

An essay towards the cure of religious melancholy, in a letter to a gentlewoman afflicted with it / By Robert Blakeway, Chaplain to ... Henry Lord Herbert, and Rector of Little Ilford in Essex. Penn'd for her use, and published at her request.

Contributors

Blakeway, Robert, 1688 or 1689-

Publication/Creation

London : Printed for, and sold by Bezaleel Creake ... and Joseph Hazard ... and by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1717.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jf9uu8xx>

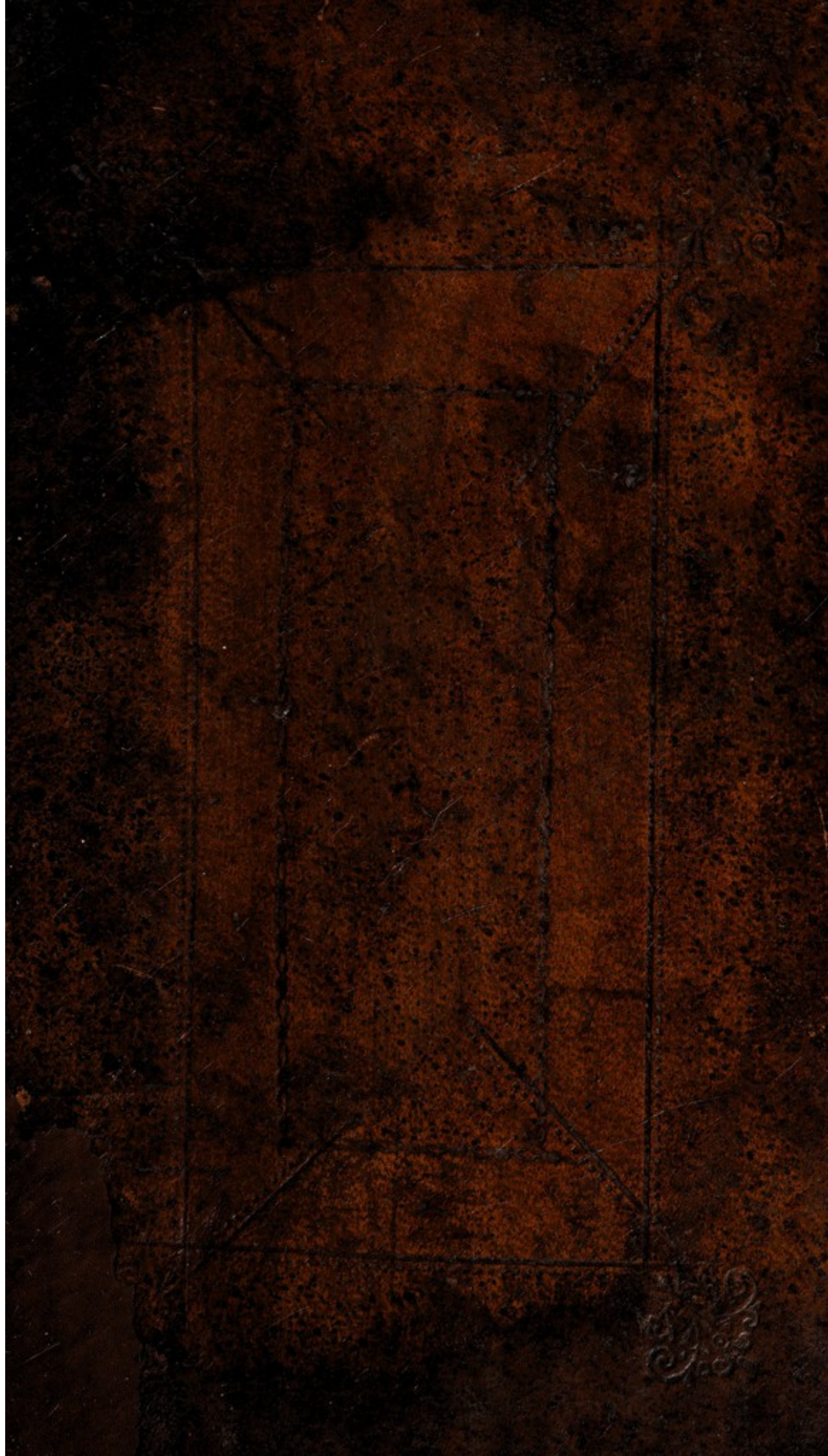
License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>




58,409/3 Supp.

BLAKEWAY, R
C

58
23
70

ES 400



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b3053060x>



A N
ESSAY

Towards the C U R E of
Religious Melancholy, &c.





IN A

ESSAYS

Towards the CURE of

Religious Delinquency &c.



A N
E S S A Y

Towards the C U R E of
Religious Melancholy,
I N
A L E T T E R to a Gentle-
woman afflicted with it.

By ROBERT BLAKEWAY, Chap-
lain to the Right Honourable HENRY
Lord HERBERT, and Rector of *Little
Ilford* in E S S E X.

Penn'd for her Use, and Published at her
Request.

*For Gold is try'd in the Fire, and acceptable
Men in the Furnace of Adversity, Eccclus. 2. 5.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for, and Sold by Bezaleel Creak at the Bible
and Ink-bottle in Germain-street, St. James's ; and
Joseph Hazard at the Bible in Stationer's Court near
Ludgate ; and by the Booksellers of London and
Westminster. 1717.

ESSAYS
ON

Towards the Cure of
Religious Melancholy.

IN
A LETTER to a Gentle-
woman afflicted with it.

348538

By ROBERT BARKER, Chap-
lain to the Right Honourable Henry
Lord Treasurer, and Bishop of Exeter.

Printed for her Life, and Published by her
Request.

For Gold is laid in the Grave, and
there is the Reward of doing Right.

LONDON:
Printed for, and sold by Samuel Crompton at the
And the same is to be had of St. Paul's Church
Joseph Harker at the Bible in St. Dunstons Church
Lancaster; and by the Booksellers of London and
Windsor.



To the very much Honoured
Mrs. MARGARET OFFLEY
OF
St. James's Place, LONDON.

MADAM!



HE unshaken
Zeal with which
the Honou-
rable Crewe
Offley Esq; hath
always distinguish'd himself in
Defence of the Hannover
Succession, and the uncom-

The Dedication.

mon Favours I therefore received from you both in my Troubles, give me the Boldness to present You with this Book, as some Profession of my unfeign'd Gratitude to Him, and particularly to Your self, in hopes it may find the same favourable Protection its Author hath done ; not that it deserves, but needs it, that by Your Countenance and Credit, it may better accomplish the Good it is design'd for.

There is no greater present Ease to Afflicted Vertue, than the Recommendation of Means to administer Comforts

The Dedication.

forts from Persons who are themselves very exemplary for Piety and Charity. In this respect, Madam, such as You outstrip us in doing Good; for we can be only term'd the Advisers of Medicines we publish, but You help to apply them, and wonderfully promote and hasten the Salutary Operation by which is by far the most Glorious Work of the two. And here, Madam, I am sure of Your Pious Endeavour, for the least Intimation of doing Good to one so well dispos'd is chearfully embrac'd, and quickly shines in the Performance. May

The Dedication.

*May the Almighty then
continue to lend You his Gra-
cious Assistance, and ever re-
ward You with a double Por-
tion of those Temporal and
Spiritual Blessings You be-
stow on others, which I am
confident is the Prayer of many
distressed Souls, and ever shall
be in particular of,*

Madam,

Your most oblig'd,

And most Obedient Servant,

Robert Blakeway.



A N
E S S A Y

Towards the Cure of Religious Melancholy. In a Letter, &c.

Mrs. H——



INCE you did me the Honour (before others much more capable) to desire my Advice and Assistance under your unhappy Circumstances, and have since requested me to give you those Instructions in Print, which I often repeated, for your *better Application* of them; tho' it may be look'd upon as too presumptuous in this Critical Age, for a young Divine to obtrude any thing upon the World in such a lasting Way, yet I shall be content to bear their Censures, if I can but do you good, and save a Soul hereby from a dangerous Error: For indeed I should have been wanting to my Duty as a Christian, but more especially as a Clergy-man, and to

B that

2 *An Essay towards the Cure*

that Respect I owe to you, and to the Memory of your very worthy Spouse, for your many particular Favours, if I had not endeavour'd to compleat your Relief. I heartily thank *God* for the good Success I have hitherto had with you; and I trust he will add a Blessing to these weak Labours, and make the Influences of his Grace supply the Defect of their Reasoning, to the Conviction of your mistaken Judgment, and Restoration of your Mind to its former Self-satisfaction and Quiet, and Joy in the Exercise of Religious Duties. And in order to this, I shall in the concisest, and yet plainest Method, since both are requir'd by Persons in your Case, set down what I suppose to be the Causes of your *Melancholy*, and then subjoin to each some Rules, which if well observ'd, with the Blessing of *God*, will (I hope) intirely remove the Effects, and prevent you from ever sinking again into the same Condition.

But before you read any farther, let me advise you to fall upon your Knees, and humbly to beg of *God* to enlighten your Understanding, and to bless these Means unto you for the Consolation and Happiness of your afflicted Soul.

Now,

NOW, in my Enquiry into the Causes of Religious Melancholy in your self, it may not be amiss in the first Place briefly to answer an Objection, which some, observing the Errors of this kind in many good People, do therefore make to the Christian Religion, viz.

That it implies a Repugnancy to our Natural Appetites and Desires; abridgeth us of the Pleasure of gratifying 'em, and consequently dooms us to perpetual Melancholy.

But that this is mere Ignorance and Delusion, I presume, will plainly appear from these three Particulars.

I. It is absolutely false that the Christian Religion interdicts the Gratification of any of our Faculties in earthly Pleasures and Enjoyments, and that because, by such an absurd Assertion, we should rob the Almighty of two of his brightest Attributes, viz. *Wisdom and Goodness*: For it had been inconsistent with both to create so many Beauteous and Pleasing Objects in the World, and such strong Inclinations of possessing them, in Man. It had been a Contradiction to the attractive Claim of Nature in the one, and to the Reason implanted in the other: Yea, it

4 *An Essay towards the Cure*

had been Cruelty and Violence done to both, to make the one amiable, the other furiously desirous of whatever is so; and yet to prohibit a mutual Intercourse or Enjoyment. Man then had been form'd to be miserable indeed, like that *Wretch*, whom the Poets feign to be starv'd in the midst of Plenty, set up to the Chin in Water, and yet forbid, and unable to quench his Thirst; however, this may be the Punishment of some of the Damn'd in the other World, yet certainly it cou'd not be the End of creating these Things in this: And therefore we are told, that as *God* doth nothing for nought and in vain, so he has given Man Liberty to use the Creatures (*Gen. 1. 29.*) which instructs us, that it is the Abuse only which he condemns: Debauches, not Rational Pleasures; Excesses, not moderate Enjoyments.

As then the *Christian Religion* doth not tie Men up from taking a lawful Delight and Satisfaction in the good Things of this World, so,

2. It refines the Relish, and heightens the Pleasure of enjoying them, and hath this Privilege besides, to be attended with infinitely more substantial and sublime Joys than they can possibly afford. As

of Religious Melancholy. 5

As to the first: *Riches* are a worldly Good, which afford some sort of Pleasure to every Possessor of them, but certainly vastly different, according to Mens different Dispositions: For where they happen to *wicked* and *irreligious Persons*, they cannot pursue the Delights of Converse and Recreations, without running into vicious Extremes, such as Drunkenness and Luxury, Chambering and Wantonness, &c. and hereby they render them a Load and Burden, Satiety and Weariness, and contract and lay in themselves the Seeds of future Diseases and Calamities. ———

Whereas when they are conferr'd upon a *Religious* and *Good Man*, they most commonly bring Health with them, without which they would be dull and insipid, and are therefore to him both a Pleasure and Felicity. His Enjoyments indeed are short, because temperate and inoffensive; but at the same time he can keep up his Spirits to a greater, more vigorous, and more enduring Height of Motion, which the Sensation of Pleasure excites, than the others possibly can; there is a Mixture of Gall and Heaviness in their Mirth and Rejoycings, but a sweet Refreshment, and sprightly Chearfulness in his.

6 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Again, *Grandeur of Condition*, is another Temporary Good, and naturally attended with much Pleasure and Delight; but then here also it is proportionably greater or less, according to the Virtues or Vices of the Persons who enjoy it; for those who have no Sparks of Religion, nor Dread of a *Supreme Being*, are only influenced by it to greater Degrees of Lewdness and Debauchery, of Pride and Insolence, Ambition and Vain-glory, Envy and Detraction, &c. and then every the least Contradiction and Disappointment begets Disquiet and Uneasiness in themselves, and their Deportment, Contempt and Enmity from others. So that to carry on their Designs, and even to support the Dignity they have, being all Wise and Good Men are declar'd Enemies to their Prophaneness, they must become guilty of all the Fraud and Oppression that an impious Fancy can invent; which robs them at once of the much greater Pleasures of Freedom and Safety, of Honour and Reputation.

But it is much otherwise with those who are *Good in Greatness*; these have the additional pleasing Satisfaction of being belov'd by all, and if they chance to fall into Misfortunes and Disgrace, of being
even

of Religious Melancholy. 7

even then pitied and beloved the more. As these bright Stars have nothing of Baseness and Servitude in their Frame and Dispositions, so they are justly accounted by all *truly Noble*, as having the *truest Mark of Nobility, viz. Vertue*; and this continually supplies them with many ravishing Reflections upon their Actions: What Joy and Comfort does it give them to consider that they have not abus'd the Power and good Things with which God hath bless'd them, to the Hurt of their own Souls or Bodies, or to the Prejudice of others! That they can enjoy the Pleasure without Sin! Live innocent in the midst of Temptations! Safe and secure in the midst of Dangers! Honourable in the midst of Scandals! And by their awful Examples deter the Ignorant from Vice, and win 'em over to an Admiration and Love of Religion. These are the *bless'd Improvements* of earthly Delights, which the Irreligious want, and none but the Virtuous enjoy: *So refin'd is their Relish, and so much more clarify'd their Pleasure in their Enjoyment of the Good Things of this World!* But further,

The *Christian Religion* hath yet this higher Privilege, *to be attended with infi-*

8 *An Essay towards the Cure*

nately more substantial and sublime Joys than they can possibly afford. It not only furnisheth us with Instructions to make the Mind easie and happy in every Circumstance; content and thankful in the Prosperous, and submissive and resign'd in the Adverse; not only prescribes Rules to keep the Conscience serene and calm, and teaches it to pronounce the refreshing Sentence of Comfort and Absolution; to heal the bleeding Heart, and to proclaim a general Peace and Amnesty, and Jubilee to the Soul; but supplies us with yet nobler, and more transporting Speculations: For here with the Eye of Faith we can view the dazzling Glories of the Great Creator, and be fill'd with most entrancing Idea's, both from his Nature and his Works. And indeed what can be more amazingly joyous than to behold an Eternal and Unlimited Power, an Incomprehensible Knowledge and Omnipresence, and an Infinite Justice and Mercy united in one miraculous and adorable Essence; and in this a Mystorious Trinity of Persons; to contemplate the gracious Condescensions and triumphant Love of our Redeemer; the astonishing Work of re-uniting our Souls and Bodies in the Resurrection;

of Religious Melancholy. 9

rection; and the Promises of saving us from the eternal Woe, and of exalting us to the inexpressible Bliss of the *New Jerusalem*! These are Contemplations fit to employ a Rational Being! Objects above a common Reach, and Heights of Pleasure which can never satiate nor weary us! and which are the *Efficacy only of supernatural Grace*, the best of sublunary Goods, being no more able of themselves to produce in us these high and lofty Speculations, than to furnish us with a good Conscience, which, sure I am, it is impossible for them to do.

From what has been briefly said, 'tis clearly evident, That the *Christian Religion* improves and advances the Perception of Pleasure to its highest Pitch, and yields an inexhausted Treasure of incomparably more solid Joys, even such as are the chief Ingredient in the Blessedness of Saints and Angels above, which manifestly shews the falsity of the Objection, *That it dooms Men to perpetual Melancholy*; And yet this will more evidently appear from the third Consideration I propos'd to speak to, *viz.*

3. Because it condemns a morose and *melancholy* Temper, and obliges Men to
Joy

10 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Joy and Chearfulness. *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, saith the holy Psalmist? Psal. 42. 11.* which plainly intimates the Error of Disquiet and Dejection; for that under the greatest Pressures he ought still to hope in God, and to praise him who is the Health of his Countenance. Of the same Import is that most affectionate Caution of the Almighty to Zion; *Fear not, O Land, be glad and rejoyce, for the Lord will do great Things, Joel 2. 21.* As if he had said, 'Tho' you have abused my Mercy, and provok'd my Indignation, I would not have you to be dispirited and disconsolate; for this indeed would incapacitate you to seek your own Interest in advancing my Glory; but upon your unfeign'd Humiliation be joyfully assur'd of my Protection and Relief. Therefore St. Paul gives this as a Command, as well an Exhortation to the *Philippians*, *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoyce, Phil. 4. 4.* And in the like manner David calls upon the Church in his Time; *Delight thou also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desires of thine Heart, Psal. 37. 4.* which shews, that Pleasure and Delight in him is one of the chief Conditions upon which Men must expect the Favour of his Love
and

of Religious Melancholy. 11

and Blessings. The Sense of which Duty made *Hannah* in her Thanksgiving say, *I rejoyce in thy Salvation, there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none besides thee; neither is there any Rock like our God,* 1 Sam. 2. 1, 2. And this mov'd the Prophet to cry out with Transport; *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God,* Isa. 61. 10. Many are the Instances, and many the Texts in the Holy Scriptures to this Purpose, commanding Joy and Chearfulness.

It may be now objected; how can that harsh and severe Duty of Repentance, enjoin'd in your Religion, and to which your Bible it self gives the dismal Titles of *mortifying the Deeds of the Body*, Rom. 8. 13. of *crucifying the old Man*, Rom. 6. 6. of *bemoaning and loathing ones self*, Jer. 31. 18. Ezek. 6. 9. of *Fasting, Weeping, and Mourning*, &c. Joel 2. 12. be reconciled to that Apprehension of Joy and Pleasure, which you say it is attended with?

In Answer to this, 'Tis true, that in the Theory it seems to a Natural Man to be a very frightful Duty, a Compound of Gall and Bitterness, but in the Practice, *the Yoke is easie, and the Burden is light*, Matth. 11. 30. For 'tis only the first resolute

12 *An Essay towards the Cure*

lute Conflict with a vicious Habit that may be somewhat difficult and painful. Thus Beasts that are not us'd to the Yoke, do struggle with it, because of the unusual Weight they feel at first, but after some time they bear it with Ease and

Omnia dum incipias, gravia sunt.
Terent.

Gentleness. There is somewhat of Difficulty in the Entrance upon all Undertakings; whence it cannot be expected that we shou'd find none in our Entrance into the Ways of Religion; and tho' the Path to Life and Glory is straight, yet when we have once enter'd into it, and go on therein, *our Steps shall not be straitned, saith Solomon; and when we run, we shall not stumble, Prov. 4. 12. i. e.* we shall find more and more Enlargement, every Day more Comfort than other; of the same Nature is this Duty of Repentance, irksom indeed in the Beginning, but comfortable in the Practice as well as in the End. A Yoke seemingly grievous at first, but after it is born a while (as I said) both *easy and light*: For when we have begun it with a sincere and steady Resolution to persevere in it, the vanquish'd Fiend retreats, and there opens all around a Scene of Consolation, Joy
and

of Religious Melancholy. 13

and Sweetness; for now to behold an Omnipotent Wrath melted into Love, to see the Soul snatch'd from the very Brink of Ruine, and guarded by good Angels who shall one Day raise it to unspeakable Felicity, is what sweetens the Tears, and makes the Sorrow joyous; for whilst we mourn, we read, *Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Matth. 5. 4. And *Ye shall be sorrowful, but your Sorrow shall be turned into Joy*, John 16. 20.

The ridiculous Austerities which the Papists make use of in the Exercise of this Duty, *viz.* their Pilgrimages, going Bare-foot, Hair-shirts, Whips, &c. do not in the least invalidate the Force of what hath been said, and that because their Commands are not the Commands of Religion, *whose Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, Prov. 3. 17.

But it may be yet urg'd: You are commanded to *work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. how then can it be consistent with that Delight and Gladness which you boast of in Religion?

