

*Preached to the King, at White-Hall,
the first Sunday in Lent.
[Probably February II, 1626/7]*

ESAI. 65.20. *FOR THE CHILD SHALL DIE A HUNDRED YEARS OLD; BUT THE SINNER, BEING A HUNDRED YEARS OLD, SHALL BE ACCURSED.*

P EACE is in *Sion*; Gods whole Quire is in tune; Nay, here is the musick of the Sphears; all the Sphears (all Churches) all the Stars in those Sphears (all Expositours in all Churches) agree in the sense of these words; and agree the words to be a Prophesie, of the Distillation, nay Inundation, of the largenesse, nay the infinitenesse of the blessings, and benefits of Almighty God, prepared and meditated before, and presented, and accomplisht now in the Christian Church. The Sun was up betimes, in the *light of nature*, but then the Sun moved but in the *winter Tropick*, short and cold, dark and cloudy dayes; A *Diluculum* and a *Crepusculum*, a *Dawning* and a *Twilight*, a little *Traditionall* knowledge for the past, and a little *Conjecturall* knowledge for the future, made up their day. The Sunne was advanced higher to the *Jewes* in the *Law*; But then the Sunne was but in *Libra*; as much day as night: There was as much *Baptisme*, as *Circumcision* in that Sacrament; and as much *Lamb* as *Christ*, in that Sacrifice; The Law was their *Equinoctiall*, in which, they might see both the Type, and that which was figured in the Type: But in the Christian Church the Sun is in a *perpetuall Summer Solstice*; which are high degrees, and yet there is a higher, the Sun is in a

perpetuall *Meridian* and *Noon*, in that Summer solstice. There is not onely a *Surge Sol*, but a *Siste sol*: God hath brought the Sunne to the height, and fixt the Sun in that height in the Christian Church; where he in his own Sonne by his Spirit hath promised to dwell, *usque ad consummationem*, till the end of the world. Here is *Manna*; and not in *Gomers*, but in *Barns*; and *Quails*; and not in *Heaps*, but in *Hills*; the waters above the Firmament, and not in drops of Dew, but in showers of former and latter Rain; and the Land of *Canaan*; not in *Promise* onely, nor onely in performance, and *Possession*, but in Extention and *Dilatation*. The Graces, and blessings of God, that is, means of salvation, are so abundantly poured upon the Christian Church, as that the triumphant Church if they needed means, might fear they should want them. And of these means and blessings, *long life*, as it is a *Modell* and abridgement of *Eternity*, and a *help* to *Eternitie*, is one; and one in this Text, *The childe shall die 100. yeares old*. But shall we receive good from God, and not receive evill too? shall I shed upon you *Lumen visionis*, the light of that vision, which God hath afforded me in this Prophecie, the light of his countenance, and his gracious blessings upon you, and not lay upon you *Onus visionis*, as the *Prophets* speak often, The burthen of that vision which I have seen in this Text too? It was a scorn to *David*, that his servants were *half cloath'd*; The *Samaritane* woman beleeved, that if she might see Christ, he would tell her all things: Christ promises of the *Holy Ghost*, that he should lead them into *all Truth*: And the Apostles discharge in his office was, that he had spoken to them *all Truth*: And therefore lest I should be defective in that integritie, I say with Saint *Augustine*, *Non vos fallo, non præsumo, non vos fallo*; I will not be so bold with you as flatter you, I will not presume so much upon your weaknesse, as to go about to deceive you, as though there were nothing but blessing in God, but shew you the Commination, and judgement of this Text too, that though *the childe should die a hundred years old, yet the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed*. If God had not lengthened his childes life, extended my dayes, but taken me in the sinnes of my youth, where had I been, may every soul here say? And where would you be too, if no man should tell you, that though *The childe should die a hundred years old, yet the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed?*

What can be certain in this world, if even the mercy of God admit a variation? what can be endlesse here, if even the mercy of God receive a determination? and *sin* doth vary the nature, *sin* doth determine even the infinitenesse of the mercy of God himself, for though *The childe shall die a hundred yeares old*, yet *the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed*. Disconsolate soul, dejected spirit, bruised and broken, ground and trodden, attenuated, evaporated, annihilated heart come back; heare thy *reprieve*, and sue for thy *pardon*; God will not take thee away in thy sins, thou shalt have time to repent, *The childe shall die a hundred years old*. But then lame and decrepit soul, gray and inveterate sinner, behold the full ears of corn blasted with a mildew, behold this long day shutting up in such a night, as shall never see light more, the night of death; in which, the deadliest pang of thy *Death* will be thine *Immortality*: In this especially shalt thou die, that thou canst not die, when thou art dead; but must live dead for ever: for *The sinner being a hundred yeers old, shall be accursed*, he shall be so for ever.

