fear the Strength and number of our Enemies, when the Almighty hath declared himself for us? Doth not God express himself thus unto his People, Ezek. 36. 9. For behold I am for you, and I will turn unto you, &c. If we should then be discouraged, it must be because we question God's Power or Faithfulness, or both, and is not this sinful? And Beloved, whatever our Troubles or Afflictions are, though never so great, though never so many; the Consideration of Gods Alfsufficiency would be a means to quiet our Spirits under all of them; seeing this is laid in Covenant for us, is not he an Almighty God? And doth he not say, I will be your God, Ezek. 36. 28. And hath such a God promised, and cannot he, nor will he not perform it? If you say he cannot help you, you reproach his Power; if you say he will not, you charge him with unfaithfulness. If Almightiness, Alfsufficiency, cannot support you, cannot deliver you, you may eternally Dispair: Who

Who among you hath a tender Love for your Children, and Power enough to help them, when in Distress you would refuse to assist them? If a Child is Sick, Poor, or encompassed with merciless Enemies; and it lies in the Power of a Father to cure him, to relieve him, to defend him, and doth not do it, doth not this declare him to be unnatural and to want Bowels to his own Child? And will an Almighty God think ye, suffer himself to be reproach'd for want of exerting his Power for his Peoples good in their Distress, &c. Learn you to improve the Power and Almighty of God (which is laid up in Covenant for you) in your Afflictions, and this will be a means to quiet and satisfy your Spirits, &c.

2. *The faithfulness and unchangeableness of God.* I touch'd upon this in the last Head. Indeed, when in Affliction and opposed by a multitude of Potent Adversaries, to have some fair-weather Friends, such that have Power, but not Will, to help and relieve us, is but a rotten stay in our Distress; to apply our selves to such for their Assistance; and find them cold to our requests and deaf to our crys; nay, to slight and contemn us, in-

instead of encouraging us, is not the way to raise our hope but augment our Grief: And truly this is very ordinary and frequent, even among Professors in this dark Day: While Prosperity smiles on us, they smile: But when we fall into Adversity, we soon see their Countenances altered and behold their Frowns. Nothing is more natural to Men, than to be lovers of themselves; and self admirers Smile on none, without proposing some outward Advantage to themselves: And while a Man hath many Friends, thrives and Prospers, he shall not want the Countenance and Complement of such Persons: Because he is in a Capacity, some how, or other, to do them a kindness at a dead Lift: But when once they perceive him to go down the Hill and fall into deep Adversity; they all disappear and are not seen; least they themselves should be petitioned for Relief. The change of our Condition, soon alters the Countenance of fickle fair-Weather Friends; who reaverenced our Wealth, not our Persons. The Wise Man is much in the right on't, Pro. 19. 4, 7. *Wealth maketh many Friends; but the Poor is separated from his Neighbour, Every Man is a Friend to him* that

that giveth Gifts, All the Brethren of the Poor do hate him : How much more do his Friends go far from him : He persweth them with words, yet they are wanting to him. This is no new thing : But to find such dealings among the religious is a great scandal to Religion. But when it falleth thus out, the true Christian hath no Ground to be discouraged, seeing the powerful Almighty, Alfufficient God, hath promised to be his Friend yea, his God, to help strengthen and uphold him. And all that are incenced against him shall be ashamed and Confounded, that they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with him shall perish, see Isa. 41. 10, 11. And when once God hath given his Hand, his Word of Promise to stand by his People, they have a sure ground of Trust ; for he is oblig'd to keep his Word : He can as soon Cease to be, as cease to be a God of Truth and Faithfulness. It destroys the Credit and Reputation of a reputed honest Man ; to falsifie his Word, when it lyes in his Power to fulfil it. God hath promised nothing but what he is able to perform ; and if he doth not fulfil his Promise, He must needs be unfaithful, but this cannot be. He cannot I say, neither will.

He by breaking his Word, give an Advantage to the Devils, nor any of his Enemies, to charge him with a Lye. *St. Paul* makes the Faithfulness of God, the encouraging Reason, of his Hope of his Future Eternal Happiness. *Titus*, 1. 2. *In hope of Eternal Life, which God that cannot Lye, promised before the World began.* This is a strong ground of Consolation to the Afflicted Believer; that God hath promised him succor of Relief: and that he will not, yea he cannot break his Word, *Heb. 10. 23. For he is faithful that promised.* This is given as a ground of Encouragement to the *Hebrews*, to hold fast the profession of their Faith without wavering. Nothing should stagger our Faith and confidence in God, who is faithful to his word of Promise and cannot Lye. The consideration of this, was that which quickened and enlivened the ancient Christians, in the midst of their Troubles and among false Brethren; yea, that which bore up the Spirit of the greatest Apostles, 2. *Thes.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *Finally Brethren, Pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with you. And that we may be delivered from unreasoning and wicked Men: For all Men have*