I answer: This Phrase doth not suggest a Predominancy of these Passions over

14 *An Essay towards the Cure*

ver the other, but intimates, that Men may, and ought to serve their *great Creator* with a Mixture of Joy and Fear, of Chearfulness and Dread, of Ecstasy and Caution; as a Man who is banish'd from a King's Presence for presuming Rudeness and Insolence, when his Majesty of his mere Goodness forgives the Crimes, and invites him to return to Court, he may then enter full of Admiration of his Prince's Clemency, and transported with the Honour done him, and yet retain a Fear of offending again.

So empty and groundless is the Objection of Melancholy to the Christian Religion! and surely there is no need of better Arguments to press it upon Mens Minds, and to remove their Prejudices against it

than these, which shew, that it puts 'em in a State of perfect Freedom, and is no Enemy to their Pleasures,

but directly the Reverse: It must be therefore not only Mens Ignorance of its Pleasures, for want of observing its Rules, that makes 'em so prone to raise Objections against it, but also a plain Want of the Use of their Reason in the Case; for when it self condemns *Melancholy*,

Bonus etiam servat, liber est;
Aug. lib. 4. de Civit. Dei.

of Religious Melancholy. 15

choly, how can it be the Cause of it? They may with as much Probability averr, That Fire doth naturally congeal Water into Ice, or that the Sun and Stars are the Cause of Darkneſs; the one gives Warmth, the other Light; and ſo wou'd *Religion*, if they wou'd let it have its due Operation, enlighten their darken'd Underſtandings, and warm their cold Affections into a vigorous Purſuit of the greateſt Pleaſure and Happineſs their Natures are capable of enjoying. — *Religious Melancholy* then muſt have other Cauſes, proceeding either from Mens Neglect of, or erroneous Notions concerning God, themſelves, or their Duties, which I am now to enquire into, and ſhall reduce to Five.

First Cause: The Sight of Sin, and Senſe of Ingratitude under Spiritual Deſertions.

When a Man by the Illuminations of *Divine Grace*, underſtands what Sin is, and what, and how dreadful the Miſeries that attend it, without which he can never become truly ſenſible of either, and afterwards grows careleſs in his Duties, which he had for ſome time practis'd

16 *An Essay towards the Cure*

* Note, *This is all that is meant by Desertion in this Discourse.*

etis'd very well, the *Almighty* is provok'd, and * seems to withdraw himself, and then makes Sin appear in all its Terrors to his Conscience; this takes the Alarm, and having in View the monstrous hideous Form, recollects, That it is a flat Contrariety and Offensiveness to God, and remembers that *its Wages are Death*, Rom. 6. 23. even such a comprehensive Death as imports *the Loss of Spiritual Life*, Rev. 3. 1. and of all worldly Peace and Happiness, with the Rise of all sorts of Calamities, *Exod. 10. 17. The Dissolution of his Body into Dust, and returning of his Spirit to his incensed and just Judge*, Eccles. 12. 7. the sooner now to be expected, and the more to be dreaded, and the Privation of the greatest Good, and Condemnation to an eternal State of the greatest Woe; *To a Furnace of Fire, where shall be wailing, and gnashing of Teeth*, Matth. 13. 42. *To a Place of Torment*, from whence is no Redemption, *Luke 16. 28. and to a Prison*, where shall be no Intervals of Liberty, nor Respite from Pains, *1 Pet. 3. 19.*

These Reflections in his forlorn Condition, do grievously affright and perplex

of Religious Melancholy. 17

plex him, and the Devil helps all he can to aggravate the Horror. — So true is that Observation of the Divine Poet.

*If Apparitions make us sad,
By Sight of Sin we should grow mad.*

Herbert's Temple, p. 55.

But besides these dismal Prospects, his Apprehension of Woe is more fearfully enhanc'd by the Sense of Ingratitude, in that he knows he has acted against the Light of Nature, *Rom.* 1. 21. the Law of God, *1 Joh.* 3. 4. the Gospel of Christ, *2 Tim.* 2. 19. and the frequent Admonitions of 'em all, *Jerem.* 7. 25. against the infinite Love of God in sending his Son into the World to assume his Nature, and to suffer and die that he might live; *Rom.* 5. 8. against his stupendious Patience and Forbearance, and other abundant Riches of his Goodness, *Rom.* 2. 4. and Promises, *1 Sam.* 2. 30. and even against his Menaces, *Gen.* 2. 17. and exemplary Judgments inflicted on great Offenders to awaken and drive him from the Lethargy of Sin, *Isa.* 26. 9. and yet further, against his own Resolutions, and solemn Vows to the contrary, *2 Pet.* 2. 22. against the Dictates and Checks of his own

18 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Conscience, *Rom. 2. 15.* and the gentle Motions of the *Holy Spirit* upon his Soul, perswading and directing to do otherwise, *Rev. 3. 20.* What Terror and Confusion? What Solitude and Fear? Yea, what Revenge and Indignation at himself do these Meditations raise in him? He finds

now by Experience, That

*Ingratitudo est
hostis gratiae, ini-
mica salutis. Bern.
de 7 Misericor-
diis.*

“Ingratitude is truly, as

“one terms it, an Enemy

“to Grace and Salvation”;

and upon the whole, per-

ceives that his Sins are the

Cause of the Desertion, *which have separated between him and his God, and have hid his Face from him that he will not hear, Isa. 59. 2.* and have brought all these consequent Miseries, *ordained by a just Providence, both as their Punishment and Effect, their inseparable Attendants.*—

He now weeps, and sighs, and groans, and only fixes his Thoughts upon the Terrible, not daring, and not able to contemplate the Beauteous and Glorious Attributes of his *Lord*: For that he believes him to be his Enemy, that he is seeking to destroy him, and only inflicts these heavy Judgments, as a Prelude to worse; which is the Reason why such an One can
receive

of Religious Melancholy. 19

receive no Consolation from any Abundance of worldly Goods that he enjoys: For, Alas ! saith he, What will Riches, or Honour, or Friends, avail me when I must perish, and am undone for ever? What Relief? What Comfort can these afford, when the *Almighty's* dreadful Indignation and Wrath hangs over me? I thought formerly my Charity, and Faith, and Hope had been truly Christian, and well-grounded ; but now I see the first were formal and hypocritical, and the last groundless and presumptuous. Oh ! what shall I do? Whither shall I fly? I dare not look up to Heaven, for there sits my Judge commanding down all his Vengeance upon me: Into his revealed Word I dare not look, for there I read my Condemnation and Doom; nor dare I run to the Grave for Rest and Shelter, for from thence I must be rais'd to hear the woful Sentence pass'd upon me; Oh, that I had never been born, or cou'd be now annihilated, &c. ! So terrible are his Apprehensions, and so confus'd his Fears!

This was the Case of *Job*, when he said, *Destruction from God was a Terrour to me, and because of his Highness I could not endure*, *Job* 31. 23. and of *David*, when

20 *An Essay towards the Cure*

he complain'd ; *Thy Wrath lieth hard upon me*, Psal. 88. 7. *And while I suffer thy Terrors I am distracted*, Psal. 88. 15.

And if this has been yours, you and all Christians may hence learn of what mighty Importance it is, to persevere so carefully in the Paths and Duties of Religion, that *God* may not be forc'd to withdraw the Shine of his *Holy Spirit* and Graces from them, lest they also come into this State of Torment. And now that I may perfectly ease your Mind of its immoderate Grief and Trouble in this respect, I shall shew what Consolation *God* has afforded to support all that are in this Condition ; and since he hath been graciously pleas'd in some Measure to lift up the Light of his Countenance again upon you, I shall add some Means whereby you may preserve his Favour, and, if possible, prevent such Desertion, and the Miseries attending it for the time to come.

I. Let us see what Consolation *God* has afforded to support all that are afflicted under Spiritual Desertions.

1. The first Piece of Joyful News I shall here offer you, as a Foundation to the rest, is, *That the Complaint of the want of Faith, is a Symptom and Argument of true Faith ;*

of Religious Melancholy. 21

Faith; which is thus evident: Where the Effects of Faith are, there most certainly the Grace it self inhabits; as where there is Smoke there is Fire; and where there is Day, there shines the Sun.

Now the Effects or Fruits by which Faith is known to be true, are these; It trembles at the Word of God, when it threatens for Sin, *Ezra* 9. 4. makes the Heart tender, and very willing to humble it self, *2 Kings* 22. 19. and the Spirit poor and contrite, *Isa.* 66. 2. It cannot but speak the Things it has seen and heard, *Acts* 4. 20. admiring the Glorious Mysteries of God, *1 Tim.* 3. 16. and laying hold of his gracious Promises, *Acts* 16. 31. And therefore knowing the Terrors of the Lord, it perswades others to believe, *2 Cor.* 5. 11. and because Faith without Works is dead, as it hath a Readiness to will, so it strives that there may be a Performance also of that which it hath, *2 Cor.* 8. 11. It waits with Patience for what it hopes, tho' it see it not, *Rom.* 8. 25. It examines it self, whether it be sound and orthodox, *2 Cor.* 13. 5. To whatsoever Duties God calls, it endeavours to obey him, as *Abraham* did, *Heb.* 11. 8. and, with *Moses*, it chuses rather to suffer

22 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, *Heb. 11. 25.*

Where these holy Dispositions and Inclinations are, their Faith is certainly a true Faith: For that in all these Respects, *it worketh by Love to God, Gal. 5. 6.* these being but various Expressions of it.— Whereas with Unbelief, there are none of these Operations upon the Soul, but on the contrary.

It would not have God to reign over it, *Luke 19. 27.* His Exhortations are slighted and despised, as we see in the Story of *Lot's Sons-in-law, Gen. 19. 14.* Besides, Unbelievers never pray to, nor call on God, *Rom. 10. 14.* They reject Christ, and receive not his Words, *John 12. 48.* and will not obey his Gospel, *2 Thes. 1. 8.* They are harden'd in strong Delusions, that they believe Lies, even the greatest Absurdities and Contradictions to Reason it self, *Chap. 2. 11.* and have Pleasure in Unrighteousness, *ver. 12.* They are not afraid to blaspheme, *1 Tim. 1. 20.* The Word preached doth not profit them, *Heb. 4. 2.* And there is nothing pure to them, but even their Minds and Consciences are defiled, *Titus 1. 15.*

From

of Religious Melancholy. 23

From these vastly different Descriptions of the Fruits of Faith and of Unbelief, you may now judge with your self, whether you have Faith or not; and upon the Conclusion, sure I am, your Conscience will tell you, that you have Faith. Since you have those three Parts whereof it consisteth, *viz.* a Knowledge of Things necessary to Salvation. An Assent to, or firm Belief of those Truths as deliver'd in the Word of God; and a Confidence in, or Application of the Evangelical Promises to your self. Which last Branch of Faith (tho' it does not rightly exert it self, by reason of the Confusion your Mind is in at present, yet it) is still inherent in your Soul, and that because you have the Fruits or Signs of it above mentioned. Thus Glass, tho' it may be cover'd or darken'd with Steams or Breath, is still the same Transparent Body. Again, St. Hieron tells us, That the Reason of our want of Faith is, be-
Non credimus, quia non legimus.
S. Hieron.

cause we read not, and consequently you have Faith because you read, and are willing to inform your self in your Duty to the utmost of your Power, with an Intent to practise it.

But then you'll say, What's the Reason
C 4 that

24 *An Essay towards the Cure*

that I have no Evidence in my self that I have it? Why, 'tis this; your Faith 'tis true, is right and good, but it is weak; for were it strong, it wou'd still have nobler Fruits, *viz. it would fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing*, Rom. 15. 13; make you confident that you have it, and the Blessing that attends it, *viz. God's Favour*, 2 Cor. 5. 8. and, upon this account, *always to rejoyce with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Upon the whole then you have Faith, but you want the Assurance that you have it; and your Faith is true, tho' not compleatly perfect. — As Fire (to carry on the Illustration) loseth not its Being, tho' it be hid from our Sight by the Intervention of Smoke, and the Sun is still the same, tho' kept from our View by the Interception of Clouds. — which leads me to another Consolation that may now encourage you entirely to cast off all immoderate Doubts and Fears, and to triumph and glory in your *merciful Redeemer*, *viz.*

2. *Faith, though weak, shall assuredly be rewarded* — All that is required on our Parts, is briefly this, to believe that *Christ* offer'd in the Gospel, is the true *Messiah*,
to

to accept him as such, to imitate his Vertues, and where we fail, to rely on him for the Supply of full Righteousness and Salvation; and all this a weak Faith doth as truly and sincerely as the strongest. Nay, its Strivings and Longings for the Divine Favour, may be more vigorous and ardent, and its bitter Cries and Bewailings more passionate and pleasing to the *God* of Love and Pity: Therefore saith he by *St. Paul*, *Him that is weak receive ye*, Rom. 14. 1. that is, I charge you always to bear a tender Regard to those my poor Worshipers, who, tho' their Faith is agreeable to my revealed Will, yet for want of a clear Judgment, and perfect Knowledge of what my Laws require, disquiet their own Consciences; receive you such an one with Meekness and Compassion, admit him into Fellowship and Communion with you, not discriminating him by his inward Thoughts and Reasonings that are dark and clouded, but by the Bent and Inclinations of his Soul, that are holy and vertuous; therefore exhort, encourage and direct him, and despise not, nor judge, nor condemn his Weakness, and that because "his
" * Faith

26 *An Essay towards the Cure*

* *Fides est radix
virtutum omnium.*
Ambros. in Lib.
de Cain & Abel.

" * Faith is the Fountain
" of all Vertues, for which
I have received him, Rom.
14. 3. I have enroll'd him
in the Number of mine Elect, 1 Pet. 1. 2.
and have written his Name in Heaven, Luke
10. 20. My Strength is sufficient for him,
2 Cor. 12. 9. He shall become perfect thro'
Weakness, Ib. I will hold him up and e-
stablish him, Rom. 14. 4. And he shall want
no manner of thing that is good, Psal. 34.
10. that is, None of my Illuminations and
Favours that are needful, and truly con-
duce to his Spiritual Advantage. It was
this supereminent Tendernefs which occa-
sioned that severe and menacing Sentence
of our Saviour; Whosoever shall offend one
of these little ones, (these Babes or weak
Disciples) who believe in me, it were better
that a Milstone were hang'd about his Neck,
and that he were drowned in the midst of the
Sea.—Matth, 18. 6. And this occasion'd
that emphatical Notification of his rising
from the Dead to St. Peter; Go, tell my
Disciples and Peter, that I am risen, Mark
16. 7. As if he had said: Be sure you don't
forget to tell Peter in particular, for now,
poor Man, his Soul is struggling under the
Agonies of Desertion, the stinging Pres-
ures

of Religious Melancholy. 27

fures of Guilt for his Denial of me, and and all imaginable Dread and Horror, lest I also shou'd deny him before my *Father*; go, revive him with the glad Tidings that I am risen, and that he shall obtain the Comforts and Benefits of my Resurrection as much as any of the rest.

As then with an holy Grief at your own Unworthiness you look up to *Christ*, and to him only for Salvation, and embrace him with all the *feeble Strength* you can, doubt not of his Support and Favour: For the very Unquietness, Unsatisfiability, and Convulsive Pantings of your Heart are highly esteem'd in the Sight of *God*, who knows (tho' you consider it not) that little Grace is true Grace, as the Filings of Gold is true Gold, tho' not so much as the Wedge it self; and therefore if the *Publican* sighs out this short Ejaculation with Sincerity, *Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner, he is justify'd*, Luke 18. 14. *I will surely hear his Cry, saith the Lord*, Exod. 22. 23. *I will deliver him, and he shall glorifie me*, Psal. 50. 15. Nay further, tho' *David* perceives not the Pulse of Faith to beat at all within him, tho' he be like a deaf Man that heareth not, or as one that is dumb, not opening his Mouth, yet *God* will

28 *An Essay towards the Cure*

will look down from Heaven, behold, visit and relieve *David*; he will not cast him off, but still takes care for him, and is his *Rock, and Fortrefs, and Deliverer*, Psal. 18. 2. As an indulgent Father, who amongst many Children, hath one that is sickly and undergrown, doth not therefore cast off this Child, or cease to be a Father; but provides for, supports, cherishes and encourages it with more endearing Tendernefs than all the rest, till it be in some measure capable to help it self.— Again,

3. As you believe, be assur'd that God will never *wholly forsake you*; for therefore it is said, That *Christ having lov'd his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the end*, John 13. 1. And St. Paul tells us, That the God of Truth hath likewise declar'd, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. that is; Tho' for wise Reasons (which you apprehend not now, but shall be fully convinc'd of hereafter) I suffer you to labour under a Partial, yet you shall never come under a Total or Final Desertion: Tho' I withdraw for a time my quickning Presence, and leave your Spirit so dull, and flat, and dead, and barren, that you cannot pray with
that

of Religious Melancholy. 29

that Fervour, hear with that Devotion, meditate with that Composedness, nor do any thing with that Vivacity as formerly you have done; though I deprive you likewise for a Season of my comforting Presence, and the enchearing Beams of my Countenance, and thereby eclipse your Joys, damp your Consolations, and leave you in Darknes and Trouble, Horror and Confusion; yet I will never wholly forsake you, my supporting Presence doth and shall still uphold and preserve you in the most doleful Condition, from notorious and presumptuous Sins, and from a total and final Apostacy, and at last shall bring you again out of the Trial, to a Sense and Assurance of my Favour, and to a lively and joyful Exercise of your Duties, or as my Apostle expresth it, *Into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.*

Thus Job was one while in Misery, *bitter in Soul, and his Roarings were poured out like the Waters,* Job 3. 20. but at last he confesth to God with humble Joy, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eye seeth thee,* v. 24. Thus David thought himself to be forsaken of God when he complains, *That his Soul was sore vexed,* Psal. 6. 3. *That he was weary with his groaning,*
that

30 *An Essay towards the Cure*

that all the Night he made his Bed to swim, and water'd his Couch with his Tears, Psal. 6. 6. but afterwards, I will sing unto the Lord, saith he, because he hath dealt bountifully with me, Psal. 13. 6. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many Waters,—Psal. 18. 16. Even our Saviour himself (who was God as well as Man) was in some Measure under the Apprehension of such Desertion when he cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Mark 15. 34. That is, (as Dr. Whitby notes) “Why is the Sense of what I suffer, so great upon me, as that I cannot attend as formerly to the Sense of the Divine Favour, or receive the Joy and Consolation from it, which I did before.”——

But upon the Completion of his Sufferings we find, that God exalted him to his own Right Hand in the heavenly Places, Ephes. 1. 20. to be a Prince and a Saviour,—Acts

** Deus unicum
habuit Filium sine
peccato, nullum sine
flagello.*

5. 31. If then God suffered his only * begotten and spotless Son to fall into, and lie under great Calamities and Miseries, and did not immediately help him out, which is the full Import of *Forsaking*; or if, as Dr. † *Hammond* observes,

† *Annotat. on Ps.*
22. 2.

of Religious Melancholy. 31

serves, "*The Divinity* suspended its Influence so far as to deliver him up to these". And if the best of Men that ever liv'd, have experienc'd such Deser-tions, of which I might give infinite Instances, what Ground is there for any one now-a-days to complain over much? He hath rather Reason to rejoyce in that our *merciful Father* takes this Method to convince us how trifling the World and its Glories are, and of what high Value the Shine of his Countenance, *by hiding it from us for a time*, and especially since he is a God of too much Love and Tender-ness entirely to desert his sincere Servants thus groveling under Sorrow and Humili-ty; for in all this he only acts like a Wise and affectionate Prince, who may suffer his Subjects for some time to be evil treated by their Enemies, to learn them the difference between his gentle Administration, and that of others, but will not wholly leave them to their Rage and Cruelty.

But here you'll desire to know when it is that God does totally forsake a Man, and leave him to his own just Wrath and Condemnation?— I answer, 'Tis only then, when there is a total Apostacy on his Part, when he acts like *Jesurun, who waxed*

32 *An Essay towards the Cure*

waxed fat, and kicked, and forsook God who made him, and lightly esteem'd the Rock of his Salvation, Deut. 32. 15. And like the Israelites, who sacrific'd unto Devils, not to God, ver. 17. and were unmindful of the Rock which begat them, and of the God who form'd them, ver. 18. For then it is said, *That when the Lord saw it, he abhorr'd them, v. 19.* To the same Purport is that Advice of David to his Son; *And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind; for the Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts; and if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.— 1 Chron. 28. 9.* But with what Reluctancy our indulgent God is forc'd to this, we may learn from our Saviour's melting Exclamation to the Inhabitants of Judea; *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold your House is left unto you desolate, Matth. 27. 37, 38.* As if he had said, *O obstinate and stubborn People! What Mercies? What long suffering? What pathetick Invitations?*

vitations? What compassionate Condescensions cou'd be desir'd, which I have not shew'd to you? But ye are wilfully blind! *Ye would not know in this your Day the Things which belong unto your Peace, and now they are hid from your Eyes!* Luke 19. 42. The enchearing Rays of my Grace shall not only leave you in your dark and comfortless State, but my unwillingly inflam'd Indignation shall now soon overtake you.