In this discovery from this Red Sea, to this *dead Sea*; from the mercy of God, in the blood of his Son, to the malediction of God, in the blood of the sinner, be pleased to make these the points of your Compaſſe, and your Land-marks by the way, in those, the two parts of this exercise. First, in the first, consider the *precedencie*, and *primogeniture of Mercy*; God begins at *Mercy*, and not at *Judgement*: God's method here, is not, *The sinner shall be accursed*, but *The childe shall have long life*: but first, the blessing, and then the malediction. And then *secondly*, we shall see, in what form the particular blessing is given here; In *long life*; *The childe shall die a hundred years old*. And then also, because we find it in the company of Mercies, in the region of Mercies, in this first part of the Text, which is the *Sppear of Mercy*; we shall look also how this very *dying* is a Mercy too: The mercy is especially plac'd in the long life: *The childe shall live a hundred yeares*; but the Holy Ghost would not leave out that, that he should *die*; *The childe shall die a hundred yeares old*. And in these three, first the *precedencie*, and *primogeniture* of God's mercy, and then the specification of that mercy in long life, and lastly, the association of mercy, that death as well as life is a blessing to the Righteous; we shall determine that first part. And in the second, *But*

the sinner being a hundred years old, shall be accursed, we shall see first, that the malediction of God hath no object but a *sinner*: God antecedes no malediction: Till there be a sinner, there is no malediction; nay not till there be an *inveterate* sinner; *A sinner of a hundred yeares*, at least, such a sinner, as would be so, if God would spare him a hundred yeares here. And upon such a sinner, God thunders out this Prosternation, this Consternation, in this one word of our Text, which involves and inwraps all kinds of miseries, feeblenesse in body, infatuation in mind, evacuation of power, dishonour in fame, eclipses in favour, ruine in fortune, dejection in spirit, *He shall be accursed*. Where, because in this second part we are in the Region and Sphear of maledictions, we cannot consider this future, *He shall be*, as a future of favour, a prorogation, a deferring of the malediction: *He shall be*, is not, he shall be hereafter, but not yet: but it is *a future of continuation*; *He shall be accursed*, that is, he shall be so *for ever*. And so have you the frame, and partitions of this *Bethel*, this House of God in which he dwells, which is both *Iosuah's Beth-hagla*, the house of Joy, and *John's Bethania*, his house of affliction too; and we passe now to the furnishing of these roomes, with such stuff as I can have laid together.

First, in our first part, we consider the *precedency*, and *primogeniture* of *Mercy*. It is a good thing to be descended of the eldest Brother; To descend from God, to depend upon God, by his eldest Son, the Son of his love, the Sonne of his right hand, Mercy, and not to put God to his second way, his sinister way, his way of judgement. *David* prophesies of God's exaltation of *Solomon* so, *Ponam in Primogenitum*, I will make him my first-born: Though *Solomon* were not so, God would make him so. And in that Title, the Wiseman makes his prayer for *Israel*; *Quem coequasti Primogenito*, whom thou hast nam'd thy first-born; for so God had in *Exodus*. *Israel* is my Sonne, even my *first-born*: and in *Job*, the fiercest terror of death is exprest so, *Primogenitus mortis, the first-born of Death shall devour his strength*: Still the exaltation, the Superlative is called so; *The first-born*. And in such a sense; if we could think of more degrees of goodness in God, of an exaltation of God himself in God, of more God in God, of a Superlative in God, we must necessarily turn upon his mercy, for that *Mercie* must be the *Super-*

lative: So is it too, if we consider Gods first action, or God's first thought towards Man; Mercy was the first-born by every Mother; by that Understanding, by that Will, by that Power, which we conceive in God; Mercy was the first-born, and first-mover in all. We consider a *preventing Grace* in God; and that preventing Grace is before all; for that prevents us so, as to *Visite us when we sit in darknesse*. And we consider an *Antecedent-Will* in God, and that *Antecedent Will* is before all; for by that Will, God would have *all men saved*. And when we call Gods Grace by other names then Preventing, whether *Assisting Grace*, that it stand by us and sustain us, or *Concomitant Grace*, that it work with us, and inanimate our action, when it is doing, or his *Subsequent Grace*, that rectifies or corrects an action, when it is done; when all is done, still it is the *Preventing Power*, and quality of that Grace, that did all that in me: If I stand by his Assisting Grace, if I work with his Concomitant Grace, if I rectifie my errour by his Subsequent Grace, that that moves upon me in all these, is still the preventing power of that Grace. For as all my *Naturall actions* of life are done by the power of that *Soul*, which was in me before, so all the *Supernaturall actions of that Soul*, are done by that power of that Grace, that prevents and preinanimates that action; and all my co-operation is but a post-operation, a working by the Power of that All-preventing Grace. I moved not at first by the *Tide*, by the strength of naturall faculties, nor do I move after by that *winde* which had formerly fill'd my sails: I proceed not now by the strength of that Grace which God gave me heretofore. But as God infuseth a *Soul* into every man, and that Soul eliciteth a new *Act* in itself, before that man produce any action; so God infuses a *particular Grace* into every good work of mine, and so prevents me, before I co-operate with him. For as Nature in her highest exaltation, in the best Morall man that is, cannot flow into Grace, Nature cannot become Grace; so neither doth former Grace flow into future Grace, but I need a distinct influence of God, a particular Grace, for *every* good work I do, for every good word I speak, for every good thought I conceive.