have not Faith. But the Lord is faithful,
 who shall stablish you, and keep you from
 evil, In all our Straits and Troubles,
 we should have recourse to the Pro-
 mises and rest upon the faithfulness of
 God therein. And Beloved, as the
 faithfulness, so the unchangeableness of
 God is ground of Encouragement to us
 in all our Tribulations: Tho' Friends
 alter their Respects to us, as our Con-
 ditions alters and changes. Yet, God
 in his Love remains still the same to us.
 He loved us not at first for what we had,
 or for any Excellency he saw in us. The
 outward beauty and pomp of worldly
 Glory and VVealth, doth not in the
 least attract his Eye: He is the Donor
 of all outward Good things; and an
 Eternal Happiness and Felicity to him-
 self. The Argument of his Loving us,
 being drawn from himself, and not from
 us, or our condition, our changeableness,
 or the Mutation of our State can make
 no change in his Love; He himself be-
 ing unchangeable in his Nature. The
 Foundation of his Love to his People,
 is therefore an immutable and unchange-
 able Ground. And if the Ground and
 Argument of his Love remains, his Love
 to us necessarily must continue, and

if his Love continues to us the same in all Mutations of Providence. We have no reason of impatience or disquietment, whatever our Condition in the VWorld be, If he that sits at the Helm of Affairs, ordering all things in Heaven and Earth, according to the Counsel of his own VWill, be our Powerful, Faithful and unchangeable Friend. Then may we assure our selves that all things will go well with us, and turn to our Advantage; (altho at present we do not perceive it, but thing run cross to our carnal desires.) For how can any thing hurt us? Seeing he wants not Power to prevent it, and hath promised so to do; and how can we fear a disappointment, seeing he is *faithful that hath promised, who also will do it.* And what tho' we are fallen into a State of Adversity, Trouble and Distress; his Mind being not changed, nor his Love in the least abated; his Bowels will not suffer any thing to harm us. We have no ground to think he is altered in his Affections; because he hath chang'd our Conditions, and we are now under the strokes of his Rod; but 'tis rather a Corroborating Instance of his Love, *for whom he loves he chastens.* A Parent's whipping of his Child

Child, argues not his hatred of him, but his Love, Care and tenderness; to reclaim him from those Enormities that might otherwise inevitably issue in his Ruin: Tho' he administers a bitter Portion to his Child, and Constrains him to take it, for the removal of ill Humours contracted in his Stomack, &c. This argues no alteration or abatement of his Love; seeing thereby he designs his Health and Advantage, &c. If God take from us such things, by which we have done harm to our selves, either this or the other carnal Enjoyment; and now hedges up our way, that we cannot come near them; this argues not any change in him or his Love: No more than it shews a want of Love in a tender Mother, when she takes away and hides, out of the sight of her Child, that Knife wherewith he had cut his Finger. Beloved, tho' your Condition be changed, yet for your Comfort, and that you may not be disquieted; God saith, Mall. 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not, &c.*

3. *The Holiness of God.* I have touch'd this already, and therefore shall speak the less at this time: We are to consider, that God's providential way, to declare

the Purity and Holiness of his Nature ; is not meerly by the Light set up in Mens Consciences, but by his outward dealings with the Children of Men ; that the glorious Lustre of this Attribute may shine through out all his Works : This is manifested inwardly to Mens Consciences, and by his Word and Spirit, and outwardly by his Acts of Providence : And this of Holiness, is indeed the Glory of all his other Attributes ; it puts a Lustre upon them as well as upon all his Works : Holiness was that Image and likeness which we had of God in our first Creation. From a view of this, together with that happy Communion Man had with God, sprung Satan's malice, who being miserable himself, highly disdain'd and envi'd Man's happiness ; and if Man's happiness at first, consisted in this, the loss of Holiness, was necessarily the loss of his Happiness. And this Satan well understood, else had he not tempted him to Sin, in taking of the forbidden Fruit : For by Sin he was depriv'd thereof, and became unmeet for Communion with a Holy God, which was the Heaven of Man's Happiness. For God being the only Good and chief End