From all which you may conclude, that your Desertions have been partial, and not total: For tho' sometimes you have not perceiv'd the Glorious Effects of God's quickning and comforting, yet you have never wanted Those of his Supporting Presence, which is evident in that he hath not suffer'd you to fall into heinous and presumptuous Sins, nor to apostatize from the Faith — Besides, during your Troubles and Conflicts, he hath still bless'd, or supported you with Hope of his Mercy and Deliverance, which the Apostate, Unbeliever or Hypocrite cannot have, according to *Job*; *For what is the Hope of a Hypocrite, saith he? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* Job 27. 8, 10. No, these Things

34 *An Essay towards the Cure*

he cannot do, because he is without Hope, the Parent of these Graces.— Hence therefore you have abundant Reason to rejoice, and trust in God, and to satisfy your self henceforward with a modest and full Assurance, that as you believe in him, *he will never forget you, nor forsake you, Isa. 49. 15. tho' he hides his Face from you for a Moment, yet with Mercy and loving Kindness will he return to you again, Isa. 54. 8.* And for your further Comfort, consider,

4. *That Christ himself prays for you, that your Faith fail not:* For St. John assures us, *that he is an Advocate with the Father, 1 John 2. 1.* and that perpetually in the Behalf of all his Followers, pleading their Cause with the utmost Tenderness and earnest Supplication, that the Father wou'd accept them thro' him, as having himself experienc'd the Infirmities of Human Nature, and the Power of Temptations; and therefore he assures St. Peter, struggling under Doubts and Fears, *That thro' his powerful Mediation his Faith shou'd not fail; I have pray'd for thee, that thy Faith fail not, Luke 22. 31.* which equally proves that he will always intercede for the Continuance of this to all other Christians, as well as to St. Peter; and therefore to
give

of Religious Melancholy. 35

give them all possible Comfort and Encouragement in believing, he adds, That the Father always heareth his Intercessions; *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the People which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me, John 11. 41, 42.*

5. Lastly, To compleat your Consolation, by the Exercise of your Faith you may see God's Love in your Desertions, in that,

1. They are design'd to exercise and try your Faith and Obedience in the same manner as he try'd the Israelites; *The Lord thy God led thee these forty Years, saith Moses, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine Heart, whether thou would'st keep his Commandments or no, Deut. 8. 2.*

2. To make you remember God, and Things above; to look to, own them, and close with them; for which end, he suffer'd his People to hunger, that they might know that Man lives not by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord, Deut. 8. 3.

3. To effect the greatest Good and Advantage for you; for therefore, saith the Apostle, *When we are judged, we are cha-*

36 *An Essay towards the Cure*

stened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World, 1 Cor. 11. 32. And as they are thus design'd to promote your Salvation, and to save you from Condemnation, so, in order to this,

4. To humble and purge you, by producing in you the Sight of Sin, to shew you your Failures and Imperfections, that you might shake at the Thoughts, and tremble at the Sight thereof: And hence,

5. To convince you, that this Sense of Sin is from *God* only, not from any Principle of corrupt Nature that will preserve it self: For our Understandings are naturally too dark rightly to apprehend and fear it, and our Wills too much prejudic'd to this World, of themselves, to loath it; nor from the Devil, for he is too mischievously cunning to excite in us any Motions destructive of his own Kingdom, but from some Seeds of Grace sown in your Heart, and secret Breathings of the *Holy Spirit of God* upon your Soul: Thus the Pool of *Bethesda* deriv'd not its healing Virtue from any natural Motion of the Waters themselves, or artificial Mixtures with them, but from the Supernatural Communications of *God*, who sent down his
Angel

of Religious Melancholy. 37

Angel at a certain Season to give them this Power to cure Diseases, John 5. 4.

6. *Faith* will further shew you, that the Sense of Sin is an Entrance into a more perfect State of Grace. It is a good Sign that Sin is dethron'd from its Empire and Principality in our Hearts, and depriv'd of its Power and Authority, when it becomes burthensom and dolorous to us, and odious and abominable in our Sight: For then we recal and practise the Vertues it before had banish'd; whereas when it reigns undisturb'd in the Will and Affections of Men, they perceive not its Tyranny, and Snares, and Dangers; they feel not its Weight and Burthen, as a Man who dives under the Water, feels not its Heaviness, tho' he may have many Tuns of it over his Head, for here *the Element is light, and the Load imperceptible. And thus the Sinner, so long as he lies under the Influence of Sin, is insensible of his wretched State, lives blindly unconcern'd, and becomes the Fool that *Solomon* speaks of; *Unto whom it is a Sport and Pastime to do evil, Prov. 10. 23.* But let the One lift a little of this same Water from its natural Place, and

* *Elementa in suo loco gravia non sunt. Arist.*

38 *An Essay towards the Cure*

he'll soon find the Deception, *viz.* that it is extremely ponderous: So likewise let the Other remove Sin from his Inclinations, and dispossess his Soul of this fallacious Enemy, and he'll grow sensible of his Errour, it appearing ever after in its proper Colours terrible, and frightful, and loathsome to him, and this will animate him to secure himself, as much as possible, against it, by endeavouring to obtain still greater Measures of Vertues and Graces. Yet further,

7. By *Faith* you will see, that as the Sense of Sin is a gentle Punishment for Sin, so it is a Clemency to punish Sin: For to stem the Tide of Wickedness before it swells into an Inundation; to awaken and rouse Mens Faculties from growing dead and useless, in a stupid and habitual Lethargy; and to save them from falling when on the Brink of Ruin, by preventing Punishments, which are sometimes as necessary as preventing Grace, is certainly an Instance of the greatest Kindness and Compassion: By this Wisdom Politicians have made this their Max-

Telemachus, pag.
351.

im, "That a little Blood
" spilt in Time, may save
" the Lives of Thousands, and make a
" Prince

“ Prince fear’d, without using Rigour
“ too often; and therefore it is said by
the *Psalmist*, That God feeds his own People
with the Bread of Tears, and gives ‘em
plenteousness of Tears to drink, *Psal.* 80. 5.

8. Lastly, By Faith you may foresee,
that the greater your Sorrow for Sin is at
present, the more acceptable to God, and
the less shall it be hereafter: The more
vehement your Sighs, and Groans, and
Tears are now, the less shall be your Fear
and Perplexity, the greater your Joy and
Comfort of believing and the more per-
fect your Peace at your Death; so that
then you shall have little else to do, but
to lie down and die, and shall be enabled
to say with Rapture: *Lord, into thy Hands*
I commit my Spirit.—— So great are the
Comforts of Believers, and so evident is
the Love of God, even in Desertions, to
the Eyes of Faith! Holy *David* cou’d di-
scern this at a Distance when he was in
the like Condition, as is evident in that
he calls God so fiducially his God; O my
God, saith he, *I cry in the Day-time, but*
thou hearest not, *Psal.* 22. 2. Hence the
best Advice that can be given you when
you are apprehensive of Desertion, is to
trust in the Mercies of your God, accord-
ing

40 *An Essay towards the Cure*

ing to that of the Prophet, *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in Darkness, and hath no Light, let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God, Isa. 50. 10. For the Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous runneth into it, and is safe, Prov. 18. 10. Thou wilt keep him, saith the Prophet, in perfect Peace, whose Mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee, Isa. 26. 3.*— But I hasten,

II. To the Means I promis'd, whereby you may preserve the *Almighty's* Favour, and if possible, prevent such Desertion, and the Miseries attending it for the Time to come, which I shall comprehend under this one General Rule, *viz. Strive to find Communion with God in the Performance of every Duty*: That is, Before you go about any, bring your Heart, as much as possible, into a Duty-frame, by shaking off the least Disposition to Sloath and Laziness, which will hinder the Efficacy of your Devotions, and by endeavouring to quicken and enliven your Attention in them, which will render 'em as a sweet-smelling Savour in the Sight of God. This Perfection of Christian Duty is fitly express'd in the Apostle's Exhortation to the Romans; *Be fervent in Spirit, serving*

of Religious Melancholy. 41

serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. The Sense of which Words is this: I advise you, as much as in you lies, to cast off all Coldness and Lukewarmness, all Indifference and Deadness in Duty, and to seek to obtain that *Union and Communion* with the *Lord*, wherein consists your greatest Happiness: For to have the Soul fill'd with the bright Rays and endearing Operations of the *Heavenly Presence*, to hear the small still Voice of *God* expressing it self in Terms more free and kind, more soft and tender, more sweet and ravishing, than the affectionate unreserv'd Whispers of the dearest Friends, and most passionate Lovers, gives Bliss unspeakable, and Joy unutterable, and may be thus attain'd, *viz.* by exciting your Soul to Fervour and intent Contemplation in every Act of *God's* Service, by striving (as for instance) in Confession, to have your Heart touch'd, and broken, and humbled for Sin: In Petition to have it taken and charm'd with the Beauties of the Things desir'd, so as to thirst and pant after them, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks: In Thanksgiving, to have your Spirit enlarg'd, and your Soul quicken'd in the Return of Praises: In Intercession, to be mov'd with
the

42 *An Essay towards the Cure*

the most tender Concern for your Brethren, and most ardent Intreaty, that *God* wou'd confer the Blessings you request upon them: In Hearing, to listen with that Awe, and Reverence, and modest Deportment, as if the Person of *God* himself was visible in the Pulpit: In Reading the Sacred Scriptures, to hunger after that Righteousness they recommend, and to adore the *Blessed Spirit* of *God*, that hath so plainly express'd his *Divinity* in every Line: In Meditation, to be ravish'd with the Wisdom, Power, Goodness and Glories of your

Lord, so as to despise all other Objects: In Receiving the * *Holy Communion*, to be astonish'd and transported with the infinite Love of your *Redeemer*, and inflam'd with a *reciprocal Love to him*.

* Your frequent and devout Exercise of this Duty will be chiefly beneficial to you in this Respect, as having the undoubted Promises of *God's* Blessings; and being therefore most

certainly attended with fresh Communications of Grace, and unspeakable Delight: For in the Words of a Pious Author; "The *Sacrament* is the purest, the noblest Refiner of Souls; the Health of the whole Man; the Restorative of Spiritual Decays; the Cure of Passions; the Antidote against Troubles and Temptations; the Conveyance of greater Grace; the Increase of imperfect Vertue; the Stay of Hope; the Support of our Faith; and the mighty Incentive of our Charity. Dr. Stanhop's *Thomas a Kempis*, p. 297.

Thus

Thus we read of St. Bernard, " That he found God
" in every Duty and Com-
" munion with him, in e-

*Nunquam abs te
recedo, &c. Bern.
Meditat.*

" very Prayer. — This is compleat Gos-
pel-Duty, and the Soul that is us'd thus to
converse with God, is so taken with the
Sweetness and gracious Peculiarities of
Divine Friendship, that no inferior Inti-
macies, nor Familiarities can now be re-
lish'd, and even Duty it self will not con-
tent it, unless it still feels therein the Com-
forts and Raptures of such *Communion*.

This Method (as far as it is in Human
Power) may help you to prevent Deser-
tion, and to preserve the *Almighty's* Fa-
vour hereafter ; for when he sees your
zealous Struggle and Endeavour after such
exalted Piety, his unmeasurable Goodness
cannot, will not suffer him *to hide his Face*
from you, nor refuse you the Assistance and
Consolations of his *Holy Spirit*. — But if
after all he shou'd again afflict you in the
same manner, you cannot be uneasie there-
at, since you see it proceeds from infinite
Love and Mercy to you, in order to bright-
ten your Vertues still more, that he may
advance you to a brighter Diadem with
himself ; and you may be assur'd he will
then

44 *An Essay towards the Cure*

then again give you Strength enough to bear the Trial ; and therefore you must quietly submit to his Dispensations, since these are always best for us, however insensible we are thereof, as being design'd to promote our own Advantage as well as his Glory, and the Furtherance of the Gospel ; and so I proceed to the

Second Cause of Religious Melancholy, which is long and sudden Afflictions.

I. Where Weakness, or Indisposition of the Body is continued without Prospect of Remedy, tho' it hath its Intervals, yet this being not sufficient to banish all Complaints and Sense of Sorrow from the Imagination, and to exhilarate the Soul perfectly, there it does by Degrees often render it distressed in the most religious Persons ; for the Continuance occasions in them Doubts and Suspensions of their Sincerity in Matters of Religion, and these troublesome and uneasie Thoughts, till at last they are quite overwhelm'd under a terrible Apprehension of the Wrath of God for Sin, and a lifeless Despondency : Thus it often happens, that a Brook by the

of Religious Melancholy. 45

the continued falling of Rains, o'erflows its Banks, and drowns it self.

2. A sudden Calamity hath often likewise the same ill Effects upon the best of Christians; for the Blood which before might be pure, spirituous and vigorous, by a sudden and accidental Fright hath its Spirits depress'd and exhausted, which obstructs and impedes its free Circulation, and this Slowness generates ill Humours whereby the Soul loseth her usual and sprightly Operation of her Faculties: Hence the Exercise of them is distracted, her Idea's are confounded, and frightful Apprehensions, which she us'd to despise and slight before, do now easily gain Admittance, and are entertain'd with more and more dismal and prevailing Fears.

These often, for want of a due Consideration, and prudent Care to make a right Use of them, *are the ill Effects of long and sadden Afflictions*; and the latter I know has been one Cause of your *Melancholy*; had you cautiously and courageously made the following Use of your Misfortune, I dare say you wou'd in a great Measure have prevented the great Disorder you have since felt in your Blood
and

46 *An Essay towards the Cure*

and Mind: For when the Accident hap-
pen'd,

I. You shou'd immediately have exam-
in'd your Soul,

1. Whether the Disaster was design'd
by your merciful *Providence*, as a gentle
Castigation for some Sins you had been
guilty of; and if thereupon you found
Cause to suspect it was, you shou'd have
made Attonement by a thankful Humilia-
tion, and joyful Repentance and Content-
ment.

2. Whether it was to exercise the Ver-
tue of Patience in you when there was no
visible Provocation on your Part, and so
to make you more perfect thro' Sufferings,
and fitter for the Joys above; if so, this
sure might have commanded from you the
just Tribute of Thanks and Praise. Or,

3. Whether it was to prevent some De-
fects which were secretly growing in you
by the Omission of, or Coldness, or want
of strict Attention in your Devotions; this
also might have mov'd you rather to *Hal-
lujahs*, than Grief and Dejection.

II. Whatsoever you found to be the
Cause of the Affliction, you shou'd have
consider'd, that *Mercy* is the chiefest and
most

of Religious Melancholy. 47

most glorious Attribute of your God; that he is never angry with the Persons, but Vices of Men, till by an obstinate and wilful Impetinance they force him to condemn them, that he may clear his Justice; and that if he be angry, 'tis only for a Moment, Psal. 30. 5. if upon the Demonstration of his Displeasure Men will repent and amend. If they come freely and humble themselves before him, tho' his Wrath be reveal'd against all Sin and Unrighteousness, such is his Tenderness, he cannot, will not let his Anger fall upon that Soul that gives so much Glory to his Mercy, as may be illustrated by that famous Instance of Ingenuity and Clemency in *Augustus Caesar*, who having promis'd by Proclamation a great Sum of Money to any one that shou'd bring him the Head of a certain *Pirate*; yet when that *Pirate*, who had heard of this, brought it himself to him, and laid it at his Feet, he not only pardon'd him for his former Offences, but rewarded him for the great Confidence he had in his Mercy. *Sueton. in Vita Augusti.*

III. You shou'd forthwith have call'd to mind the great Advantage of Afflictions, viz. That they are intended (as I have

48 *An Essay towards the Cure*

have shewn) to awaken Men to Repentance, and to draw their Affections from the World to God; that they are Marks of Adoption and Legitimation; for *what Son is he, saith St. Paul, whom the Father chastiseth not? But if ye be without Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Bastards and not Sons, Heb. 12. 7, 8.* And lastly, That they excite and improve Graces, which occasion'd the Prophet's Observation; *Lord, in Trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy Chastning was upon them, Isa. 26. 16.* Hence the Afflicted may upon good Grounds, with *David, accept the Punishment of their Iniquity, and thank the Lord for thus giving them Warning, Psal. 16. 8.* And therefore,

IV. You shou'd immediately have resolv'd to love him more fervently, to obey him more universally, and to praise him more zealously for the Benefit of the Chastisement, whilst you apply'd your self to the Help of Physicians, and begg'd his Blessing upon the Means you us'd for your Recovery.

Tho' I doubt not but that you did practise some of these Rules, yet for want of an Intent and careful Exercise of them,
(for

(for, Alas! we cannot not only do all we shou'd, but are often easily diverted by Surprise from doing what we can, which may teach you how to demean your self more vigilantly, if *God* shall be pleas'd to send any other Afflictions upon you, since hence) you might fall into those ill Consequences I have before describ'd; and these brought on another Cause of your *Melancholy*, viz.

3. *A Desire to be more holy than you can be in this mortal State.*

This I take also to have been your Error, that tho' you are not ignorant of, you have not call'd to mind the Frailties of Humane Nature, and wou'd therefore fain rise to greater Perfection, than it is possible for you to do in this imperfect State; and then you grieve and afflict your self, because you find you cannot; in order to remove this Cause, consider well the following Particulars:

1. That as Man by the Fall of *Adam*, lost his Innocence, so the Joys that attend it. He that was once the Hieroglyphick of all *Understanding* and *Wisdom*, the very Image of the *Deity*, the Glory and Lord of the Earth, the Darling of Heaven,

50 *An Essay towards the Cure*

ven, the Master of all Sciences, and the Admiration of the Universe, is now become the Mirrour of Sottishness and Ignorance, the Vizard of Hell, the Shame of the World, and a Slave to it, the Object of Divine Wrath, and the very Exemplar of Stupidity, doom'd to admire and study the Creatures for his own Instruction and Information, and must now go to the Ant to consider her provident Ways, and be wise, Prov. 6. 6. To the Turtle and Swallow to learn to make a right use of Time, Jerem. 8. 7. To the Ox and the Ass for Knowledge, Isa. 1. 3. And to the Fowls of the Air for Confidence and Trust in

* *Heu tristis & lacrymosa mutatio!* Bern. in Cant. Ser. 25.

God, Matth. 6. 26. * So mournful and inglorious is the Change! for lo his Passions are confus'd, exor-

bitant, and irregular! His Affections bent to things contradictory to his own Happiness! and his whole Soul subject to Blindness, false Guidances, and the pernicious Suggestions of that wicked one, *who goeth about as a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour!* 1 Pet. 5. 8. And now amidst so many Assaults and Imperfections that are become natural to him, he cannot do the Good he wou'd, and the Evil he wou'd not do, that he doth.

2. That

2. That since that unhappy Apostacy of our first Parent, none on Earth but *Christ* was ever able to preserve his Innocence immaculate, as is evident from Scripture; *for there is not a just Man upon Earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. 7. 20. From Reason; for that the whole Human Nature was corrupted in *Adam*, and consequently in his Posterity; so that now the very Graces and Vertues of the most accomplish'd Saints are imperfect, and so far sinful, in as much as that * "to make
 " up their Perfection is re-
 " quired a Knowledge and
 " Confession of their Im-
 " perfection." And lastly, from Antiquity and Experience of all Ages. Wherefore St. *Ambrose* argues,
 † " That it was high Pre-
 " sumption and Wicked-
 " ness to say, That any
 " Mortal was without Sin,
 since " * this is the sole Pre-
 " rogative of the *Word* or
 " *God incarnate*. He was
 entirely good and vertuous in the midst of all manner of Vices, and herein he set himself as an Example to us, which he

* *Ad virtutis perfectionem pertinet ipsius etiam imperfectionis agnitio.*
 Aug.

† *Nemo sine peccato, negare hoc sacrilegium.* Am-
 brof.

* Μόνος ὁ ἀ-
 ναμαρτητός ὁ λό-
 γος. Clem. Alex.