When God gives me accesse into his *Library*, leave to consider his proceedings with man, I find the first book of Gods making to be the *Book of Life*. The Book where all their names are written that

are elect to Glory. But I find no such *Book of Death*: All that are not written in the Book of Life, are certainly the sonnes of Death: To be pretermitted there, there to be left out, wraps them up, at least leaves them wrapt up, in death. But God hath not wrought so positively, nor in so primary a consideration in a book of Death, as in the Book of Life. As the aftertimes made a Book of *Wisdom* out of the *Proverbs*, of *Salomon*, and out of his *Ecclesiastes*; but yet it is not the same Book, nor of the same certainty: so there is a Book of Life *here*, but that is not the same book that is in *Heaven*, nor of the same certainty: For in this Book of Life, which is the Declaration and Testimony which the Church gives of our Election, by those marks of the Elect, which she seeth in the Scriptures, and believeth that she seeth in us, a man may be *Blotted out of the Book of the living*, as *David* speaketh; and as it is added there, *Not written with the Righteous*: Intimating that in some cases, and in some Book of Life, a man may have been written in, and *blotted* out, and written in again. The Book of Life in the Church, The Testimony of our Election here, admits such expunctions, and such redintegrations: but Gods first Book, his *Book of Mercy*; (for this Book in the Church, is but his *Book of Evidence*) is inviolable in it self, and all the names of that Book indelible.

In Gods first Book, the Book of Life, Mercy hath so much a precedence, and primogeniture, as that there is nothing in it, but Mercy. In Gods other Book, his Book of Scripture, in which he is put often to denounce judgements, as well as to exhibite mercies, still the Tide sets that way, still the Biass leads on that hand, still his method directs us *ad Primogenitum*, to his first-born, to his Mercy. So he began in that Book: *He made man to his Image, and then he blest him*. Here is no malediction, no intermination mingled in Gods first Act, in Gods first purpose upon man: In *Paradise* there is, That if he eat the forbidden fruit, if he will not forbear that, that one Tree, *He shall die*. But God begins not there: before that, he had said, of every tree in the Garden thou maist freely eat; neither is there more vehemency in the punishment, then in the libertie. For as in the punishment there is an ingemination, *Morte morieris*, Dying thou shalt die; that is, thou shalt surely die; so in the liberty, there was an ingemination too, *Comedendo comedes*, Eating thou shalt eat; that

is, thou maist freely eat. In *Deuteronomy* we have a fearfull *Chapter of Maledictions*; but all the former parts of that Chapter, are blessings in the same kind: And he that reads that Chapter, will beginne at the beginning, and meet Gods first-born, his Mercy first. And in those very many places of that Book where God divides the condition, *If you obey you shall live, if you rebell you shall die*, still the better Act, and the better condition, and the better reward, is placed in the first place, that God might give us possession, *In jure Primo-geniti*, in the right of his first-born, his mercy. And where God pursues the same method, and first dilates himself, and expatiates in the way of mercy, *I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him*; when after that he is brought to say, *If his children forsake my Law, I will visit their transgression with the rod*; where first he puts it off for one Generation from himself, to his *Children*, which was one Mercy: And then he puts it upon a forsaking, an Apostasie, and not upon every sinne of infirmity, which was another Mercy; when it comes to a correction, it is but a milde correction, *with the rod*: And in that, he promises to *visite* them; to manifest himself, and his purpose to them in the correction; all which are higher and higher degrees of Mercy: yet because there is a spark of anger, a tincture of judgement mingled in it, God remembers his first-born, his Mercy, and returns where he begun: *Nevertheless my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my Holinesse, that I will not lie unto David*. There are elder pictures in the world of Water, then there are any of oyl; but those of oyl have got above them, and shall outlive them. *Water* is a frequent embleme of *Affliction*, in the Scriptures; and so is *oyl* of *Mercy*; If at any time in any place of Scripture, God seemed to begin with water, with a judgement, yet the oyl will get to the top: in that very judgement, you may see that God had first a mercifull purpose in inflicting that medicinall judgement; for his mercy is his first-born. *His Mercy is new every morning*, saith the Prophet; not onely *every day*, but *as soon as it is day*.