of Man: The loss of our primitive Holiness and Righteousness, separated us from that only good, who could not look pleasantly upon us and lay us in his Bosom as before, we being by our Sin and disobedience, become unclean and polluted. God therefore to make us sensible of our unhappiness, by reason of Sin and his displeasure thereat, (as well as to declare his Truth and Justice,) so soon as he had embrac'd a Fools Paradise and Sin'd, turn'd him out of his real Paradise, and hid his Face from him: For Holiness being his Nature and Himself, he could do no otherwise, unless he seem'd to walk contrary to himself; and not only so, but give Man just ground, to suspect his Purity and to charge Him with Falshood, in breaking his Word, had he not shew'd himself offended with Sin. And truly as God did not upon Man's first Sin, walk contrary to himself and seem to countenance it, So neither doth he, nor can he by any means indulge Men in their Sins, no not his own chosen People; for tho' (as I have said) he be reconcil'd so far to their Persons, by the Death of Christ, as not to punish them with endless wrath as a severe Judge, yet neither

is he, nor can he be reconcil'd to their Sins, unless he fall out with himself, and act contrary to his Nature, which is utterly Impossible. And tho' after the Fall, *Adam* had the Promise of the Seed, Christ, and acted Faith in the Promise; and was Personaly Justifi'd and receiv'd to God, yet, this hindred not, but he must taste the fruit of his Sin, *Get his Bread, by the sweat of his brow*; and at length return to Dust, and why so! but because God would have a continual Sense of his Sin to remain in him, so long as liv'd: that God might make his hatred thereto apparent; and enhaunce the Price of his Holiness. And is it not therefore highly reasonable that Men should patiently and quietly submit to his Rod, whereby God makes a discovery of the Purity of his Nature, and his aversness to Sin? and that to this very End, that through Christ Men might be separated from their Sin, and recover their primitive Happiness of Communion with God: *For without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. &c.

4. *And Lastly. God's Omniscieny.* The serious consideration of this Attribute; that God's Eye is like a flame of Fire

Fire, that penetrates through the closest
 Crevis and Cavern, that he beholds all
 Things and Persons with one look and
 at all times, Would certainly much
 tend to the quieting and settling of the
 Soul under the heaviest Pressures and
 in the deepest Afflictions. Heb. 4. 13.
*Neither is there any creature that is not
 manifest in his sight, for all things are na-
 ked and opened unto the eyes of him, with
 whom we have to do.* Therefore as he be-
 holds our Enemies, and observes all
 their motions, with a design to counter-
 work them; or takes a strict observa-
 tion in order to measure out their Pu-
 nishment, according to the degree and
 demerit of their Sin. So his Eye is up-
 on us, narrowly watching our motions
 whether we have any Heart-burnings
 and Heart-risings against them; and
 are not ready to usurp the Throne of
 God, and take upon us to be Judges in
 our own Cause, and Executioners of our
 Adversaries. *For vengeance is mine saith the
 Lord, and I will repay it,* Rom. 12. 19.
 It is dangerous to seem, as tho' we would
 take the work out of God's hand; whose
 Glory is as much concerned, as our
 Peace and Profit: we are to consider that
 he is not an Idle Spectater, but observing
 how

how is Name is exposed, will not, can not winck at their Sin; and therefore will lay-hold on a fit opportunity to shew them their Sin by their punishment: *be still*, saith Jehovah, *and know that I am God*. As he is God, and it is his Royal Prerogative, both to punish and pardon Sin: So he wants neither Wisdom nor Justice to find out a fit Reason and right methods to magnifie those his Attributes, in avenging himself on his and our Adversaries. Therefore it is our Duty to stand still, and see the Salvation of God, as Omniscience cannot but see all our Afflictions and Tribulations; so he wants not an Eye to pity us, because he loves us, and if he sees our Distress, and Loves our Persons, he will at present support us, and at length deliver us, and as he sees us to Pity us, so to reprove us, for the least misbehaviour under his Rod, either inwardly by piercing Convictions, or outwardly by sharp stripes if when he Afflicts us to separate us from our Sin, we should take an occasion to increase the number of our Sins, either by sinful Fears or repinings; no wonder if he double his Strokes. God takes great notice how his Children behave themselves, especially in the hour of Temptation; And if our Thoughts and Considerations dwell upon this, we shall narrowly watch our own Spirits, that we may Patiently subject ourselves to the will of God in such a Dispensation.

F I N I S.

THere is a large Treatise concerning the Sabbath, containing divers Sermons, preparing to be Printed, if Encouragement be given by Subscribers: It being a full Confutation of those that keeping the *Jewish* Sabbath; in which will be divers new Arguments. By *Benj. Keach*.

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