52 *An Essay towards the Cure*

befeecheth us to imitate ; but as he well knows that it is not in our Power to be so divinely pure as himself, he mercifully makes Allowances for our Infirmities, and only requires a *Gospel-perfection*, which is a real Sorrow for what we do amiss, and a sincere Resolution, and hearty Endeavour to amend ; and this sure every Man may attain to ! We must not now pretend to merit Heaven by our Righteousness. *By Grace it is that we are saved through Faith, and that not of our selves, it is the Gift of God, Ephes. 2. 8. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins, Isa. 43. 25.*

3. That *Abraham, Moses, David, &c.* under the Old, and *St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, &c.* under the New Dispensation, were Saints in the Esteem of God, and yet Sinners in respect of Duty, being infinitely short of *Christ* ; for that they had their particular Frailties, *viz. evil Thoughts and Inclinations*, which their *Lord* overcame : But in general their Resolutions, and Endeavours, and Actions were holy ; and this it was that gain'd 'em Praise and Honour with Men in this World, and a blissful Immortality with Angels in the next—
Hence,

4. From

of Religious Melancholy. 53

4. From these Considerations you may learn, that it is yours, and every ones Duty to be content with that Station into which our Sins have brought us, still endeavouring to combat and subdue our Spiritual Enemies, and regain as far as we are able, our primitive Uprightness; and this is all that *God* now requires from us, and all we need to do, and will be our Joy and Glory at the last; for as we are taught, *in whatsoever State we are, therewith to be content*, Phil. 4. 11. so we are assur'd, that *Godliness* (or vigorous Endeavours after it) *with Contentment, is great Gain*, 1 Tim. 6. 6.

I wou'd have it observ'd, that my assigning this as a Cause of your *Melancholy*, is only to remind you of your imperfect Capacity, and *God's* Expectations, that you may not think to extend the one beyond its Power, nor judge hardly of the other, as if he expected more than our frail Natures can perform, or *is extreme to mark what is done amiss*, Psal. 130. 3. by his sincere Servants; and not to put Bounds to your Endeavours after Holiness, or to give the least Pretence of Excuse to those who are careless therein: For that it is an

54 *An Essay towards the Cure*

express Command, that we shou'd always (as much as possible) abound in the Works of the Lord, for as much as we know that our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

From hence you may see, that *true Religion* is a *Medium* between its two Extremes, Prophaneness and Superstition; the former consisting in a total Neglect or Irreverence towards Sacred Things and Duties, when these which ought to have Mens highest Esteem, are look'd upon as vile and common, as they are with Atheists, Debauchees, and Libertines; The latter, in a Misapprehension of Things, when Men place Religion in such Things as they ought not for the Matter, and in such a Degree as they ought not for the Measure; in both which respects the Papists are highly culpable: And hither may be reduc'd that inconsiderate Desire of being more holy than our weak Abilities will permit us to be, which is sure to ascribe to God a harsh and rigorous Expectation of greater Perfection than our Natures are capable of here, and so raises in our Minds a servile Dread and Terror, instead of a true Filial Reverence and Honour, instead of paying a lively and chearful Homage,

it

it leads Men to Despair and presumptuous Sins, and thence often to a Destruction of their Bodies, and (it is to be fear'd) their Souls too—— How then can this be a true Serving of *God*, which excites in us Conceptions so unworthy of his infinite Goodness, and is in its Consequences so burthenfome and dangerous? How can true Affection proceed from such affrighting Speculations? Or how can Men so drown'd in the Sense of their own Corruptions, and fill'd with such disagreeable Notions of the *Deity*, revere him as their *most indulgent Father*, with that humble Joy, and cautious Alacrity as they ought? It is impossible: And therefore the *Christian Religion* recommends Joy and Chearfulness in fearing *God*, both by Precept and Example, as I have prov'd above. Besides which, we find the very Heathens, tho' ignorant of Divine Revelation, condemning this Error. “ For

“ which end (saith a great

“ * *Prelate* of our *Church*)

“ *St. Austin* mentions it as

“ *Varro's* Judgment, That

“ the Passion of Fear and

“ Dread belongs to superstitious Persons,

“ but the Vertue of Reverence to those

* *Bishop Wilkins* Nat. Relig. p. 217.

Deum à Religioso vereri, à Superstioso timeri.

56 *An Essay towards the Cure*

“that are Religious.” And then he sub-joins a Clause of *Seneca* to the same Effect: * “No

* *Deos nemo sanus timet, furor enim est metuere salutaria, nec quisquam amat quos timet.*
Benef. lib. 4. cap. 19. Epist. 123.

“Man, in his right Mind,
“will fear *God* in this Sense;
“’tis no less than Madness
“to have frightful Appre-
“hensions of that which
“is most benign and beneficial; nor can
“true Love consist with this kind of
“Fear.

This, I hope, may convince you of the Error of this Cause, and plainly shews the Necessity of seeking to obtain a right Apprehension of the Nature of Things, which is the best Natural Help you can use to keep you off from it, it being the want of this that hath occasion’d all the Evil that is, and ever hath been in the World, Men becoming prophane or superstitious, Atheistical or Enthusiastical, &c. thro’ Ignorance or Inadvertency: Therefore considering the Loss of uncorrupted Innocence, the Impossibility of attaining it in this Life, and how far short of it the most Religious Persons, after their best Endeavours have fallen here is sufficient Reason for you entirely to shake off this Cause, in acknowledging your In-ability,

ability, in resting satisfy'd with doing the utmost you can, and in praising your merciful *Lord*, for that he has still preserv'd you from the worst Consequences thereof, *viz.* Despair and Ruin — And now, if you continue, as blessed be *God*, you hitherto have done, in the true Filial (without the Servile) Fear of him, *viz.* in adoring his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, in giving him the Glory in all Things, in a submissive Resignation to his Will, in striving to subdue all Reluctancies which may gain his Displeasure; and for this End in keeping a cautious Watchfulness over all your Actions, you may depend upon the Truth of the *Psalmist's* Observation, That *he who thus fears the Lord, his Soul shall dwell at ease*, *Psal. 25. 13.* — But I must proceed to another Cause of your *Melancholy* occasion'd by the preceding, which is,

4. *An unwary Applying to your self all the severe Menaces in the Scriptures, and an overlooking of the gracious Promises to sincere Penitents.*

The Error of this is shewn by considering to whom the severe Menaces are truly appli-

58 *An Essay towards the Cure*

applicable, and to whom the Comforts do properly belong.

1. The just Threatnings of Judgments are only applicable to the Wicked: As for Instance; To Murderers, for *therefore Cain was cursed from the Earth*, Gen. 4. 11. To Idolaters; *therefore the Lord plagued the Israelites because they made a Calf*, Exod. 32. 35. To Murmurers; *for when the People murmured, it displeased the Lord, and his Fire was kindled, and consumed in the uttermost Parts of the Camp*, Numb. 11. 1. To Unbelievers; *How long will it be ere they believe me, saith the Almighty? Therefore I will smite them with the Pestilence, and disinherit them*, Numb. 14. 11, 12. To Whoremongers; *for therefore was a Plague among the Israelites*, Numb. 25. 3. To the Disobedient; *for which Cause Lot's Wife was turn'd into a Pillar of Salt*, Gen. 19. 26. To Lyars; *Wherefore God punished many for prophecying falsely, and Lyes to Israel*, Jerem. 29. 21. To Pride, Fulness of Bread, and abundance of Idleness, which were Sodom's Sins, *for which God took her away*, Ezek. 16. 49, 50. To those who forget the Lord, *and therefore shall surely perish*, Deut. 8. 19. To those who despise or reject his Word; *for therefore he rejected Saul*
from

from being King, 1 Sam. 15. 23. To those who will not hearken, and be persuaded; For if ye will not hearken unto me, saith God, Levit. 26. 14. I will appoint over you Terror, ver. 16. and if ye will not for all this hearken, then will I punish you seven times more for your Sins, ver. 18. To those who will obstinately chuse their own Ways, and delight in Abominations; for then God also will chuse for such their Delusions, and bring their Fears upon them, Isa. 66. 3, 4. And lastly, To those who wilfully and impudently persist in these, or any other Vices, like the Jews, who were not ashamed, neither cou'd they blush, therefore shall they fall, saith the Lord of Hosts, Jerem. 8. 12. From all which it appears, that the severe Denuntiations in the Scriptures are only applicable to Men so long as they continue resolutely blind, and obdurately impenitent, and will not be reclaim'd by any passionate Invitations of God's Ministers, nor secret Motions of his Grace, and no longer; for when the wicked Man becomes sincerely penitent, and turneth away from the Wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive, Ezek. 18. 27. Cease to do evil, Isa.

60 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Isa. i. 16. *learn to do well*, saith the Prophet, v. 17. *and then tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool*, v. 18. Which leads me to consider,

II. To whom the Comforts do properly belong.

I. To those whose Intentions are holy, which *God* accepts for the Deed, *i.e.* in Cases where Men have no real Power to act; but it is otherwise where they have Power: As for Instance; Kneeling is the humblest, and consequently the fittest Posture for all Christians at *Prayer* and receiving the *Holy Communion*; for where we express Humility in Ceremony, such Ceremonies are undoubtedly obligatory; but then, if a Man by Weakness or Sickness is incapacitated to kneel at his Devotions, *God* (who sent the Indisposition) will dispense with the yet more imperfect Performance of them, and accept with the same Candour and Goodness the humble Aspirations and Oblations of the Soul. So in Works of Charity, in the Esteem of *God*, there's as much Religion in a single Mite, as in Bags of Gold; as much Love to *God* in a little Water given to a Disciple, in the Name of a Disciple, as in the richest Wines

Wines and Cordials. To intend or design *God's* Glory in what we do, is to promote it; this sanctifies every the meanest Actions, the Purpose making 'em Religious or Vicious, Devout or Pharisaical, and by this Distinction with *Omniscience* they are accepted or rejected. Thus in the good *Hezekiah*, it was no Sin to enumerate his righteous Deeds upon his Sick-bed, *Isa.* 38. 3. when the doing of the very same Thing in the Pharisee was accounted Vain-glory and Insolence, *Luke* 18. 14. The one intended only to give *God* the Glory, and obtain a Mercy; the other, to assume the Praise unto himself, to extol his own Excellencies, and to despise his Brother, as less deserving of Divine Favours. This distinguish'd also *St. Paul's* seeking Honour from the *Corinthians* in repeating his good Acts, *2 Cor.* 11. from that of *Herod* in making a fulsom Oration, *Acts* 12. 21. It was but a necessary Vindication of his Innocence for holy Purposes in the one, and Pride and Blasphemy in the other.

Apply now this Doctrine to your self, and be assur'd, That *if there be first a willing Mind, you are accepted according to that you have, and not according to that you have*
not,

62 *An Essay towards the Cure*

not, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Your Mind is not so sedate as it us'd to be, nor have you so good a Command over its Operations now as formerly; it seems to be environ'd in a Cloud or thick Darkness. Multitudes of Mists do darken the Paths of Religion, and frightful Apparitions disturb its Struggles to go on therein; *i. e.* Your Mind being in a deep Confusion and Hurry, strives to do its Duty, yet knows not how; forgets what it had learnt, and learns and forgets again; Distractions do thence more easily creep into it at Times of Devotion; these are follow'd with evil Thoughts, and they with terrible Apprehensions; so that it is evident, that as you have not yet Power entirely to vanquish these (for if God had given you such Power, he wou'd expect a more serene Obedience) so if your Intentions are sincere, and your Endeavours resolute and hearty, as I am satisfy'd they are, you have a sure and undoubted Claim to God's Acceptance and Reward. Why then shou'd you apply to your self his Menaces against *obdurate* and *impenitent Sinners*, when you are *heartily* sorry for your Frailties? Why shou'd you appropriate to your self the Recompence of *wilful Iniquity*, when your *Intentions* are *holy*,

of Religious Melancholy. 63

holy, and you *abhor* the Ways of Reprobates? But,

2. The comfortable Promises of *Holy Writ* do also belong to those *who hunger after Righteousness*; i. e. to those who esteem it above all Things as most excellent in its Nature, and as absolutely necessary, because it leads to Salvation, and therefore are earnestly desirous to be inflam'd with an ardent Love in the Exercise of it, and to make a continual Progress therein, and indefatigably strive to do all they can to obtain it, and to exercise it sincerely whenever an Occasion is offer'd. A Mind thus dispos'd, cannot fail of being bless'd with the Divine Protection and Assistance, and hath an undoubted Right to all the comfortable Assurances thereof; forasmuch as *God* accounts this ardent Desire and Endeavour after Righteousness with Faith (which inseparably attends it) for Righteousness it self; for *to him who believeth, his Faith is counted for Righteousness*, Rom. 4. 5. This then makes us Righteous, and to encourage us to be so, we are told, *That the Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers*, Psal. 34. 15. *That though they fall, yet shall they*

64 *An Essay towards the Cure*

*not utterly be cast down; for the Lord up-
holdeth them with his Hand, Psal. 37. 24.
And that these are the Blessed unto whom the
Lord imputeth not Iniquity, Psal. 32. 2.*

The *Holy Scriptures* are full of these gracious Promises to Persons so piously inclin'd; and now, sure I am, this may afford you strong Consolation, since I am perswaded that you do *truly hunger after Righteousness* in the Sense above-mention'd; and therefore you may hence modestly apply to your Soul the joyous Comforts of your *Lord*, hoping and trusting that he will grant you, in his own good Time, a sensible Relish of them, but still humbly confessing your self to be the meanest and unworthiest of his Servants.

Besides, a serious Consideration of the *Almighty's* Goodness and Clemency to Mankind, may help to convince you, that as you are not obstinate, and sin not wilfully against the Light of Nature, the Admonitions of Conscience, and in Despite of Grace and the Means *God* has prescrib'd, the Menaces belonging solely to such as I have prov'd; so his infinite Compassion to our frail Natures will not suffer his Judgments to fall upon us when we devoutly pray they may not, and vigorously

rously endeavour to do nothing that may deserve them, and to do every thing that may procure his Favour ; for see how movingly he expresseth himself to us ? Do ye thus requite the Lord ? O foolish and unwise ! Is not he thy Father ? Deut. 32. 6. Judge, I pray you, between me and my Vineyard, Isa. 5. 3. What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it ? v. 4. Wherefore will I yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your Childrens Children will I plead, Jerem. 2. 9. See if there be such a thing ! v. 10. Hath a Nation chang'd their Gods, which yet are no Gods ? But my People have chang'd their Glory, v. 11. Be astonished, O Heavens, v. 12. They have forsaken me the Fountain of living Waters, v. 13. Have I been a Wilderness unto Israel ? A Land of Darknes ? v. 31. Be thou instructed, O Ferusalem ! Jerem. 6. 8. I spake unto thee rising up early and speaking, Ch. 7. 13. O Ferusalem ! wilt thou not be made clean ? When shall it once be ? Ch. 13. 27. Have I any Pleasure at all that the Wicked should die, saith the Lord God ? and not that he should return from his Ways and live ? Ezek. 18. 23. I have none : Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O House of Israel, Ch. 33.

66 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Which shews, that he delights not in Severity, but takes infinite Pleasure in doing Good, and shewing Mercy; for these are his most darling and essential Attributes: Who ever heard that the *God of Love* is extreme to mark what is done amiss? Who ever found it so? Why then shou'd you be severe to your self, when he is kind and tender-hearted? Why shou'd you affright your self with his Terror and just Denuntiations against the Impenitent, when you bewail your Transgressions, and he wou'd have the humble Penitent to rejoyce? and that upon good Grounds; because *the Lord is gracious, and plenteous in Mercy*, Psal. 103. 8. *As the Heaven is high above the Earth, so great is his Mercy towards them that fear him*, V. 11. *Wilt thou condemn him who is most just?* Job 34. 17. or endeavours to be so? No—This Interrogation affirms, that he will not; for, *like as a Father pitieth his own Children, even so the Lord pitieth them that love him*; for he knoweth our *Frame*, he remembreth that we are but *Dust*, Psal. 103. 13, 14. i. e. He knoweth that we are loaded with Infirmities, and expos'd to the Assaults of Ghostly Enemies. *He will not turn away his Face from you, if ye return unto him,*

of Religious Melancholy. 67

him, Deut. 30. 9. *He will still be the Hope of his People*, Joel 3. 16. *Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, saith the Lord*, Jerem. 31. 20. See what amazing Tendernefs is express'd towards the Penitent! amazing indeed in so great a Being! Therefore David calls upon his Servants to rejoyce in the God of their Salvation; *Be glad, saith he, in the Lord, and rejoyce ye Righteous; and shout for Joy all ye who are Upright in Heart*, Psal. 32. 11. i. e. Ye whose Intentions are pure and holy, and whose Desires and Inclinations are just and vertuous.

These few Scriptures may give you a satisfactory Relish of the Almighty's Clemency, and (with what has been said before) may suffice to prove, that as you are heartily sorry for your Sins, and don't wilfully continue in the Commission of any, these only, and not the severer Texts are applicable to you; therefore take here these two Advices.

1. As long as you exercise your self to have always a Conscience void of Offence, both towards God, and towards Man, let nothing in this World disturb and trouble

68 *An Essay towards the Cure*

you ; fear not the Devil, nor his Agents, and despise the petty Arts he makes use of to discompose you ; and don't any longer afflict your self by superstitiously fancying that every Threatning Sentence in the Word of *God* is meant to you, but comfort your self with these Scriptures, which exhibit his Mercy and Promises ; and add to both Catalogues all that you meet with of the same Import.

2. Make it likewise the chief of your Business to sing Hymns of Praise and Glory to *God*, that he has given you such pious Resolutions, and Ability to improve 'em into vertuous Actions. You enjoy also many more Blessings from his Bounty, laud him daily for 'em all : For this was the chief Practice of the Apostles and Saints, and is the present Exercise of the Blessed Angels ; and as it is undoubtedly as acceptable as the most solemn Devotion perform'd upon your Knees ; so *I am assur'd* there's nothing will contribute more to the Satisfaction and Peace of your Mind, and the Cure of your bodily Indispositions, which have been occasion'd by the Uneasiness of the former, for a sound and chearful Mind will quickly make the Body so, as being the best Physick you can take——

of Religious Melancholy. 69

take—I hasten now to the last Cause of your *Melancholy* occasion'd by those I have discuss'd before, *viz.*

5. *Unreasonable Fears when you fall into Temptation.*

The Extravagance of which will be detected by considering that all Men are liable to Temptations; that they are not to be baffled by Fear, but Courage, with Patience and Employment; that we have strong Consolation against the Violence of them, and therefore must not despair under them; but on the contrary are commanded to rejoyce when we fall into them.

I. *No Man is free from Temptations:* This, Alas! the best of Men do daily experience, since we have lost that Innocence by our Degeneracy in *Adam*, which shou'd have been our Preservative against 'em, and must now struggle with the Attacks of Spiritual and Temporal Enemies, which otherwise we shou'd have been as free from as the blessed Angels above; or if they had presum'd to approach us, we shou'd have look'd upon them with as much Abhorrence, have overcome them

70 *An Essay towards the Cure*

with as much Facility, and have triumph'd over them with as much Disdain as those Glorious Spirits ; but now by our Weakness they have assum'd more Boldness, and gain'd more Strength and Power to assault us. Now no Place, no Company, no Age, no Person is Temptation-free : No one can glory that he was never tempted, nor be high-minded upon that Account, but hath daily Reason to fear, for he may be surpriz'd in that very Instant wherein he boasteth that he was never tempted at all : Therefore our *Blessed Redeemer* in his Divine Form, and our *Church* in her *most excellent Litany*, have taught us to pray daily against 'em.

Here you will object : I must confess that we are now plac'd in the midst of Temptations ; but then what must I do in this Case ? *God* requires that our Prayers shou'd be as a sweet-smelling Incense, pure and free from all Abominations ; That we call upon him in Truth, Psal. 145. 18. and lift up holy Hands without Wrath or doubting, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Now, tho' I bless *God* I am in Charity with all the World, and it is with the lowest Humility that I approach the Throne of Grace, yet I cannot pray without Distractions, and am at other
Times

of Religious Melancholy. 71

Times often disturb'd with very wicked and evil Thoughts, which still render me more unfit for holy Duties; and then as I well know the Purity and Holiness of that *Sacred Majesty* I come before, how can I help fearing and doubting of being accepted? Can I presume to flatter my self, that he will be pleas'd with my unhallow'd Sacrifices? No, *he is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13.— To give you Satisfaction in this Point, I will speak to,

I. Distractions, or wandring Thoughts, and shew how far they are sinful, and how far they are not sinful, or at least will not be so imputed unto us at the last Day by our *merciful God*.