Trace God *in thy self*, and thou shalt find it so. If thou beest drowzie now, and unattentive, curious or contentious, or quarrelsome now, now God leaves thee in that indisposition, and that is a

judgement: But it was his Mercy that brought thee hither before. In every sinne thou hast some remorse, some *reluctation*, before thou do that sinne; and that *pre-reluctation*, and *pre-resorse* was Mercy. If thou hadst no such remorse in thy last sinne, before the sinne, and hast it now, this is the effect of Gods former mercy, and former good purpose upon thee, to let thee see that thou needest the assistance of his Minister, and of his Ordinance, to enable thee to lay hold on Mercy when it is offered thee. Can any calamity fall upon thee, in which thou shalt not be bound to say, I have had blessings in a greater measure then this? If thou have had losses, yet thou hast more, out of which God took that. If all be lost, perchance thou art but where thou begunst at first, at nothing. If thou begunst upon a good heighth, and beest fallen from that, and fallen low, yet as God prepared a *Whale* to transport *Jonas*, before *Jonas* was cast into the Sea, God prepared thee a holy *Patience*, before he reduced thee to the exercise of that Patience. *If thou* couldest apprehend nothing done for thy self, yet all the mercies that God hath exhibited to *others*, are former mercies to thee, in the *Pattern*, and in the *Seal*, and in the *Argument* thereof: They have had them, therefore thou shalt. All Gods *Prophecies*, are thy *Histories*: whatsoever he hath promised others, he hath done in his purpose for thee: And all Gods *Histories* are thy *Prophesies*; all that he hath done for others, he owes thee. Hast thou a *hardnesse* of heart? knowest thou not that Christ hath wept before to enteder that hardnesse? hast thou a *palenesse* of soul, in the apparition of God in fire, and in judgement? knowest thou not, that Christ hath *bled* before, to give a vigour, and a vegetation, and a verdure to that palenesse? is thy sinne *Actuall* sinne? knowest thou not, that there is a Lamb bleeding before upon the Altar, to expiate that? Is thy terrour from thy inherence, and encembrance of *Originall* sinne? knowest thou not, that the effect of *Baptism* hath blunted the sting of that sinne before? art thou full of sores, putrid and ulcerous sores? full of wounds, through and through piercing wounds? full of diseases, namelesse and complicate diseases? knowest thou not that there is a holy Charm, a blessed Incantation, by which thou art, though not invulnerable, yet invulnerable *unto death*, wrapt up in the eternall Decree of thine *Election*? that's thy pillar, the *assurance of thine Election*: If thou shake

that, if thou cast down that Pillar, if thou distrust thine Election, with *Samson*, who pulled down pillars in his blindnesse, in thy blindnesse thou destroyest thy self. Begin where thou wilt at any Act in thy self, at any act in God, yet there was mercy before that, for his mercy is eternall, eternall even towards thee. *I could* easily think that that, that past between *God* and *Moses* in their long conversation; that that, that past between *Christ* and *Moses* in his transfiguration; that that, that past between Saint *Paul* and the *Court of Heaven* in his extasie was instruction and manifestation on one part, and admiration and application on the other part of the mercy of God. Earth cannot receive, Heaven cannot give such another universall soul to all: all persons, all actions, as Mercy. And were I *the childe of this Text*, that were to live *a hundred yeares*, I would ask no other marrow to my bones, no other wine to my heart, no other light to mine eyes, no other art to my understanding, no other eloquence to my tongue, then the power of apprehending for my self, and the power of deriving and conveying upon others by my Ministry, the Mercy, the early Mercy, the everlasting Mercy of yours, and my God. But we must passe to the consideration of this immense *Light*, in that one *Beam*, wherein it is exhibited here, that is, long life: *The childe shall die a hundred yeares old.*

Long life is a blessing, as it is an image of eternity: as Kings are blessings, because they are Images of God. And as to speak properly, a King that possest the whole earth, hath no proportion at all to God, (he is not a dramme, not a grain, not an atome to God) so neither if a thousand *Methusalems* were put in one life, had that long life any proportion to eternity; for *Finite* and *Infinite* have no proportion to one another. But yet when we say so, That the King is *nothing* to *God*, we speak then between God and the King; and we say that, onely to assist the Kings Religious humiliation of himself in the presence of God. But when we speak between the King and our selves his Subjects, there we raise our selves to a just reverence of him, by taking knowledge that he is the Image of God to us. So though *long life* be nothing to eternity, yet because we need such *Glasses* and such *Images*, as God shews us himself in the King, so he shewes us his eternitie in a long life. *In this*, that the *Patriarchs* complain every where of the shortnesse of life, and neernessee of