1. How far they are sinful: Here there is only this one Circumstance which renders them so; that is, when they *are entertain'd with Pleasure and Deliberation*: Whoever in the Performance of Religious Duties is pleas'd with vain Imaginations, which are then most apt to intrude themselves, must needs render his Worship impure, and an Abomination; for the secret Pleasure makes him deliberate upon them, and wholly withdraws his Mind from a Spiritual Contemplation of that *great Ob-*

ject he is adoring, upon which he ought to fix it with as much Intention as he possibly can; it damps the Fervour of his Affections, and deadens and destroys the Life of his Devotion, so that in the Sight of *God* it seems to be Hypocrisie, and looks as if he did not really want the Blessings he is supplicating for, or did not care whether he receiv'd them or not. The Service is all a Sham, Lip-labour without an Heart, a Sacrifice without Incense, a contemptuous Address: As for Instance; If a Man in the midst of Prayer has a Thought come into his Head, That by such and such Steps he may advance his Estate, &c. is suddenly pleas'd with it, breaks off the Chain of his Devotion, and then deliberates upon it for a Minute or longer, he turns the Prayer into Sin, which before this Interruption might be very devout and pleasing, and must not in such Cases vainly hope that *God* will hear, and grant his Petitions, unless he heartily repents for this Iniquity of his Thoughts; and if he does, *God* is merciful, he will then pardon him; for when he sees us fall into Sin unadvisedly and inconsiderately, upon our Humiliation and Resolution of Amendment, he will not *withdraw from us* for

for this—— Nay, to render your Notions yet more clear in this Matter: Suppose then it shou'd suddenly come into his Remembrance, That at such a Time he did a Charitable Act, which gain'd him much Applause with Men, and he hopes Favour with *God*; That at such a Time he receiv'd the blessed *Eucharist* with abundance of Spiritual Joy and Comfort; and at such a Time will (*God* willing) receive it again, &c. and then is pleas'd, and deliberates upon these Things as above: Even such Thoughts as these, which at other Times he may justly rejoyce in, and please *God* by his Meditation, and holy Resolution, are now as sinful as the other vainer Thoughts, and that because *they are unseasonable*; so that all Thoughts of what Nature soever they be, which are foreign to the sacred Business we are about, are sinful *when extertain'd with Pleasure and Deliberation*.

2. Let us now see when they are not sinful, or at least will not be so imputed unto us at the last Day by our *merciful God*.

When we reject their very first Motion with Abhorrence, and immediately call upon *God* with some such short Ejaculation as
this

74 *An Essay towards the Cure*

this; *Lord, pardon! — Oh, give me Power over this, and all Temptations! —* And so proceed with a double Watchfulness and Zeal, then it is that they are not Sins, but Frailties, and that for these Reasons.

1. Because such is our Inability, and our Natures are so averse to good Works, that it is not in our Power, without an extraordinary Measure of Grace, such, as I suppose, no Mortal was ever yet bless'd with, to prevent these first Motions; and therefore we cannot suppose that *God*, who is so Good, Wise and Compassionate, will lay to our Charge, or punish us for what we cannot help.

2. Because our *Saviour* has made an Attonement for these original Corruptions, and *God* has accepted the Propitiation, and now graciously hearkens to his *Beloved Son* thus interceding for us: *Father forgive them — It is not for want of Love to us — Thou knowest their Frailties — They cannot be so spotless as they desire to be — Grant then their Supplications, and give them Power over the Temptation!* And now since the *Father* has declar'd, that he will give what his Servants humbly ask for, we may be much more confident, that he will not turn away his Ear from these
tender

of Religious Melancholy. 75

tender Intercessions of that *Blessed Person* in whom he is well-pleased.

These two Reasons plainly evince, that wandering Imaginations which suddenly interrupt our Devotions, and are as suddenly rejected, are not sinful, or at least will not be so imputed unto us, when we come to give up our Accounts before the Tribunal of our *Lord*. And this I am satisfied is only your Case; you are not pleas'd with them, nor do you deliberate upon them; why then shou'd you suppose that *God* is displeas'd with you for what is not properly your own Fault, and is unavoidable? He suffers these Things to try your Zeal and Sincerity, and your being grieved for them, shews that you have both. Don't then make your self *Melancholy* because you cannot be so perfect as you wou'd be, for this will rather displease *God*, in that it will by Degrees render your Zeal imperfect, and your Sincerity wavering. Rejoyce rather that you can with an Eye of Faith look up to him: Rejoyce that you are blest'd with so much Grace as to be suspicious of your own Performances, and not presumptuous: Rejoyce again, that *God* is so gracious as to accept the sincere Intentions, and overlook

76 *An Essay towards the Cure*

look the Failures of his Creatures ; and that you can trust in his Mercy, and confidently hope that he will do so by you: And this will protect you against unreasonable Fears on this Account— We find in the Lives and Actions of *good Men*, that they have always taken this Method, of which I will give you an Instance in the Words of a pious Man, penn'd upon the like Occasion.

*I thirst for Thirstiness, I weep for Tears,
Well pleas'd I am to be displeas'd thus,
The only Thing I fear, is want of Fears,
Suspecting I am not suspicious ;
I cannot chuse but live, because I die,
And when I am not dead, how glad am I ?
Yet when I am thus glad for Sense of Pain,
And careful am, lest I shou'd careless be ;
Then do I grieve for being glad again,
And fear less Carelessness take care for me.
Amidst these restless Thoughts this Rest I
[find,
For those that rest not here, there's Rest
[behind.*

You see this Holy Man rejoyc'd in Mourning and Distrust, and was never more pleas'd than when he was suspicious
of

of Religious Melancholy. 77

of himself, for that he well knew that this is the truest Sign of Grace, and yet he curbs his Joy too, lest he should become Presumptuous—— From hence you may learn, that it is your Duty always to be chearful, and to rejoyce in *Christ* with Humility, and to say with Mr. *Herbert*,

Sickness and Weakness, Loss, Disgrace and
[Sorrow,
Lend most sometimes, when most they seem
[to borrow.
Bless'd be the Hand that helps by hurting,
[gives
By taking, by forsaking me relieves.
If in my Fall my Rising be thy Will,
Then I will say the worse the better still.

Herbert's Synagogue, p. 53.

And only take care that your Joy does not exalt you to Spiritual Pride, Self-conceit and Ostentation, and you will not do amiss. And so I proceed to answer the

2d. Part of your Objection, *viz.*
That you are often disturb'd with Evil Thoughts at other Times, when you are not at your Devotions, which, you say, render

78 *An Essay towards the Cure*

render you still more unfit for holy Duties ; and hence you cannot help Fearing and Doubting of being accepted when you go about them—In answer to this,

I do allow, that one in your *Melancholy* Condition, having been led astray by erroneous Notions, which I have before detected and answered, is apt to have many unbecoming Thoughts and Fancies, which constantly haunt him as so many frightful *Dæmons*, and which (during this unhappy Disease) he can be no more free from than his Shadow, tho' he desire it never so earnestly.

Sometimes he thinks that he is guilty of many heinous Crimes, because he cannot get or keep them out of his Head ; and then imagines that the Frequency of these Thoughts is a Consenting to the Crimes, and it is difficult to convince him of the contrary.

Sometimes he is tormented with blasphemous Thoughts of *God*.

Sometimes too he imagines that he hath no Sense at all of Religion, and so fears that all his Worship is Formality and Hypocrisie.

And sometimes supposes that he is guilty of the grossest Atheism and Infidelity, that he neither believes in *God*, nor in *Christ*, and
is

of Religious Melancholy. 79

is therefore in a worse Condition than *Turks* and *Heathens*, because they have not so much Knowledge of the *Glorious Light* of the *Gospel* as he hath——

And whilst he is perplex'd with such groundless Apprehensions and wrong Imaginations, in this Confusion he knows not how to guide himself, and now more than ever puts wrong Interpretations upon every Passage he meets with in the *Holy Bible*, that Book of Love and Mercy, and perversly applies it to himself, and is sure to judge himself by the Menaces therein; and there is not a Sentence in a Sermon he shall hear, that he likewise makes a right use of, but turns all Things so, as to encrease his Trouble, and bring no Relief to his sorrowful Soul.

“ I have known, saith our
 “ late *pious** *Metropolitan*, se-
 “ veral well-disposed Per-
 “ sons, and some of them
 “ sincerely Pious, that have been in this
 “ Condition; What now is to be said to
 “ this? (continues he) Why, 'tis very
 “ certain that all these Thoughts and
 “ Fancies are thrust upon them, and are
 “ not the free, natural, voluntary Ope-
 “ rations

* Archbishop
Sharp, in his Ser-
 mon upon the
 Government of
 the Thoughts.

80 *An Essay towards the Cure*

“ rations of their own Minds, but the
 “ Effects of *Vapors* and *Hypocondriack*
 “ *Melancholy* ; nor can the Persons them-
 “ selves any more help their thus thinking
 “ or fancying, than they can help the Di-
 “ sturbances of their Dreams when they
 “ have a mind to sleep quietly. Indeed
 “ we may properly enough call these
 “ Fancies of theirs, their *Waking-dreams*,
 “ as their Dreams are their *Sleeping-Fan-*
 “ *cies*.

I shall now, to give you entire Satisfaction, reply severally to each of these evil Thoughts.

I. It is natural as for one in your Circumstances, so for you to have great Sins daily and often intrude themselves into your Thoughts, and then you fright your self more and more by imagining that the frequency of these Thoughts implies a Consent on your Part to the Crimes. Consider here,

1. That there are three Degrees of such Thoughts : As for Instance, in the Case of Revenge.

The *First* is, when a Man that has receiv'd an Injury from another, has a Thought come into his Head, That by such a Method he may be reveng'd on him ;

of Religious Melancholy. 81

him, he rejects the sudden Motion or Desire as soon as he is aware of it, strives all he can to suppress, contradict and extinguish it in Embryo, and is heartily sorry for it. This, as I observ'd before, is not a Sin, but a Frailty.

The *Second Degree* is morose Desires, when the Soul reflects upon the Sin suggested by the Imagination with Complacency and Delight, and consents to it without retracting it; this indeed is a Crime, as I observ'd also before, and here *Sin has conceiv'd*.

The *Third Degree* is, when his sinful Conception and Desires of Revenge receive Life and Form by passing into a Purpose of committing it, and are follow'd with Contrivance how to accomplish 'em, from the Accomplishment of which he is only restrain'd by want of Opportunity. In this Case *Sin* is come to the Birth, and *finish'd*, and *has brought forth Death*; for this, in the Esteem of God, is morally as Evil as the Act it self, which is not more Evil in the same Kind, than as it brings Scandal to himself from Men, and Injury to his Brother. Consider,

2. That your Evil Thoughts come not within the Compass of the two last De-

82 *An Essay towards the Cure*

grees, but are confin'd to the first, that they have not the Consent of your Will, without which there is no Consent at all, nor no Sin ; for this Reason it is provided in the *Mosaick Law*, That if a Woman being in the Field, shall be forc'd by a Man, against her Consent, if she cry out, the Man shall be adjudg'd to Death, but she shall be free, as having done nothing worthy of Death, Deut. 22. 25. To the same Purpose it was well observ'd on the Rape committed by *Tarquin* on *Lucretia*,

* *Duo fuerunt in actu, unus autem Adulterium admisit Augustus.*

“ That there were two in
“ the Act, and but one in
“ the Adultery.” If then
an Act otherwise so highly
Criminal, is not by the *Law* reputed Sin in a Woman, when taken by Surprise and forc'd, much less can sinful Thoughts, which a Man abhorreth from his Heart, and doth not consent to, but are thrust upon him by the Infirmary and Weakness of Flesh, and the Devil taking Advantage thereof, be so reputed; which plainly shews that it is an Error in you to fancy that you are guilty of Crimes which you never did consent to, and that because these evil Thoughts do no ways proceed from your own Mind, but are either
ther

of Religious Melancholy. 83

ther the Dictates of this your Ghostly Enemy, or the Natural Effects of *Vapors* or *Melancholy*, as that Learned *Prelate* (whose Words I have just given you) observes; be which they will, by rejecting 'em suddenly, sure I am, you please God: If they come from the former, you thereby vanquish him, and in effect *bid him get behind you*, as your *Saviour* did: If from the latter, God who permits you to be thus afflicted, and perceives your righteous Strugglings against Iniquity, will, you need not doubt, come soon unto your Relief, drive away those Fumes which disturb your worshipping of himself, and reward you at last with a Crown of Glory.

2. As to blasphemous Thoughts of God; if ever you have been tormented with these, you may be satisfy'd herein by the foregoing Answers. God will not require any Account of them, if you rejected their first Motions (as I am satisfy'd you wou'd) with Trembling and Abhorrence, since they also proceed from your bodily Indisposition, or Temptations of the Devil, neither of which no Mortal can *absolutely prevent*, tho' by the Grace and Blessing of God, he may *overcome both*.

84 *An Essay towards the Cure*

“ These of all other irregular Thoughts,
 “ faith the same great * Di-
 * Archbishop *vine*, “ have the least Dan-
 Sharp. “ ger of Sin in them, be-
 “ cause they are so terrible
 “ in their own Nature, that no Man in
 “ his Wits, and that hath any Sense of
 “ *God* and *Goodness*, can be suppos’d to
 “ consent to them: They are indeed great
 “ Infelicities, but by no means any Sin
 “ any further than we approve of them;
 “ and to approve of them for any tole-
 “ rable good Man is impossible.

3. It is probable you have sometimes fancy’d, that you had no Sense at all of Religion, and that all your Worship was formal and hypocritical, because you have not had so warm and vigorous Affections, so lively and devout Attention, and so transporting a Zeal in the Exercise of it as formerly. These Imaginations have heightned your Troubles and Fears; but that this is an Error likewise, consider,

1. That your *Grief* for these Thoughts argues (as I have intimated) *Sincerity*: If you had no Sense at all of Religion, you wou’d have no Regard at all to it, much less wou’d you be grieved for the supposed want of it; your Fears of Formali-
 ty

ty and Hypocrisie in it, plainly evince, that you have a true Sense of it, and are heartily sincere about it, otherwise you wou'd have no Fears at all, no Doubts at all— Consider therefore,

2. That to fear and doubt of your Performances, is a *Gospel-perfection*; for we *must work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. and then for our Encouragement herein, we are told, That *God's Mercy is on them who thus fear him from Generation to Generation*, Luke 1. 50. Be not therefore discourag'd at such Thoughts as these, only take care that they do not overwhelm you, and *rejoyce* that you have so much Sense of the great Work you have to do, and of your own Weakness, as having learnt, that you must *in every thing give thanks*; for *this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*, 1 Theff. 5. 18.

4. It often happens to one in your Condition to imagine that he is guilty of the grossest Atheism and Infidelity, that he neither believes in *God* nor in *Christ*, because he finds his Faith, that was formerly so lively and full of Love, to be now cold and dead and gone, as he supposes, in that he feels not that Warmth and Ecstasy, that

86 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Life and Vigour with which he was us'd to pray. If ever you have been perplex'd with these Thoughts, you will see from the following Considerations, That it is an Error to be *dejected* for them : For,

1. The Atheist or Infidel is not grieved for his wicked and blasphemous Thoughts of *God* and *Religion*; he is not afraid to think and to say too, that there is no *God*, and that all Religion is Imposture; he is not afflicted when such impious Notions come into his Head, but is pleased with them, and takes Delight in all the prophane Wit he meets with, that can raise Objections against the Existence of the one, and the Revelation of the other.

2. He endeavours to stifle the Dictates of right Reason, the Evidences of Conscience, and the good Motions which the blessed Spirit, or the hearing of pious Discourses shall excite in his Mind, imputing all this to the Force and Prejudices of Education. So much does he strive to deceive and undo himself ! These are the Practices of Atheists and Infidels ! How erroneously then do People under *Religious Melancholy* fancy themselves to be of the Number of these Wretches, only because such Thoughts do sometimes come into their

of Religious Melancholy. 87

their Minds? Such sudden Imaginations can no more make a *good Man* an Atheist, than a vertuous Thought can make an Atheist a Saint, or ambitious Thoughts can make a Beggar a Prince; you cannot then judge of your Condition from such gloomy Apprehensions: If the Divine Ray does not at all times shine equally bright upon your Soul, and invigorate your Faith, and Love and Zeal, it is no more than what the best Saints have experienc'd, as I have prov'd before, and is what I wou'd here again.

3. And *lastly*, I offer to your Consideration; for remember that it is often Day when the Sun doth not shine; and tho' thick Clouds darken the Sky as if it were Night, yet we cannot say it is gone down. Such is the Condition of many *good Men in the State of Salvation*: The Sun is with them, they are Children of the Day, yet have they no Assurance or Joy of their Salvation; the Reason is, it shines not, their Day is not clear; and hence they are inconsiderately astonish'd and affrighted at the Eclipse. This was that which made *David* cry out, *Restore me the Joy of thy Salvation*, Psal. 51. 12.— But how precipitate and groundless are their Fears? For
G 4 tho'

88 *An Essay towards the Cure*

tho' God for some time ceases to shew the *Acts* of Love to his Servants, yet his *Affection* of Love ceaseth not: *His mercy is everlasting, and his Truth endureth to all Generations*, P^{sa}. 100. 5. Let 'em not then be troubled tho' they want the former, but praise and glorifie him for the latter, and wait for the Return of his *comfortable Light* with *Patience*, which is not to be look'd for on a sud-

* *Whitby's An-*
not. Vol. 1. p.
229.

den: * "For the Expe-
" rience of the highest Sor-
" rows, and the sublimest
" Joys at the same time is not well com-
" patible with the Infirmities of Humane
" Nature." Nor is it to be expected,
when it does come, that it will *incessantly*
cheer the Soul with its balmy Rays, for to
be perpetually transported in our Adora-
tions, to hear and pray with Ecstasy at
all times, is a Blessing too great for a
mortal State: It is Part of that Felicity
which the Angels enjoy in Heaven, and
which therefore is not to be hop'd for in
so perfect a Degree till we come there:
Good Men indeed have sometimes some
Taste of it in their fervent Devotions; and
tho' again sometimes they have it not, yet
if they approach to God *with a serious and*
re-

of Religious Melancholy. 89

reverent Attention of Body, and an humble and devout Intention of Mind, let 'em not conclude that they are wholly deserted by him, but be assur'd that their Sacrifices are as acceptable now, as when they are most rapturous. The Spiritual Life within them is not dead, tho' they may think it is; for that Life which is wrought by the Spirit of Life, never dieth, but by the hidden Methods of God still encreaseth, until it rises into the bright Mansions of Life eternal, Colos. 2. 19. Ephes. 4. 16. Thus a Man that is climbing up a Hill, may be for a while infested with the unpleasant Fogs and Vapors of the marshy Bottom, but as he ascends, he loseth by Degrees the dewy Thickness of the Air, and at the Top is refresh'd with the enchearing Influence of Sun-shine, Serenity, and beauteous Prospects.

Upon this Discovery of the Unreasonableness of your Objections in all their Parts, I shall not need to examine any more Cases, for these Answers may satisfie you in all others, and therefore proceed to the Inference which you draw from them. You say you are disturb'd with *Distractions* at your Devotions, and with *Evil Thoughts* at other Times, and the

the Conclusion you make, is, and then as I well know the Purity and Holiness of that *Sacred Majesty* I come before, how can I help Fearing and Doubting of being accepted? Can I presume to flatter my self that he will be pleas'd with my unhallow'd Sacrifices? &c. Tho' the foregoing Answers to the Objections might suffice to convince you, That this Inference is very wrong, yet to satisfy you more fully, I shall draw two Inferences my self from the State of your Case, which I know I have truly represented.

1. Upon sedate and calm Reasoning you will find that you have no Cause to fear or doubt of being accepted when you pray to *God*; for it appears that you have the Requisites to fit you for Acceptance, *viz. Faith, Sorrow and Sincerity*; you believe that *God* is, and that *he is a Rewarder of all those that diligently seek him*; you are heartily sorry for your frail Commissions and Omissions, and you are sincere in your Endeavours to amend, and in your devotional Oblations; therefore,

2. You have all the Reason in the World to believe that your Prayers are well-pleasing to him. *David* says, *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will*
not

of Religious Melancholy. 91

not hear me, Psal. 66. 18. therefore you may say, as I abhor Iniquity in my Heart, I will approach the Lord with Confidence, and full Assurance that he will hear me; and from that Ease in your Mind with which God hath lately bless'd you, you may say with the holy Psalmist in the following Verse; But verily God hath heard me, and hath attended to the Voice of my Prayer, Psal. 66. 19. You see now how benign and tender-hearted your Heavenly Father is; wait then his own good Time for the perfect Consummation of your Bliss, and in the mean while learn how graciously he promiseth to crown your Affliction at the last with triumphant Joys and Blessings. O thou afflicted, toss'd with Tempests, and not comforted! behold, I will lay thy Stones with fair Colours, and thy Foundations with Sapphires. I will make thy Windows of Agates, and thy Gates of Carbuncles, and all thy Borders of pleasant Stones. In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from Oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from Terror, for it shall not come near thee, Isa. 54. 11, 12, 14. Yea, as Jeremiah assures you, He will rejoyce over you to do you good with his whole Heart, and his whole Soul— Jerem. 32. 41. Upon the whole,

whole, since *God* hath vouchsafed you such Joyous Comforts as these, you cannot sure be any longer uneasie with groundless Apprehensions— O how happy is your Condition, if you did but rightly know it! Sing then with Transport as *David* did, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes*, Psal. 119. 71. Let all immoderate Distrusts and Fears henceforward vanish, and give place to joyful Hopes and well-grounded Faith— This is the most glorious Scene of your Life, an Indication of the *Almighty's* Favour to you: *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. Rev. 3. 19.

Having thus prov'd, That all Men are liable to Temptations, and answer'd your Scruples of Conscience which fall most naturally under this Head, I am now,

II. To shew, That *Temptations* are not to be baffled by *Fear*, because,

I. To fear at the Assault of them, argues Cowardice in the Service of *God*; and a Coward and a Christian are Things *diametrically opposite* as Light and Darkness; I shall therefore briefly describe both these.

The

of Religious Melancholy. 93

The one as under the Controul and Terrors of Fear, that distracted and sneaking Passion, which is the wretched Progeny of Sin and Shame, and the Corruption of our Souls, and hence distinguishable from the necessary, beneficial and commendable *Fear of God*, and that *dutiful Affection* that makes a Part of that Obedience and Esteem which is due from Inferiors to Magistrates—*The other* as under the Influence and Direction of Vertue; from whence you will easily discern how unfit the former is, and how well qualify'd the latter for this great Work—*The one* accounts all Misfortunes and Difficulties *Real Evils*, which in themselves are not so: *The other* looks upon them to be no more than *Accidents*, and often *Real Blessings*. *The one* is perpetually tortured and kept in awe with the Apprehension of such *imaginary Calamities* to come: *The other* takes no Care for the Morrow, submits all Things to Providence, and disdains to afflict himself *now* with the Dread of what may happen *hereafter*. *The one* is so full of anxious Thoughts, and so confounded with them, that he can neither make Provision to prevent Disasters, nor be prepar'd to receive and
bare

94 *An Essay towards the Cure*

bare them when they come: *The other* constantly preserves his Mind in so sedate a Frame and Composure, that he can do both. *The one* fears to be wretched, and yet becomes that Wretch he wou'd not be, by improving his *empty Fears* into solid and substantial *Miseries*, and thereby drawing upon himself those very Dangers he is so solicitous to escape, for want of discerning the proper Methods and Opportunities of escaping: *The other* is bold as a *Lion*, and therefore as he will not suffer any false Alarms to disturb his Repose, nor check his Joys, so neither can any Prospect of Dangers double his Difficulties, by affecting him with Terror or Impatience. In short, *the one* starts, and trembles, and flies when no Man pursues.

* *Obstupuit, steteruntq; comæ, vox faucibus hæsit.*

* *Amazement bears up his
[erected Hair,
Nor can his stammering
[Tongue express his Fear.*

Hence he loseth his very Reason for want of Resolution to use it; and, thro' Blindness of Understanding and Perplexity of Judgment, turns his present Prosperity into Misery, Health into Pain, and
all

of Religious Melancholy. 95

all his Good into Evil : *The other* extracts Good out of Evil, a Sense of God's Favour from Temptations, and of his Love and Mercy from the most humbling Afflictions and Adversities— From this brief Comparison of the *Fearful Man* and the *Christian*, it is evident, That *Temptations are not to be baffled by Fear*, which is so subject to misgiving Horrors, and so apt to be deluded with Shadows, and cheated with Fancies— And that further, because,

2. It renders Men idle and unactive, whence *Temptations irresistably* grow upon them, and more easily overcome them; for it is certain, that Idleness is the necessary *Effect* of Fear, as Inactivity of Idleness; and that *whoever labours under the Cause, must certainly labour under the Effects too*. Whenever therefore Temptations attack such an one, as there is no vigorous and manly Opposition us'd, nothing to repulse and keep them off, they must necessarily increase their Power, and gain the Victory : For now every sweet Allurement to Sin is sure to gain his Will, and the * Reason is obvious ; *he is idle*. It finds him at leisure to be seduc'd and deluded, and so easily

* *In promptu
causa est desidiosus
erat.* Ovid.

dis-

96 *An Essay towards the Cure*

disposeth him to the Prosecution of all manner of Wickedness: It is not therefore *by Fearing* at the Assault of Temptations that we can baffle, or even resist them. But,

III. By *Courage, with Patience, and Employment* alone it is that we can preserve our selves from their Infection and Dominion over us. The Man who *fears and flees* is so far from *frustrating* the *Machinations*, and *vanquishing* the Force of his *Adversary*, that he rather *invites* him to make use of both more vigorously; at least Flight is an Encouragement to pursue, and the Enemy *when feared*, is sure to overcome: For meeting with a stupid Passiveness he soon leaves off to allure, and authoritatively commands; and so for want of Resistance he gains his Ends; therefore it highly concerns him to be continually upon his Guard, and to be resolutely prepar'd to oppose and combat Temptations at their first Onset; for then indeed he may subdue them, if when they present themselves to the Mind in a *single Thought*, which is always the first Step they take, he immediately rejects it, and will not suffer it to grow into a *strong Imagination*, much less

less into a *sensible Delight*, which is follow'd with *Evil Motions*, and the *Assent of the Will*. If thus, I say, a Man will strive to suppress Temptations in their first Attack, he has gain'd a great Point, he has gather'd Strength himself, and *weaken'd* his Enemy. But then let him not imagine, tho' he hath repuls'd, that he hath wholly disarm'd him—No—he is retreated only to reinforce himself, and to return at an *unguarded* Time, if such shou'd happen, which shews the absolute Necessity of a *constant Watchfulness* and *Courage* in order to succeed well in this great Affair: For as a Soldier that walks near his Enemies Works, is very circumspect that he is not overtaken by their Mines; so the *good Christian* in his Spiritual Warfare, must never think himself so secure as to *forget* the Danger he is daily in of being surpriz'd by the Temptations of the Devil, the World and the Flesh: He must be *perpetually* careful to observe the nice Separation between himself and the devouring Destruction, for that he may see Hell gaping for him, and must needs therefore take every Step with the utmost *Fear* and *Caution*; and hereby with *Patience* and *Long-suffering*

98 *An Essay towards the Cure*

the unwearied Christian will either overcome Temptations at the last by degrees, tho' perhaps slow ones, and by God's Assistance, who hath promis'd to *exalt those in due time, who humbly submit themselves to his good Pleasure in all their Tribulation, and to save them that be of a meek and a contrite Spirit*, Psal. 34. 17, 18. or else, if in his infinite Wisdom he sees it better, to make his whole Life one continued Scene of Trials and Conflicts, yet he will also with the Temptation make a way to escape that he may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10. 13. So that you may chearfully conclude with St. Paul; *I reckon that the Sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that shall be revealed in us*, Rom. 8. 18.

Hence it appears that we must meet Temptations with an *invincible Courage*, and an *undaunted Resolution* to overcome, for that the Devil's Assaults are not so much worth our Regard, as that we shou'd be *dejected* for them, and *fearful* of 'em, since we have an *Almighty Goodness* so ready to protect and assist us.

But farther, we have it yet more in our own Power to confound his Devices by another natural Help, which is, by
keep-

of Religious Melancholy. 99

keeping our selves constantly employ'd, either in the Exercise of *Christian Duties*, or the Works of an *honest Calling*, or ~~in~~ innocent *Discourses* and *Divertisements*,ⁿ in offensive and good *Company*, for whosoever does so, preserves himself free from the Danger of his fatal Enticements: To this Purpose remember the Words of a *pious Clergyman* to a *Woman*, who being tempted by the Devil, came to him for Advice *how she might resist the Temptation*, and he gave her this Answer: "Never
 " be idle, but be always well employ'd; for
 " in my own Experience I have found it:
 " When the Devil came to tempt me, I
 " told him, *I was not at leisure to hearken*
 " *to his Temptation*; and by this means I
 " resisted all his Assaults." In the like manner when you are tempted, immediately set about to * divert the evil Thoughts by Reading, or other holy, or innocent Exercise, and then with *modest Vigour* say, *I am not at leisure to hearken to thy Temptations, I am better employ'd, busied in the Work of my God, or of my lawful Calling, and am taken up with an humble Expectation of his Bless-*

* Or if you'll sing an Hymn, which I think, in your Case, will be very advantageous. See the Conclusion.

100 *An Essay towards the Cure*

sing thereupon. Get thee behind me, Satan—
 At the same time think of some apposite
 Text of *holy Scripture* prohibiting the Sin
 you are tempted to, thereby more effectually
 to repel the Tempter: As for instance,
 Are you tempted to desire the Things of
 this World too eagerly? say, it is written;
Set your Affections on things above, and not
on things on the Earth, Colos. 3. 2. Are
 you tempted to dote upon, or idolize
 them? Say with your Saviour, it is writ-
 ten, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God,*
and him only shalt thou serve, Matth. 4. 10.
 Are you tempted to Pride and Self-con-
 ceitedness? Say, it is written, *The proud in*
Heart is an Abomination to the Lord; tho'
Hand j. yn'd in Hand, he shall not go un-
punish'd, Prov. 16. 5. Are you tempted
 to murmur under Afflictions? Say, it is
 written, *As many as I love I rebuke and*
chasten, be zealous therefore and repent, Rev.
 3. 19. Are you tempted to a Mistrust of
 God's Blessings and Providence? Say, it
 is written, *The Eyes of all wait upon thee,*
and thou givest them their Meat in due Sea-
son. Thou openest thine Hand, and satisf-
fiest the Desire of every living thing, Psal.
 145 15, 16. Are you tempted to omit
 your daily Offices of Devotion? Say, it
 is

of Religious Melancholy. 101

is written, *Pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. 5. 17. Are you tempted to rest satisfy'd with your present Attainments of Grace, and to seek after no further Improvements of it? Say, it is written, *Furthermore then we beseech you, Brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how you ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more*, 1 Thess. 4. 1. Are you tempted to despise your Brother? Say, it is written, *A new Commandment I give you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*, John 13. 34. Are you tempted to misrepresent the Actions of Enemies? Say, it is written, *Thou shalt not bear false Witness against thy Neighbour*, Exod. 20. 16. Are you tempted to retaliate Injuries? To revile Revilers? Say, it is written, *Recompence to no Man Evil for Evil*, Rom. 12. 17. *Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you*, Matth. 5. 44. Are you tempted to lay aside the strict Observance of Spiritual Watchfulness? Say, it is written, *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*, Matth. 24. 42. Are you tempted to doubt of the Doctrine of

102 *An Essay towards the Cure*

the *Blessed Trinity*, because of Mens presumptuous Disputes about it? Say, it is written, *There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one*, 1 John 5. 7. Are you tempted to think favourably of the late Impudent Revilings, Treasonable Conspiracies, and Rebellious Attempts against our Gracious Sovereign King GEORGE? Say, it is written, *Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers*, Titus 3. 1. And, *Curse not the King, no, not in thy Thoughts; and curse not the Rich in thy Bed chamber; for a Bird of the Air shall carry the Voice, and that which hath Wings shall tell the Matter*, Eccles. 10. 20. Are you tempted to withdraw your Allegiance from him? Say, it is written, *That God threatned the Jews for revolting from the King of Babylon, and breaking their Oath and Covenant with him*, Ezek. 17. 12. to v. 20. Are you tempted to presume upon the Mercy of God, whether you repent or no? Say, it is written, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, Luke 13. 3. Are you tempted to Despair, altho' you do repent and turn to God? Say, it is written, *Let the Wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return*

of Religious Melancholy. 103

return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7. Again, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, Joh. 6. 37. Lastly, If after all your pious Endeavours, you are tempted to doubt whether you shall be sav'd or not? Say it is written, He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, Matth. 23. 12. Them that honour me, I will honour, 1 Sam. 2. 30. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House, Acts 16. 31. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life, Rev. 2. 10. And again, If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, Joh. 13. 17.

Thus, if you shou'd ever be attack'd with any of these Temptations, or whatsoever you can possibly be assaulted withal, either from the Devil or the World, if you have Recourse to what is written in the Divine Revelations of God, and put on the Shield of Faith, and in all your Conflicts with Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, defend your self by this Sword of the Spirit, there is no Fear of your falling; you shall herewith be able to quench all the fiery

104 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Darts of the Wicked, Ephes. 6. 16. For the *Faith* you walk by, will not only *support* you under them, but *carry* you thro' 'em all with *Joy* and *Triumph*: You need not fear what all the united Force of Devils can do against you, so long as you believe in *God*, and trust on him, Since it is an undoubted Truth founded upon *Scripture*, and confirm'd by the *Experience* of all the Saints that ever liv'd, that *God* never fails to protect and guard such an one; so that if your Faith and Hope do not first fail you, you may be confident that *God* will not; and if he, *whose Power* no Creature is able to oppose, *stands by you*, be-fore all the Powers of Hell can *never hurt you*.

By this Method of *Resisting* Temptations our Grand Deceiver will never be able to fasten upon you, for he *never* gains Advantage over any one, but either when he finds him *wandering* out of the Ways of *God*, or *idle*, or *engag'd* in sinful Actions—Nay, he will forbear to tempt you any more, or at least not *so often* as he was us'd to do, when he perceives that his Assaults only serve to awaken your *Ver- tues*, and to put you upon holy Exercises and Devotion. And now that I may more effectually

effectually preserve you from unreasonable Fears when you fall into Temptations, I shall shew,

IV. That tho' God permits this, he hath afforded you strong Consolation against the Power and Violence of them: As to their Power, consider,

I. That he is your Friend, and so both can and will subdue them under you, tho' they be too strong for you, they are not too strong for him; tho' they worst you, he can conquer them, and drown them all in the Blood of your Redeemer as easily as he did the Egyptians in the Red Sea: For, for this end he created us as fit Objects for his Goodness to shine upon, and then imparted to us his Grace that he might crown us with his Glories; for the better Improvement whereof he made us a perfect Transcript of himself, an Epitome of his Perfections, such were the first Emanations of his Friendship; and how gloriously happy had we been, had we preserv'd our Innocence! But still *miraculous Mercy*, tho' we had forfeited the Privilege of being Subjects, wou'd not disown his poor lost Creatures, and finds out a Method to reconcile us to his Favour and Friendship— The utmost earthly Good-

106 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Goodness thinks it sufficient Clemency to spare the Life of a Traytor; but to re-assume him into his Care and Service, to receive him yet higher into his Bosom, into the Number of his *Friends*, and accordingly to make use of all possible tender Means to bring him to himself; *Henceforth*, saith he, *I call you not Servants, for the Servant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends*, John 15. 15. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you*, Joh. 15. 9. And further, to die for him that he might save him from Death, and then to make him good by the Communications of his Grace, that he might reward him for being so, and lastly, to make the Condition of obtaining this Grace so easie, viz. only an *humble and earnest Supplication* for it, are Acts for none but the *Deity*. So infinite is his Love, and so supernatural his *Friendship*! What can be more expressive of this, than that winning and compassionate Invitation? *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matth. 11. 28. He loves us not for any amiable Qualities or Merit in us, but because he loves us, saith St. Bernard.

amat, quia amat. Bern.

nard.

nard. The Root of *Love* is in himself, and by his Communicative Goodness the *Fruit* is ours; whence, by reason of this his extraordinary Kindness and Favours to us, he is not only call'd *Loving*, but in the Abstract *Love it self*, 1 Joh. 4. 8. Be not therefore so much troubled at the Strength of your Corruptions, as comforted with the transcendant Power and Indulgence of your *God*, who is your *Friend*; and not only a *Friend* to you, but an *Enemy* to them—— Consider,

2. That this *Almighty Friend* can, not only subdue the Sins you labour under, but infuse into you the contrary Graces; not only conquer your Corruptions, but sanctifie your Nature; not only make you dead unto Sin, but alive unto himself; not only withdraw your Affections from Earth, but raise 'em unto Heaven. And then to compleat your Blessedness, he can pardon your Iniquities, and justifie your Person; and from being a miserable Sinner, exalt you into the Number of his Glorious Saints and Angels. All this, and infinitely more, your *powerful God* can do; and as he can, so you may justly hope that he will at last perfect these great Changes in you; and that briefly, because
he

he is your *Friend*, as he will be to all who truly value his *Friendship*, and humbly strive to obtain and keep it by a constant Exercise of *Repentance*, *Faith* and *Love*.

2. As to the Violence of *Temptations*, comfort your self by considering,

1. That your *Friend* is as much above your *Enemy* in Power, as he is in Happiness, and infinitely more than the greatest *Monarch* is superior in Dignity to the meanest *Slave*: For what can that Deceiver do? Why, nothing at all without the *Almighty's* Permission; he holds him in Chains, so that he must obtain his Leave before he can do any thing. *He cou'd not touch Job's Goods till he had receiv'd Commission from God; Job 1. 10, 11. nor cou'd he attack his Body, till he had renewed his Commission, Job 2. 4, 5.* For as the Bounds of the Ocean are limited, that it shall flow so far and no further, so is the Devil's Power. He can do nothing more than what God hath given him leave to do; as appears from the Revelation to the Church of *Smyrna*; Behold, the Devil shall only cast some, not most or all, of you into Prison, not into the Sea, or Fire, or Hell, that ye may be try'd, not torn, rack'd, or damn'd, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days, Rev. 2.

10. not for a Month, or Year, or Age, or for ever.

2. Comfort your self, in that as your *Friend* is above your *Enemy*, so he never permits your *Enemy* to tempt you, but he himself will be present to assist and protect you; he will either weaken the Temptation to adapt it to your Strength, or encrease your Strength to bear the Temptation: And so, tho' he lead you into Temptation, he will not leave you at its Mercy; tho' he suffers the Devil to assault you, he will never suffer him to overcome and destroy you, but will still be arming you with the Breast-plate of *Faith*, the *Victory which overcometh the World*, 1 Joh. 5. 4. so that you shall never be confounded, 1 Pet. 2. 6.

3. Comfort your self also in that your *Heavenly Friend* will not only take care that *Satan* shall not conquer you, but that you may conquer him by turning all his Temptations into Improvements of Grace, all his heavy Afflictions into wholsom Admonitions, and all his intended Evils into substantial Blessings. So that you may joyfully say with the Apostle, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8. 31. and especially since he will

will give you these particular Advantages from the Temptations, *viz.* hereby he will make you more conformable to the Doctrine of your *Saviour*, and teach you how to help and succour others; so that of a *Patient*, he will make you a *Physician*, and hence put you upon the Exercise of your Faith, which will afford you a noble Occasion of Joy and Triumph, of which otherwise you can have no true Relish, and so might remain a Stranger to one of the greatest Pleasures in the *Christian Religion*; since where there is no Conflict, there can be no Victory; where there is no Fight, there can be no Conquest; and where there is no *Temptation*, there can be no *Triumph*.

✧ What Grounds now can you have to *fear unreasonably* when you fall into Temptations? Or what room is there for any one to *despair* under them? Your *merciful God* indeed hath preserv'd you from this last Extravagancy, which is *the height* of Error and Delusion: But since these Instructions may happen into the Hands of others who may be tainted with it, it may not be amiss,

V. Briefly to *expostulate* this matter with them.

of Religious Melancholy. 111

For what is it that they *despair*? Why, 'tis because they fancy themselves to be so great Sinners, that there's no Hopes of Mercy or Salvation left for them—But how is this possible? There's only *one Sin* declar'd to be *irremissible*, viz. *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*, Matth. 12. 3. Now, as they deeply mourn for all their Transgressions, they cannot be guilty of this, because no Man commits it, who is *afraid* he hath, and *desires* he had not committed it; for such penitential Passions, are against the very Definition of it. As then God hath declar'd, That all other Sins are pardonable, is it not a direct charging him with Falsity to fancy they are not? And a gross Error to fear as if they were not? Hath not he himself told them, That *he delights not in the Confusion and Death of Sinners*? Ezek. 33. 11. And hath not *Christ* assur'd them, That *he came into the World to save Sinners*? 1 Tim. 1. 15. And that *there is great Joy in Heaven at their Conversion*? Luke 15. 7. Nay, is he not now a perpetual Advocate daily *interceding* with his *Father* for their Pardon? Rom. 8. 34. And does he not use infinite Arts, Instruments, and Devices to reconcile them to himself? Yea, does he not *pray* them to be

in

112 *An Essay towards the Cure*

in Charity with him, and to come unto him, that they may be *refreshed and forgiven*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. And does he not constantly send his Angels to guard them from all Violence and Infection of wicked Men, and from the Temptations and Surprizes of the Devil? And the *Spirit of Truth* to guide them into the *Paths* of Truth? And his Ambassadors to reprove and admonish them perpetually? Are not these Things so? They cannot be deny'd. And therefore since God is certainly so desirous to save Sinners, is it likely that he will condemn them without an *obstinate and deliberate* Perseverance in Provocations of him? And can there be any obstinate and deliberate Perseverance in them, when they are *lamented and abhorr'd*? No, for this is *true Repentance*: And those who look upon their Sins with so much Sorrow and Concern, are undoubtedly *safe*, tho' they *fear* exceedingly: For all that are baptiz'd, have an unquestionable Title to Forgiveness of Sins, so long as they do not *renounce* that Covenant; and this *Renuntiation* must be voluntary, they must willingly estrange themselves from it before they ought to despair of Pardon; for the

Grace

of Religious Melancholy. 113

Grace of the Gospel does not account a Christian's Infirmities a Renouncing of Christianity ; but if he *adheres* to it, and still *professes* and *approves* the Faith, and endeavours to *practise* its Rules, it assures him upon all the Veracity of God, that he is still in a *possible State of Salvation*, tho' he may have been guilty of the greatest Sins ; for if (as has been said) he forsake them and repent, he will be accepted and forgiven, since there is now *no Condemnation to them which are*, i. e. believe in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8.