death; (*Jacob at a hundred and thirtie yeares tells Pharaoh*, that his dayes were few,) In this, that God threatens the shortnesse of life for a punishment to *Eli*, God saies, *There shall not be an old man in thy house for ever*: In this, that God brings it into Promise, and enters it, as into his Audite, and his revenue, (*With long life will I satisfie him, and shew him my salvation*,) That God would give him long life, and make that long life a Type of Eternity; In this, that God continues that promise into performance, and brings it to execution, in some of his chosen servants; at a hundred and twenty *Moses his eyes were not dim, nor his naturall force abated*; and *Caleb* saith of himself, *I am this day 85. yeares old, and as my strength was at first, for warre, so is my strength now*; In all these and many others, we receive so many testimonies that God brings long life out of his Treasurie, as an immeditate blessing of his. And therefore, as such his blessing, let us pray for it, where it is not come yet, in that appreception and acclamation of the antient general *Councells, Multos annos Cæsari, Æternos annos Cæsari*, Long life to our *Cesar* in this world, everlasting life to our *Cesar* in the world to come: and then let us *reverence* this blessing of long life, where it is come, in honouring those *Ancient* heads, by whose name, God hath been pleased to call himself, *Antiquus dierum*, the ancient of dayes: and let us not make this blessing of long life, impossible to our selves, by disappointing Gods purpose of long life upon us, by our surfets, our wantonnesse, our quarrels, which are all *Goths, and Vandals, and Giants*, called in by our selves to fight with God against us. But yet, so receive we long life, as a blessing, as that we may also find a blessing in departing from this life: For so manifold, and so multi-form are his blessings, as even *death* it self hath a place in this Sphear of blessings, *The childe shall live a hundred yeares, but yet The childe shall die.*

When *Paradise* should have extended, as man should have multiplied, and every holy family, every religious Colony have constituted a new Paradise, that as it was said of *Egypt*, when it abounded with Hermitages in the Primitive persecutions, That *Egypt* was a continuall *City of Hermitages*; so all the world should have been a continuall Garden of Paradises, when all affections should have been subjects, and all creatures servants, and all wives helpers, then life

was a sincere blessing. But, but a mixt blessing now, when all these are so much vitiated; onely a possible blessing; a disputable, a conditionable, a circumstantiall blessing now. If there were any other way to be saved and to get to Heaven, then by being born into this life, I would not wish to have come into this world. And now that God hath made this life a *Bridge* to Heaven; it is but a giddy, and a vertiginous thing, to stand long gazing upon so narrow a bridge, and over so deep and roaring waters, and desperate whirlpools, as this world abounds with: *So teach us to number our dayes*, saith *David*, *that we may apply our hearts unto wisedome*: Not to number them so, as that we place our happinesse, in the increase of their number. What is this *wisedome*? he tells us there; *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him*: But was that this life? It was *Length of dayes for ever and ever*, the dayes of Heaven.

As houses that stand in two Shires, trouble the execution of Justice, the house of death that stands in two worlds, may trouble a good mans resolution. As death is a sordid *Postern*, by which I must be thrown out of this world, I would decline it: But as death is the gate, by which I must enter into Heaven, would I never come to it? certainly now, now that *Sinne* hath made life so miserable, if God should deny us death, he multiplied our misery. We are in this Text, upon blessings appropriated to the Christian Church, and so to these times. And in *these Times*, we have not so long life, as the Patriarchs had before. They were to multiply children for replenishing the world, and to that purpose had long life. We multiply sinnes, and the children and off-spring of sinnes, miseries, and therefore may be glad to get from this generation of Vipers. God gave his Children *Manna* and *Quails*, in the Wilderness, where nothing else was to be had; but when they came to the Land of Promise, that Provision ceas'd: God gave them long life in the times of *Nature*, and long, (though shorter then before) in the times of the *Law*; because in nature especially, but in the Law also, it was hard to discern, hard to attain the wayes to Heaven. But the wayes to Heaven are made so manifest to us in the Gospel, as that for that use, we need not long life; and that is all the use of our life here. He that is ready for Heaven, hath lived to a blessed age; and to such an intendment, a childe newly baptized may be elder then his Grandfather. Therefore

we receive long life for a blessing, when God is pleased to give it; though *Christ* entered it into no *Petition of his Prayer*, that God would give it: and so though we enter it into no Petition, nor Prayer, we receive it as a blessing too, when God will afford us a deliverance, a manumission, an emancipation from the miseries of this life. Truely I would not change that joy and consolation, which I proposed to my hopes, upon my *Death-bed*, at my passage out of this world, for all the joy that I have had in this world over again. And so very a part of the Joy of Heaven is a joyful transmigration from hence, as that if there were no more reward, no more recompence, but that, I would put my self to all that belongs to the duty of an honest Christian in the world, onely for a joyfull, a cheerfull passage out of it. And farther we shall not exercise your patience, or your devotion, upon these three pieces which constitute our first part: The Primogeniture of Gods Mercy, which is first in all; The specification of Gods Mercy, long Life, as it is a figure of, and a way to eternity; and then the association of Gods Mercy; that Death, as well as Life, is a blessing to the Righteous.