I. Therefore * St. *Austin* makes this Discourse to comfort the greatest of Sinners : " Let no Man say, I

* Aug. de Symbolo Lib. 1. cap. 7. Tom. 9. p. 294.

" have done such or such a Thing, and
 " I fear it will not be forgiven me. What
 " hast thou done ? What great Sin hast
 " thou committed ? Tell me, some monstrous, grievous, horrible Crime which
 " thou art afraid to think of : Let it be
 " what it will : Hast thou kill'd Christ ?
 " There can be no Fact *worse than that*,
 " because there is nothing better than
 " Christ. How great a Wickedness is it
 " to murder Christ ! But the Jews did mur-

114 *An Essay towards the Cure*

“ der him, yet many of them afterwards
 “ repented and believed, and the Sin
 “ which they committed *was forgiven*
 “ *them*, as appears from *Acts 2. 22, 38. and*
 “ *41 verses.*” So that no one ought to be
 afraid to *look upon* his Sins, but only fear-
 ful to *encrease* them, since the greatest we
 can possibly commit are evidently par-
 donable upon our Humiliation and Con-
 version— Otherwise it wou’d be strange,
 that *God* who is *Goodness* and *Mercy* it self,
 shou’d send his *Son* into this World, to
 be born in Poverty, to live in Contempt,
 and to die in Disgrace, and all for Man’s
 sake, to *redeem* him from Death and Hell,
 and to make him *Partaker* of Eternal
 Life. And it wou’d be much more strange,
 if a Man for whom *Christ* suffer’d all this,
 shou’d *earnestly desire*, and *zealously labour*
 for this Salvation, and yet inevitably miss
 of it— As for *Original Sins*, they are at-
 ton’d for by the Blood of that *Spotless*
Lamb; and we are assur’d, that that actu-
 al unfinning Obedience which was re-
 quir’d in the *Old Testament*, is not now
 expected in the *New*, which renders *this*
Dispensation more easie and practicable,
 and the *Mercies of the Dispenser* more ad-
 mirable and adorable. How unreasonable
 then

of Religious Melancholy. 115

then is it for Persons to *despair* of *Mercy*, who have to do with *infinite Mercy*? To *despair* because they have sinn'd, is to be *worse* because they have been *bad*; and is therefore certainly the most wretched Abuse of their Intellects, and absurd Imposition upon their Judgments, that the Devil ever invented; for besides that, it is an horrid and complicated Sin, and an high Dishonour upon *God*; it is a Ruine to their Condition, and

“ will be sure (as * one
“ observes) to verifie it self,
“ if they look not to it. The

* Bishop Tay-
lor's Holy Dy-
ing.

greatest Sins are said to be those which are oppos'd to the Three Theological Vertues, *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*: Infidelity to *Faith*; *Despair* to *Hope*; and Hatred to *Charity*: Amongst these Infidelity and Hatred, the One *not believing*, the Other *hating God*, are in themselves most wicked; but in regard of the Sinner, *Despair* exceeds them both in the Danger that is annex'd to it; there-

fore saith St. *Augustin**,

“ What can be more mi-
“ serable, what more pitiful,

* *Quid miserius
misero non mise-
ranti seipsum.*

“ than for a poor miserable Wretch not to
“ take pity on his Soul?

116 *An Essay towards the Cure*

Well (may the *Melancholy Person* now say) I grant it is extreme Folly and Mad-
ness to *despair*, as long as we continue in
the Faith; but how can I be assur'd of
Perseverance in it? And what will become
of me if I shou'd apostatize? In Answer

to which, let such remem-
ber the Instance * *Dr. Stan-*
* *Tho. a Kem-* hope gives of “ a *Person*
pis, p. 69.

“ *irresolute and wavering* in the Concerns
“ of his Soul, divided between Hope and
“ Fear, who in his Prayers was earnestly
“ entreating to be *assur'd* of his own
“ *Perseverance*, and expressing how hap-
“ py he shou'd think himself, cou'd he
“ but be satisfy'd in this Point. Where-
“ upon he was immediately answer'd from
“ within; Well, and supposing you cou'd
“ be *assur'd* of this, *How wou'd you pro-*
“ *ceed then?* Do but *act now*, as you wou'd
“ *think your self oblig'd to do in that Case,*
“ and never question your *Persevering*.
“ This comfortable Reply settled his
“ Mind; and instead of indulging any
“ curious Enquiries into Events, or anxi-
“ ous Doubts concerning the Success of
“ his Endeavours, he immediately ap-
“ ply'd himself to consider what *God* ex-
“ pected from him, and to set about the
“ Per-

of Religious Melancholy. 117

“ Performance of that without more to do. *Trust in the Lord, and be doing good* (saith the Psalmist) *commit thy Way to him, and he shall bring it to pass*, Psal. 37. 56. *Then thou shalt be kept by the Power of God unto Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and be reckon’d in the Number of those unto whom the Lord saith, *I give Eternal Life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand*, John 10. 28.

And that *such Resignation with Sorrow and Humility*, is undoubtedly favour’d by him, will be further evident from the following Relation, I have met with, of a

“ *Gentlewoman much trou-*
“ *bled in Mind, and cast*
“ *down in her Soul with*
“ *the Apprehension of Spi-*
“ *ritual Desertion: Her*

Tho. White’s Ser-
mon at St. Giles
Cripplegate, Lon-
don, 1653.

“ *Husband* (with the Assistance of others
“ better experienc’d in such Cases than
“ himself) did all he cou’d by *Prayers*
“ *unto God*, and otherwise by *Perfwasion*
“ to reduce her to the Knowledge of *God’s*
“ *Mercy and Goodness* to her, but all in
“ vain; she cou’d not be drawn to *hear*,
“ or *read* any Thing that might *work for*
“ *her Spiritual Advantage*. At last her
“ *Husband* by much Importunity prevail’d

118 *An Essay towards the Cure*

“ that he might read but one Chapter in
 “ the Bible unto her ; the Chapter was
 “ *Isaiah 57.* and when he came to the 15th
 “ Verse in these Words ; *For thus saith the*
 “ *High and Lofty One that inhabiteth E-*
 “ *ternity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in*
 “ *the high and holy Place, with him also*
 “ *that is of a contrite and humble Spirit,*
 “ *to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to*
 “ *revive the Heart of the contrite ones—*
 “ O, says she, *Is it so, that God dwells with*
 “ *a contrite and humble Spirit ? Then I am*
 “ *sure that he dwells with me ; for my Heart*
 “ *is broken into a Thousand Pieces* O happy
 “ *Text, and happy Time that ever I shou’d*
 “ *hear such Comfort ! and was thereupon*
 “ *recover’d.*” So that not a proud and
 high-minded, but a resign’d and humble Heart
 is the only fit Habitation for God to dwell
 in, and the surest Way to obtain from
 him the Grace of Perseverance here, and
 the Crown of Glory hereafter ; agreeably
 to these Sayings of our Saviour ; *Whosoever*
shall exalt himself, shall be abased ; and he
who shall humble himself, shall be exalted,
Matth. 23. 12. Again, *Whosoever shall humble*
himself as this little Child, the same is greatest
in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 18. 4.

of Religious Melancholy. 119

As then one in your Condition hath no Grounds to *fear unreasonably*, and much less to *despair* under Temptations, so,

V. He ought to *account it Matter* (not of Fear, but) of *all Joy*, when, through the *Divine Permission*, he falls into them, James 1. 2. And that because they are sent for the Trial of his Constancy and Sincerity in the Faith— There is indeed another kind of Temptations, *viz. such as lead us to Sin*, which the *Lusts of the Flesh*, and the *Love of Riches* produce in us, 1 Tim. 6. 9. These our Lord instructs us to pray against, that we *enter not into them*; and if we do, that we may not be tempted above our Ability, and that he wou'd enable us to conquer and improve them. And as to these, *Let no Man say when he is thus tempted, I am tempted of God*; for *God cannot be tempted with Evil*, neither *tempteth he any Man*, James 1. 13. But yours are Temptations of the former kind, design'd to make Trial of your Zeal and Perseverance in the Faith; and if you endure them *patiently*, still striving to subdue 'em, you will be either immediately deliver'd from them, as God tells the *Church of Philadelphia*; *Because thou hast kept the Word of my Patience, I also will keep thee*

120 *An Essay towards the Cure*

from the Hour of Temptation which shall come upon all the World to try them that dwell upon the Earth, Rev. 3. 10. or be gloriously rewarded at the last: For blessed is the Man, saith St. James, that thus endureth Temptations, for when he is tried, he shall receive a Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, James 1 12. Therefore you may sing with David, Tho' my Flesh and my Heart may fail me, yet God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever, Psal. 73. 26. And rejoice with the Apostle, in that he assures you, That all things shall work together for good unto them who love God, Rom. 8. 28.

THE
CONCLUSION.

I Shall now conclude with some necessary additional Advices, which cou'd not be well comprehended under the foregoing Heads.

1. Read no other Books, till you are perfectly freed from your *Melancholy*, but the *Holy Bible*; and, if you think 'em worthy of your Perusal, *these Instructions*. I give this Caution, because you may be apt, like those in your State, to puzzle your self by vainly seeking for Relief in *Variety of Books*, which will only more and more distract, but not ease your Mind.

2. I wou'd particularly advise you to lay aside *the Practice of Piety*; for tho' there is much good in that Book, yet there are some Things in it whereby several others, besides your self, have been insensibly drawn into *Religious Melancholy*.

3. Con-

3. Converſe much with thoſe who are *innocently chearful* and *talk faſt*: And as you pray againſt Deſpondency and Dejection of Spirit, don't *indulge* it; to what Purpose do you pray againſt it, if you do?

4. Make choice of *one Prayer* that is full and good, which you may daily uſe at *Morning, Noon* and *Night*, and keep to this as long as you live: For I know that People in your Condition are apt to run to *Variety*, which inſtead of *allaying*, tends only to *encreaſe* the Hurry and Confuſion of your Thoughts. You may be aſſur'd, that God will accept the ſame Words, tho' never ſo often offer'd up for the ſame Exigences, or *Chriſt* wou'd not have ſhewn us an Example herein *in repeating the ſame Petition thrice* juſt before his Crucifixion.

5. Since you ought to ſtrive all you can to be lively and chearful, and your accuſtoming your ſelf to *ſing Hymns of Praise to God*, will make you ſo, and by Degrees vanquiſh all Sorrow and Trouble, as I have known it do from ſome
in

of Religious Melancholy. 123

in your Condition; and having therefore before hinted the Usefulness thereof, I do here *particularly* recommend this Practice to you; and to furnish you for this Purpose, have collected and subjoin'd some *Hymns*, which I advise you *constantly* to make use of in the Method proposed, as long as you live.

A Morn-

in your Condition; and having therefore
before him the Objects thereof I do
here particularly recommend this Practice
to you; and to furnish you for this Pur-
pose, have collected and join'd some
Prayers, which I advise you constantly to
make use of in the Method propos'd, as
long as you live.



A Morning Hymn to be us'd
as soon as you awake, before
any worldly Thoughts intrude
into your Mind.

I.



*Wake my Soul, and with the Sun,
Thy daily Stage of Duty run;
Shake off dull Sloth, and joyful
[rise
To pay thy Morning Sacrifice!*

II.

*Awake my Soul, on God reflect,
Whose Eyes all Day thy Ways inspect;
Lord, I my Vows to thee renew,
Scatter my Sins as Morning Dew!*

III.

III.

*Awake my Soul, live this Day o'er,
As if thou wast to live no more;
Lord, guard me lest I shou'd transgress;
Lord, all my Motions guide and bless!*

IV.

*Awake my Soul, as Noon-tide clear,
Let thy Integrity appear!
Return all Heav'n's benignant Rays
In ardent Love and sprightly Praise!*

V.

*Awake my Strings, awake my Heart,
And with the Angels bear a Part;
Who all Night long unwearied sing
Glory to the Eternal King!*

VI.

*Awake, awake, ye heavenly Choir,
May your Devotion me inspire;
That I, like you, my Age may spend,
Like you may on my God attend!*

VII.

VII.

*May I, like you, in God delight,
Have all Day long my God in sight;
Perform, like you, my Maker's Will,
O may I never more do ill!*

VIII.

*Had I your Wings, to Heav'n I'd fly,
But God shall that Defect supply;
And my Soul wing'd with warm Desire,
Shall all Day long to Heaven aspire!*

IX.

*Glory to thee who safe hast kept,
And hast refresh'd me while I slept;
Lord, grant when I from Death shall wake,
I may of endless Life partake!*

X.

*I wou'd not wake, nor rise again,
Ev'n Heav'n it self I wou'd disdain;
Wert Thou not there to be enjoy'd,
And I in Hymns to be employ'd!*

128 *An Essay towards the Cure*

XI.

*Heav'n is, dear Lord, where-e'er thou art,
O never then from me depart !
For to my Soul 'tis Hell to be
But for one Moment without thee !*

XII.

*Glory be then to thee this Day
In all I think, or do, or say ;
For to my Soul 'tis Hell to be
But for one Moment without thee !*



A N



A N

EVENING HYMN to be us'd
the last thing you do before
you sleep.

I.

ALL Praise to thee my God this
A *[Night*
For all the Blessings of the Light!
Keep me, O keep me, King of Kings,
Under thine own Almighty Wings!

II.

Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,
The Ills which I this Day have done ;
That with the World, my self and thee,
I, e'er I sleep, at Peace may be !

III.

Teach me to live, that I may dread
My Grave as little as my Bed!
Teach me to die, that so I may
Triumphant rise at the last Day!

K

IV.

IV.

*O may my Soul in thee repose,
And with sweet Sleep mine Eye-lids close ;
Sleep that may me more vigorous make
To praise my God when I awake !*

V.

*When in the Night I sleepless lie,
My Soul with Heavenly Thoughts supply ;
Let not ill Dreams disturb my Rest,
Nor Powers of Darkness me molest !*

VI.

*Dull Sleep me so of Sense deprives,
I am but half my Days alive ;
My Dearest Lord, how am I griev'd
To be so long of thee bereav'd !*

VII.

*But tho' Sleep o'er my Weakness reigns,
Let it not hold me long in Chains ;
But now and then let loose my Heart,
Till it an Hallelujah dart !*

VIII.

VIII.

*The faster Sleep the Sense doth bind;
The more unfetter'd is the Mind;
O may my Soul from Matter free,
Thy unveil'd Goodness waking see!*

IX.

*O when shall I in endless Day
For ever chase dark Sleep away!
And endless Praise with th' Heav'nly Choir
Incessant sing, and never tire!*

X.

*You my blest'd Guardians, whilst I sleep,
Close to my Bed your Vigils keep;
And in my stead all the Night long
Sing to my God a grateful Song!*

XI.

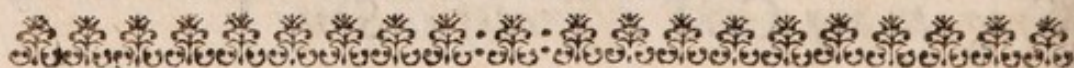
*Praise God from whom all Blessings flow!
Praise him all Creatures here below!
Praise him above th' Angelick Host!
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!*

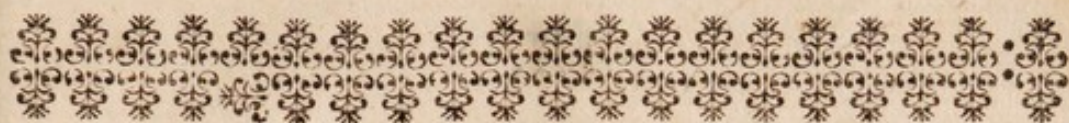
XII.

*Lead me, O Providence Divine,
Where ever thou dost me design!
So shall I with Delight and Ease
Pass through Life's tiresome Wilderness!*

XIII.

*Lead me, O God, so shall I follow thee,
Yea, though my stubborn Soul reluctant be!
Whether I will or no, I'll follow thee;
Whether I will or no, I'll follow thee!*





A N

H Y M N of Confession and Repentance, to be us'd at all Times of Humiliation, but especially before Receiving the *Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

I.

*H*E's bless'd whose Sins have Pardon
[gain'd,
No more in Judgment to appear;
Whose Guilt Remission has obtain'd,
And whose Repentance is sincere!

II.

Shou'd I conceal the fretting Sore,
My Bones shall waste without Relief;
All Day I shall with Anguish roar,
But no Complaints assuage my Grief!

III.

God's Hand on me shall heavy lie,
 By Day and Night alike distrest;
 Till quite of vital Moisture drein'd,
 Like Lands with Summer's Draught op-
 [prest!

IV.

My Faults I dare not think to hide,
 Nor must I ever hope to fly
 From this Almighty Judge, since nought
 Escapes his All-discerning Eye!

V.

This is my Grief; t' a Deluge swell'd,
 My Sins my sinking Head o'erflow;
 Lord, for my feeble Strength to bear,
 Lo, they too great a Burden grow!

VI.

O Now I do the Wound disclose,
 The Guilt that tortures me within!
 Let thy Forgiveness interpose,
 And Mercy's healing Balm pour in!

VII.

VII.

*Accept my Tears and humble Cry,
And now I seek, of me be found!
So from the common Deluge freed,
I shall not be with Sinners drown'd!*

VIII.

*Thy Favour, Lord, in all Distress
My Tower of Refuge I must own;
O help me then to conquer Sin,
And me with Songs of Triumph crown.*

IX.

*Enlighten both my Eyes and Mind,
That so I clearly may discern
The wondrous Things which they behold,
Who thy most righteous Precepts learn!*

X.

*If thou wilt make me know thy Laws,
And by their holy Guidance walk,
The wondrous Works which thou hast done,
Shall daily be my constant Talk!*

XI.

*If thou true Wisdom from above
Wilt kindly to my Soul impart,
To keep thy perfect Laws I will
Ever devote my zealous Heart !*

XII.

*Then in thy Temple 'midst thy Saints
My chearful Voice I'll loudly raise,
And thy bless'd Angels imitate
In never-ceasing Hymns of Praise !*





A N

H Y M N to be used constantly
in Times of Temptation in
this Manner, *viz.* as soon as it
assaults you, either immediate-
ly sing this with all the vigo-
rous and humble Zeal you can,
or use the Method above in
Page 99.

I.

*** *R O M* these Temptations me retrieve
* *F* * *My Soul in Safety keep,*
*** *Controul the Deluge e'er it spread,*
And plunge me in the Deep !

II.

Lord, hear the humble Prayer I make,
Thy Succour interpose ;
And shield me for thy Mercy's sake
From these ensnaring Foes !

III.

III.

*How long shall evil Thoughts my Soul,
And Grief my Heart oppress?
How long Temptations me assault,
And I have no Redress?*

IV.

*O hear, and to my longing Eyes
Let thy bright Light return,
And soon, that under these Attacks
I may no longer mourn!*

V.

*With hearty Zeal for thee I seek,
To thee for Succour pray;
O suffer not my careless Steps
From thy right Paths to stray!*

VI.

*For still, O Lord, my steadfast Trust
I on thy Help repose;
That thou, my God, art good and just,
My Soul with Comfort knows!*

VII.

*If whensoever in Distress
His Servants make their Prayer,
He hears them from his holy Hill:
Why shou'd I now despair?*

VIII.

*Salvation to the Lord belongs,
He only can defend;
His Blessings he extends to all
That on his Power depend.*

IX.

*O then let all who trust in thee,
With Shouts their Joys proclaim!
Let them rejoyce whom thou preserv'st,
And all that love thy Name!*

X.

*Safe in my Heart, and closely hid,
Let thy Word ready lie,
To succour me with timely Aid
When sinful Thoughts arise!*

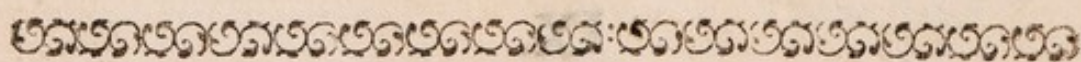
XI.

XI.

*Secur'd by that o'er th' Enemy,
The Vict'ry I shall gain;
And by the Rules of thy just Laws
My future Life still frame.*

XII.

*Then Joy shall fill my Mouth, and Songs
Employ my chearful Voice;
My grateful Soul by thee redeem'd,
Shall in my Strength rejoice!*



A N

H Y M N for Times of great
Sorrow and Dejection of Spi-
rit.

I.

H E N I pour out my Soul in Prayer,
W Do thou, O Lord, attend;
*To thy Eternal Throne of Grace
Let my sad Cry ascend!*

II.

II.

*My Heart is wrack'd with Pain, my Soul
With deadly Frights distrest;
With Fear and Trembling compass'd round,
With Horror quite oppress'd !*

III.

*Through ev'ry Watch of tedious Night
Thou keep'st my Eyes awake,
My Grief is swell'd to that Excess,
I sigh, but cannot speak !*

IV.

*O with thy wonted tender Eyes
When wilt thou kindly see
My sad Afflictions, and from Guilt
Entirely set me free !*

V.

*My God, my God, why leav'st me thus,
When I with Anguish faint ?
O why so far from me remov'd,
And from my loud Complaint ?*

VI.

VI.

*Hast thou for ever cast me off,
Withdrawn thy Favour quite?
Are both thy Mercy and thy Truth
Retir'd to endless Night?*

VII.

*I said, my Weakness hints these Fears,
But I'll my Fears-disband;
I'll call to mind thy Works of Old,
And Pow'r of thy Right Hand.*

VIII.

*On thee our Ancestors rely'd,
And thy Deliv'rance found;
With pious Confidence they pray'd,
And with Success were crown'd.*

IX.

*For why? Thou'rt good, fresh Acts of Grace
Thy Pity still supplies;
Thy Anger moves with slowest Pace,
Thy willing Mercy flies!*

X.

X.

*Yet thou art still the Righteous Judge,
Tho' I'm with Grief oppress'd ;
And therefore Sion's Praises are
Of right to thee address'd !*

XI.

*Thou grant'st the full Desires of those
Who thee with Fear adore ;
And dost their Troubles soon compose,
When they thine Aid implore !*

XII.

*O hide not then thy Glorious Face,
Nor me in Wrath reject ;
My God and Saviour leave not him
Thou didst so oft protect !*

XIII.

*Awake, arise, let seeming Sleep
No longer thee detain ;
Nor let me, Lord, who sue to thee,
For ever sue in vain !*

XIV.

144 *An Essay towards the Cure*

XIV.

*O to thy Servant soon return,
And speedily relent ;
As I forsake my Sins, do thou
Revoke my Punishment !*

XV.

*To satisfie and chear my Soul,
Thy early Mercy send ;
That I may all my Days to come,
In Joy and Comfort spend !*

XVI.

*But why so restless, O my Soul ?
Trust God who will employ
His Aid for thee, and change these Sighs
To thankful Hymns of Joy.*

XVII.

*Why restless, why cast down, my Soul ?
Hope still, and thou shalt sing
The Praise of him who is thy God,
Thy Health's Eternal Spring.*

XVIII.

XVIII.

*Thou striv'st each Action to approve
To his All-seeing Eye;
Why then shou'd Sorrow drown thy Hopes,
When he to such is nigh?*

XIX.

*Tho' Trouble, Anguish, Doubts and Dread,
To compass thee unite;
Yet he can teach thee still to make
His Precepts thy Delight.*

XX.

*And hence excite abundant Joys,
Ev'n in the midst of Pain;
So shalt thou still continue free
From what deserves his Blame.*

XXI.

*If thus thou wilt thy Goodness shew,
And ease my troubled Soul;
If for thy wond'rous Mercy's sake
Vouchsafe to make me whole!*

XXII.

*Then to my Brethren I'll declare
The Triumphs of thy Name;
In Presence of assembled Saints
Thy Glory thus proclaim!*

XXIII.

*" Ye Worshipers of Jacob's God,
" All you of Israel's Line;
" O praise the Lord, and to your Praise
" Sincere Obedience join!*

XXIV.

*" He ne'er disdain'd on low Distress
" To cast a gracious Eye,
" Nor turn'd from Poverty his Face,
" But hears its humble Cry!*

Hallelujah, &c.



A N

H Y M N of Praise to God for
his manifold Blessings and Mer-
cies, to be us'd frequently at
any Time when you are dis-
pos'd to be chearful.

I.



*O celebrate thy Praise, my God,
I will my Heart prepare ;
To all the listning World thy
[Works,
Thy wondrous Works declare.*

II.

*What tho' I can't resound thy Praise
Like those that dwell above ?
Yet Zeal shall help my humble Lays
To mount on Wings of Love.*

L 2

III.

III.

*The Gifts that to the sacred Store
The Wealthy brought were small,
The Widow's single Mite was more,
Because it was her All.*

IV.

*My All I give, and so may sing
(Tho' with inferiour Art)
With Choirs of Angels, whilst I bring
The Musick of my Heart!*

V.

*My Soul shall therefore bless my King,
Whose Precepts give me Light;
And private Council still afford
In Sorrows dismal Night!*

VI.

*To Heaven I made my mournful Prayer,
To God my humble Moan;
Who graciously inclin'd his Ear,
And heard me from his Throne!*

VII.

*Thus, Lord, thy Goodness still disclose,
And thus exalt thy Fame,
That I may daily Hymns compose
To thy Almighty Name!*

VIII.

*Thy Wrath has but a Moment's Reign,
Thy Favour no Decay;
My Night of Grief is recompens'd
With Joys returning Day!*

IX.

*The Lord himself, the mighty Lord
Vouchsafes to be my Guide;
The Shepherd by whose constant Care
My Wants are all supply'd!*

X.

*In tender Grass he makes me feed,
And gently there repose;
Then leads me to cool Shades, and where
Refreshing Water flows!*

XI.

*He does my wandring Soul reclaim,
And to his endless Praise,
Instruct with humble Zeal to walk
In his most righteous Ways !*

XII.

*I pass the gloomy Vale of Death,
From Fear and Danger free ;
For there his aiding Rod and Staff
Support and comfort me !*

XIII.

*Exalted thus, I'll gladly sing
Thy Praise in grateful Verse ;
And as thy Favours endless are,
Thy endless Praise rehearse !*

XIV.

*Since thus thou dost thy wondrous Love
Thro' all my Life extend ;
That Life to thee I will devote,
And in thy Temple spend !*

XV.

XV.

*My Thanks I'll publish there, and tell
How thy Renown excels ;
That Seat shall e'er be my Delight,
In which thy Honour dwells !*

XVI.

*I'll daily there proclaim thy Praise,
And when I stop for want of Store,
My Heart shall vent a Sigh or Groan,
That thou may'st still have more !*

XVII.

*All ye then that on God rely,
Courageously proceed ;
For he will still your Hearts supply
With Strength in time of Need !*

XVIII.

*The suffering Saints, when most distress'd,
He ne'er forgets to aid ;
Your Expectation shall be crown'd,
Tho' for a time delay'd !*

XIX.

*Therefore, with me, give Thanks to him
Who does so gracious prove ;
And let the Tribute of our Praise
Be constant as his Love !*

XX.

*Ye Angels too in Consort join,
To him your Voices raise !
Ye Cherubims and Seraphims
Cease not to sing his Praise !*

XXI.

*Awake, thou Moon, that rul'st the Night,
And Sun that guid'st the Day ;
Awake, ye glittering Stars of Light,
To him your Homage pay !*

XXII.

*Ye azure Heavens above awake,
And his due Praise declare !
Magnifie him, O all ye Clouds,
That move in liquid Air !*

XXIII.

*Let Earth her humble Tribute pay!
Praise him ye dreadful Whales!
Praise him ye Fish that thro' the Sea
Glide swift with glittering Scales!*

XXIV.

*Let Fire, and Hail, and Winds and Air,
With all of humble Frame:
Hills, Trees, and Fruits, and Beasts and
[Fowls,
His matchless Praise proclaim!*

XXV.

*Let chiefly Men that Breath enjoy,
The Breath he does afford,
In just Returns of Praise employ,
Let every Creature praise the Lord!*

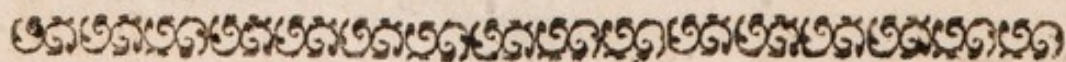
Hallelujah, &c.

MA Y the God of Mercy now look down upon you, and *assist* you to serve himself with *Joy* and *Transport*: May he *perfectly dispel* your Fears, *exhilarate* your Mind, and *encrease* your Graces: May he inspire you to *love* him still *more fervently* for his afflicting you: And may he enable you not only to *oppose*, but to *triumph* over all Temptations! which is the constant Prayer of

Your Faithful Friend and Servant

In all Christian Offices,

R. BLAKEWAY.



THE



THE
INDEX.

A.



A

*Bounding in Vertue, a Duty
incumbent upon all* 54

Afflictions, their Advantage,
35, 47, 92

*Four Rules to be observ'd
when they happen,* 46
to 48

We should rejoice under them, 76, 77

God's Promises to the Afflicted, 91

Atheist, Description of one, 86

*Popish Austerities not the Commands of
the Christian Religion* 13

H. Bible

The I N D E X.

B.

	<i>Pag.</i>
H. <i>Bible</i> , to whom its severe Menaces are only applicable,	58
To whom its Comforts do properly belong	60
Texts which exhibit God's Mercy and Promises ought carefully to be col- lected and remembred by Persons un- der <i>Religious Melancholy</i>	68
<i>Books</i> , The seeking for Relief in Variety prejudicial to them	121

C.

<i>Christ</i> , How to obtain Union and Com- munion with him	40
The frequent receiving of the Lord's Supper chiefly necessary for this Pur- pose	42
Good <i>Christian</i> , Description of his Cou- rage	92
<i>Conversation</i> , What Sort best for Persons under <i>Religious Melancholy</i>	122
<i>Courage</i> , Its good Effects	96

Spiritual

The I N D E X.

D.

	<i>Pag.</i>
<i>Spiritual Desertion</i> , What is meant by it,	16
Five Consolations for those who apprehend themselves to be under it	20, 24, 28, 34, 35
They never want God's supporting Presence	33
When it is that God does totally forsake Men	31
His Love is manifested by it Eight Ways	35 to 39
Advice to those who are apprehensive of it	39
Means to prevent it, and to secure God's Favour	40
<i>Despair</i> , Arguments against it,	111 to 115
<i>Devil</i> , Hath no Power over us without God's Permission	108
<i>Distractions</i> , When sinful	71
When not sinful	73

Employment,

The I N D E X.

E.

	<i>Pag.</i>
<i>Employment, Its good Effects</i>	99

F.

<i>Faith, The Complaint of the want of it</i>	
an Argument of true Faith	20
Its Fruits when true	21
And strong	24
Tho' weak, it shall be rewarded	24 to 28
The Reason why Persons under <i>Religious Melancholy</i> have no Evidence in themselves that they have it,	<i>ibid.</i>
God will never wholly forsake those who believe	28
<i>Christ</i> prays for such, that their Faith fail not	34
It discovers God's Love in Affliction,	35
True Filial <i>Fear</i> of God, What is meant by it	57
To fear and doubt, a Gospel Perfection	85

The I N D E X.

	<i>Pag.</i>
<i>Fears</i> common to the best Saints,	87
Description of servile <i>Fear</i> , 92 to 96 which is condemned by the very Heathens	55
G.	
God his Tendernefs and Clemency to Man- kind	64 to 67
He is our Friend	105
He can fubdue our Sins, and give us Graces	107
He is infinitely above our Enemies in Power	108
He never permits them to tempt us, but will be prefent to affift us,	109
He will not only hinder them from conquering us, but enable us to conquer them!	<i>ibid.</i>

H.

<i>Holiness</i> , Defire of greater than is attain- able here, an Error for four Reasons	49 to 54
<i>Hope</i> , Apostates, Unbelievers and Hypo- crites have none	33
<i>Hymns</i> , The Advantage of finging them to Persons under <i>Religious Melan-</i> <i>choly</i>	68 and 122
	<i>Hymn</i>

The I N D E X.

	<i>Pag.</i>
<i>Hymn</i> for the Morning	125
For the Evening	129
In Times of great Sorrow	140
And Temptation	137
Of Praise	147

I.

<i>Idleness</i> , Its Effects	95
<i>Ingratitude</i> , Sense of it painful to the truly Religious	17
<i>Innocence</i> , Those that endeavour after it shou'd let nothing discompose them	67
<i>Intention</i> , When accepted for the Deed,	60
<i>Joy</i> , Uninterrupted, not attainable here,	88

K.

<i>Knowledge</i> , The Necessity of seeking to obtain a right Apprehension of the Nature of Things	56
--	----

M.

<i>Man</i> , See all that God requires of him	24
He lost his Innocence by <i>Adam's</i> Fall	49
	None

The I N D E X.

	Page
None but <i>Christ</i> was ever spotless	51
The Best have been Sinners	52
And have sometimes thought themselves deserted of <i>God</i> 29 to 31,	87
They ought to be content with that Station into which their Sins have brought them, whilst they endeavour to regain their Innocence	53
Religious <i>Melancholy</i> , The Christian Religion not the Cause of it for three Reasons	3, 4, 9
Five Causes of it	15, 44, 49, 57, 69
Description of one under it	15 to 19, 78
His Objections	70, 77

P.

<i>Patience</i> , Its good Effects	97
<i>Perfection</i> , Want of it must not deject, or make us careless	53
<i>Perseverance</i> , How to be assur'd of it	116
<i>Prayer</i> , What is requir'd to make it acceptable	90
When pleasing to God, tho' not offer'd up with Spiritual Joy and Rapture	89
The Use of one good <i>one</i> for Morning	M ing

The INDEX.

	<i>Pag.</i>
ing, Noon and Night, helpful to those under <i>Relig. Melancholy</i>	122
<i>Prophaneness, What</i>	54
R.	
Christian <i>Religion</i> allows a temperate Gratification of our Faculties in earth- ly Pleasures and Enjoyments	3
It refines the Relish, and heightens the Pleasure of enjoying them	4
Is attended with much greater Joys than they can afford	8
Condemns a morose and melancholy Temper, and obliges Men to Joy and Chearfulness	9
<i>Repentance, Not a harsh, but joyful Duty,</i>	11
True <i>Religion, A Medium</i> between Pro- phaneness and Superstition	54
<i>Righteousness, What is meant by hungring after it</i>	63
S.	
<i>Sin, Sight of it terrible to the truly Reli- gious</i>	16
Sense of it from God only	36, and an En-

The I N D E X.

	Pag.
Entrance into a more perfect State of Grace	37
It is a Mercy to punish it	38
The greater our Sorrow for it is now, the greater will be our future Comfort	39
Superstition, What	54
T.	
Temptations, No Man is free from them,	69
They are not to be baffled by Fear for two Reasons	91, 95
But by Courage with Patience, and Employment	96
The Steps they take	ibid.
Consolation against the Power	105
And Violence of them	108
What Sort are to be pray'd against,	119
And when they are Matter of Joy,	ibid.
Evil Thoughts, Three Degrees of them	80
Not sinful without the Consent of the Will	82
Common to Persons under Religious Melancholy	52, 79, 80
M 2	Blas-

The I N D E X.

	<i>Pag.</i>
Blasphemous <i>Thoughts</i> in such Persons, of all others, have the least Danger of Sin in them	83
They proceed not from the Mind, but are Temptations of the Devil, or the Effects of Vapours or Melancholy	<i>ibid.</i>
Grief for them shews Sincerity in Religious Exercises	84
It is not in our Power to prevent their first Motions	74
For which our Saviour has made Attonement	<i>ibid.</i>

U.

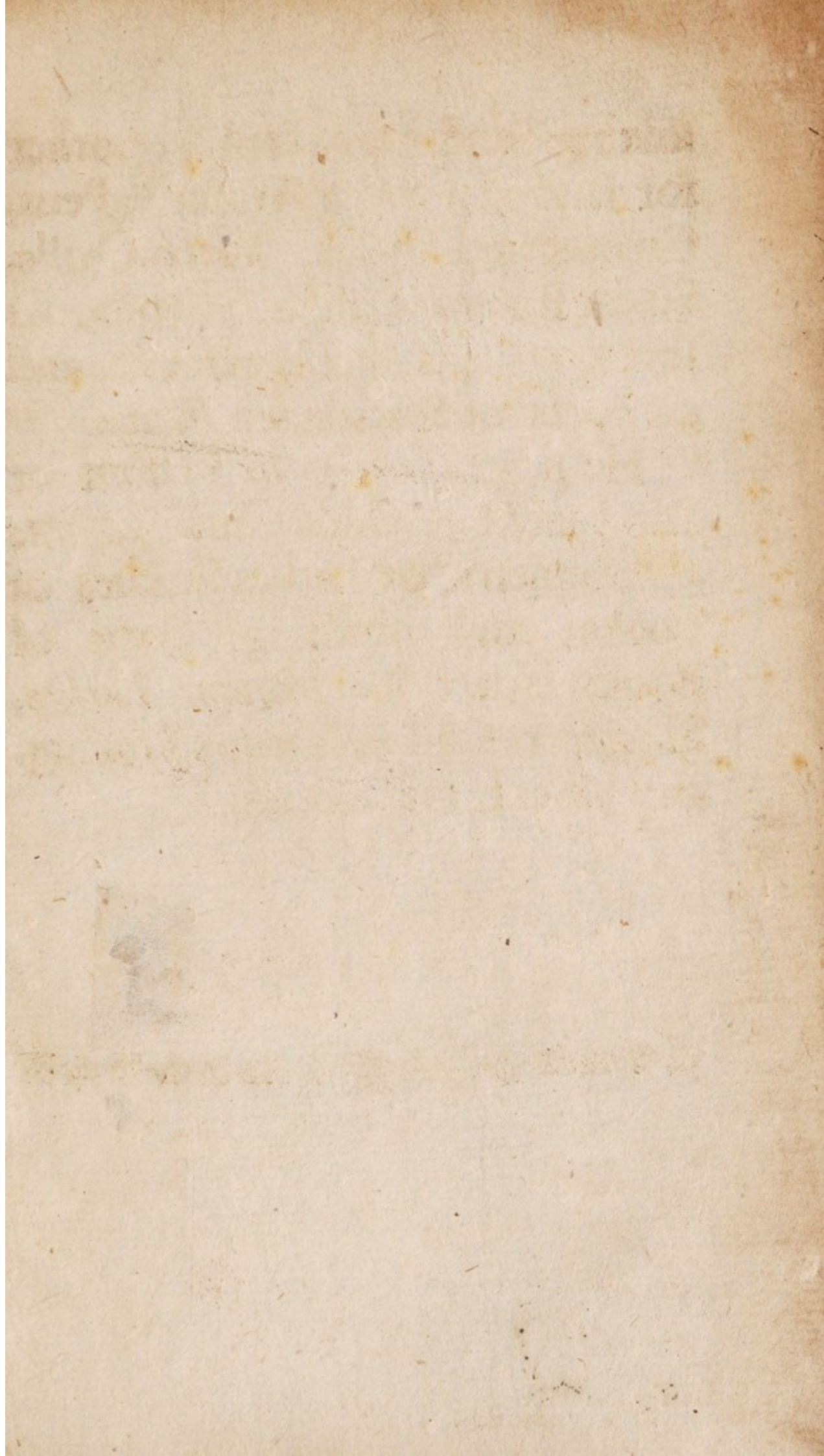
<i>Unbelief</i> , The Signs or Fruits of it	22
---	----

W.

<i>Watchfulness</i> , The Necessity of it	97
---	----

F I N I S.





68

01-

72