So then we have brought our Sunne to his *Meridianall height*, to a full Noon, in which all shadows are removed: for even the *shadow of death*, death it self is a blessing, and in the number of his Mercies. But the *Afternoon shadows* break out out upon us, in our second part of the Text. And as afternoon shadowes do, these in our Text do also; they grow greater and greater upon us, till they end in night, in everlasting night, *The sinner being a hundred yeares old shall be accursed*. Now of shadowes it is appliably said, *Vmbræ non sunt tenebræ sed densior lux*, shadowes are not utter darknesse, but a thicker light; shadowes are thus much nearer to the nature of light then darknesse is, that shadowes presume light, which darknesse doth not; shadowes could not be, except there were light. The first shadowes in this dark part of our Text, have thus much light in them, that it is but the *sinner*, onely the sinner that is accursed. The Object of Gods malediction, is not *man*, but *sinfull man*. If God make a man sinne, God curses the man; but if sinne make God curse, God curses but the sinne. *Non tales Deum tuum putas, qualis nec tu debes esse*, Never propose to thy self such a God, as thou wert not bound to imitate: Thou mistakest God, if thou make him to be

any such thing, or make him to do any such thing, as thou in thy proportion shouldst not be, or shouldst not do. And shouldst thou curse any man that had never offended, never transgrest, never trespass thee? Can God have done so? Imagine God, as the Poet saith, *Ludere in humanis*, to play but a *game at Chesse* with this world; to sport himself with making little things great, and great things nothing: Imagine God to be but at play with us, but a gamester; yet will a gamester *curse*, before he be in danger of losing any thing? Will God curse man, before man have sinned? In the Law there are denuntiations of *curses* enjoyned and multiplied: There is *maledictus* upon *maledictus*; but it is *maledictus homo*, cursed be the man; He was not curst by God, *before* he was a man; nor curst by God, *because* he was a man; but if that man commit *Idolatry, Adultery, Incest, Beastiality, Bribery, Calumny*, (as the sinnes are reckoned there) there he meets a particular *curse*, upon his particular sinne. The book of Life is but names written in Heaven; all the Book of Death, that is, is but that in the Prophet, when *names are written in the Earth*. But whose names are written in the Earth there? *They that depart from thee, shall be written in the Earth*: They shall be, when they depart from thee. For saith he, *They have forsaken the Lord, the Fountain of Living water*: They did not that, because their names were written in the Earth, but they were written there, because they did that. *Our Saviour Christ* came hither to do all his Fathers will; and he returned cheerfully to his Father again, as though he had done all, when he had taken away the sinnes of the world by dying for all sinnes, and all sinners. But if there were an *Hospitall* of miserable men, that lay under the *reprobation* and malediction of *Gods decree*, and not for sinne; the blood of that Lamb is not sprinkled upon the Postills of that doore. Forgive me *O Lord, O Lord* forgive me my sinnes, the sinnes of my youth, and my present sinnes, the sinne that my Parents cast upon me, Originall sinne, and the sinnes that I cast upon my children, in an ill example; Actuall sinnes, sinnes which are manifest to all the world, and sinnes which I have so laboured to hide from the world, as that now they are hid from mine own conscience, and mine own memory; Forgive me my crying sins, and my whispering sins, sins of uncharitable hate, and sinnes of unchaste love, sinnes against *Thee* and *Thee*,

against thy Power O Almighty Father, against thy Wisdome, O glorious Sonne, against thy Goodnesse, O blessed Spirit of God; and sinnes against *Him* and *Him*, against Superiours and Equals, and Inferiours; and sinnes against *Me* and *Me*, against mine own soul, and against my body, which I have loved better then my soul; Forgive me *O Lord, O Lord* in the merits of thy *Christ* and my *Jesus*, thine Anointed, and my Saviour; Forgive me my sinnes, all my sinnes, and I will put *Christ* to no more cost, nor thee to more trouble, for any reprobation or malediction that lay upon me, otherwise then as a sinner. I ask but an application, not an extention of that Benediction, *Blessed are they whose sinnes are forgiven*; Let me be but so blessed, and I shall envy no mans Blessednesse: say thou to my sad soul, *Sonne be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee*, and I shall never trouble thee with Petitions, to take any other Bill off of the fyle, or to reverse any other Decree, by which I should be accurst, before I was created, or condemned by thee, before thou saw'st me as a sinner; For the object of malediction is but a *sinner*, (which was our first) and an *Inveterate sinner, A sinner of a hundred yeares*, which is our next consideration.

First, *Quia centum annorum*, because he is so old; so old in sinne, *He shall be accursed*. And then, *Quamvis centum annorum*, though he be so old, though God have spared him so long he shall be accursed. *God is not a Lion in his house, nor frantick amongst his servants*, saith the Wiseman; God doth not rore, nor tear in pieces for every thing that displeaseth him. But *when God is prest under us, as a cart is prest that is full of sheaves*; the Lord will grone under that burthen a while, but he will cast it off at last. That which is said by *David*, is, if it be well observed, spoken of God himself, *Cum perverso pervertēris*; from our fowardnesse, God will learn to be foward: But he is not so, of his own nature. *If you walk contrary unto me, I will walk contrary unto you*, saith God. But this is not said of one, first, wry step; but it is a *walking*, which implies a long, and a considerate continuance. And if man come to sinne so, and will not walk with *God*, *God* will walk with that man in his own pace, and overthrow him in his own wayes. Nay, it is not onely in that place, *If you walk contrary to me, In occursu*, as *Calvin* hath it, *ex adverso*, as the *vulgate* hath it, which implies an *Actuall Opposi-*

tion against the wayes of God: but the word is but *Chevi*, and *Chevi* is but *In accidente, in contingente*; if you walk *negligently, inconsiderately*; if you leave out God, pretermit, and slight God; if you come to call Gods Providence *Fortune*, to call Gods Judgements *Accidents*, or to call the Mercies of God, *favours of great Persons*, if you walk in this *neglect of God*, God shall proceed to a *neglect* of you; and then though God be never the worse for your leaving him out, (for if it were in your power to annihilate this whole world, God were no worse, then before there was a World) yet if God neglect you, forget, pretermit you, it is a miserable annihilation, a fearfull malediction. But God begins not before sinne, nor at the first sinne. God did not curse *Adam* and *Eve* for their sinne; it was their first, and God foresaw they would not be *sinners of a hundred yeares*. But him that was in the *Serpent*, that inveterate sinner, him, who had sinned in Gods Court, in Heaven, before, and being banished from thence, fell into this *transmarine treason*, in *another land*, to seduce Gods other Subjects there, him God accurs'd. Who amongst us can say, that he had *a Fever* upon his *first excesse*, or a *Consumption* upon his *first wantonnesse*, or a *Commission* put upon him for his *first Briberie*? Till he be a *sinner of a hundred yeares*, till he have brought age upon himself, by his sinne, before the time, and thereby be *a hundred yeares old at fourtie*, and so a *sinner of a hundred yeares*, till he have a *desire* that he might, and a *hope* that he *shall be able to sinne to a hundred yeares*; and so be a sinner of a hundred yeares; Till he sinne hungerly and thirstily, and ambitiously, and swiftly, and commit the sinnes *of a hundred yeares in ten*, and so be *a sinner of a hundred yeares*; till he infect and poyson that age, and spoile that time that he lives in by his exemplary sinnes, till he be *Pestis secularis*, the plague of that age, *peccator secularis*, the *proverbiall sinner* of that age, and so be *a sinner of a hundred yeares*, till in his actions he have been, or in his desires be, or in the *fore-knowledge of God* *would be a sinner of a hundred yeares*, an inveterate, an incorrigible, an everlasting sinner, God comes not to curse him.

But then *Quamvis centum annorum*, though he have lived a hundred yeares, though God have multiplied upon him Evidences, and Seals, and Witnesses, and Possessions, and Continuances, and prescriptions of his favour, all this hath not so riveted God to that man,

as that God must not depart from him. God was crucified for him, but will not be crucified to him; still to hang upon this Crosse, this perversnesse of this habituall sinner, and never save himself and come down, never deliver his own Honour, by delivering that sinner to malediction. It is true, that we can have no better Title to *Gods future Blessings*, then his Blessings formerly exhibited to us; Gods former blessings are but his *marks* set up there, that he may know that place, and that man the better against another time, when he shall be pleased to come thither again with a supply of more Blessings: God gives not Blessings as *payments*, but as *obligations*; and becomes a debtor by giving. If I can produce that, *Remember thy mercies of old*, I need ask no new; for even that is a *Specialty* by which God hath bound himself to me for more. But yet not so, if I abuse his former Blessings, and make them occasions of sinne. *How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens*, saith *Christ*, I know not how often; surely very often; for *many hundreds of yeares*: But yet, how often soever, God left them open to the *Eagle, the Romane Eagle* at last. God gives thee a *recovery* from sicknesse, that doth not make thee Immortall. God gives thee a good interpretation of thine actions from a gracious Prince, this doth not make thee impeccable in thy self. God gives thee titles of Honour upon thy self, this doth not alwayes give thee honour, and respect from others. For as it is God that *Raiseth up the poore out of the dust*, and *lifteth the needy out of the dunghill*, that he may set him with *Princes*; so it is God that *Cuts off the Spirit of Princes*, and is *terrible to the Kings of the Earth*. It is God that *maketh the devices of the People of none effect*, and it is God that *destroyes the Counsels of Egypt*. It is God that *maketh their Nobles like Oreb, and like Zet*, and *like them that perisht at Endor*, and *became as dung for the Earth*; that is, profitable onely in their ruine, and conculcation. And so with the same unwillingnesse, that God comes to the execution, we come to the denunciation of this malediction. They, They, these inveterate, incorrigible sinners, *Quamvis centum annorum*, though God have spared them so long, yet *Quia centum annorum*, because they have employed all that time in sinne, *They shall be accursed*.

Accursing is malediction, malediction is literally but maledicence; and that is but *evill speaking*. Now all kinds of evill speaking do not

inwrap a man within the curse of this Text; For, though it be a shrewd degree of this curse of God, to be generally ill spoken of by sad, sober, and discreet, and dis-passioned, and dis-interessed *Men*, yet we are fallen into times, when men will speak ill of men, in things which they do not know, nor should not know, and out of credulity and easie beleeving of men, whom they should not beleeve; men distempered and transported with passion: So men speak evill out of passion, and out of compassion; out of humour, and out of rumour. But malediction in our Text, is an Imprecation of evil, by such men as would justly inflict it if they could, and because they cannot, they pray to God that he would, and he doth: When God seconds the Imprecations of good men, that is this curse. The Person that is curst here is *Peccator centum annorum*; an habituall, an incorrigible sinner. If you put me to assigne, *in what rank of men*, Magistrates or Subjects, rich or poore, Judges or prisoners, *All*. If you put me to assigne, for *what sinnes*, sins of *complexion* and *constitution*, sinnes of *societie* and *conversation*, sinnes of our *profession*, and *calling*, sinnes of the particular *place*, or of the whole *times*, that we live in, sins of *profit*, or sins of *pleasure*, or sins of *glory*; (for we all do some sins which are sins *merely of glory*; sins that we make no profit by, nor take much pleasure in, but do them onely out of a mis-imagined necessity, lest we should go too much lesse, and sink in the estimation of the World, if we did them not;) if I must say which of these sinnes put us under this curse, *All*; If he be *centum annorum*, Inveterate, Incorrigible, *He is accursed*. But then who curses him? God put an extraordinary spirit, and produc'd extraordinary effects from *curses*, in the mouths of his Prophets which have been since the World began. So *Elizeus* curses, and two Bears destroy fourty two persons. These curses are deposited by God, in the Scriptures, and then inflicted by the *Church*, in her ordinary jurisdiction, by *excommunications*, and other censures. But this may be but matter of *form* in the *Church*, or matter of indignation in the Prophet. Not so, but as God saith, *That the rod in Ashurs hand is his rod*, and the *sword in Babylons hand his sword*, so the curse deposited in the Scripture, and denounced by the Church, is his *curse*. For as the Prophet saith, *Non est malum*, all the evill (that is, all the *penall* ill, all plagues, all warre, all famine,) that is *done* in the World, God

doth; so all the evill that is spoken, all the curses deposited in the Scriptures, and denounced by the Church, God speaks. But be all this so; *there is* a curse deposited, denounced, seconded by God; yet, all this is but malediction, but *a speaking*, here is no *execution* spoken of: yes, there is, for as the sight of God is Heaven, and to be banisht from the sight of God, is Hell in the World to come, so the blessing of God, is Heaven, and the curse of God is Hell and damnation, even in this Life. The *Hieroglyphique* of silence, is the hand upon the mouth; If the hand of God be gone from the mouth, it is gone to strike. If it be come to an *Os Domini locutum*, that the mouth of the Lord have spoken it, it will come presently to an *Immittam manum*, That God will lay his hand upon us, in which one Phrase, all the plagues of Egypt are denounced. *Solomon* puts both *hand* and *tongue* together; *In manibus linguae*, saith he, *Death and Life are in the hand of the tongue*: Gods *Tongue* hath a *hand*; where his Sentence goeth before, the execution followeth. Nay, in the execution of the last sentence, we shall feel the Hand, before we heare the Tongue, the execution is before the sentence; It is, *Ite maledicti*, go ye accursed: First, you must *Go, go out of the presence of God*; and by that being gone, you shall know, that you are accursed; Whereas in other proceedings, the sentence denounces the execution, here the execution denounces the sentence. But be all this allowed to be thus; There is a malediction deposited in the Scriptures, denounced by the Church, ratified by God, brought into execution, yet it may be born, men doe bear it. How men do bear it, we know not; what passes between God and those men, upon whom the curse of God lieth, in their dark *horrours at midnight*, they would not have us know, because it is part of their curse, to envy God that glory. But we may consider in some part the insupportableness of that weight, if we proceed but so farre, as to accomodate to God, that which is ordinarily said of naturall things, *Corruptio optimi pessima*; when the best things change their nature, they become worst. When God, who is all sweetnesse, shall have learned fowardnesse from us, as *David* speaks; and being all rectitude, shall have learned pervernesse and crookednesse from us, as *Moses* speaks; and being all providence, shall have learned negligence from us: when God who is all Blessing, hath learned to curse of us, and being of himself spread as an universall Hony-combe over All, takes in an impres-