

**THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER, OR,
THE SOUL RISING OUT OF
THE VANITY OF TIME, INTO
THE RICHES OF ETERNITY**

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THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

TREATING OF SOME MATTERS PREPARATORY TO THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER.

THE greatest part of mankind, nay of Christians, may be said to be asleep; and that particular way of life, which takes up each man's mind, thoughts, and actions, may very well be called his particular dream. This degree of vanity is equally visible in every form and order of life. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, are

all in the same state of slumber ; only passing away a short life in a different kind of dream. But why so ? It is because man has an eternity within him, is born into this world, not for the sake of living here, not for anything this world can give him, but only to have time and place, to become either an eternal partaker of a divine life with God, or to have an hellish eternity amongst fallen angels : and therefore every man, who has not his eye, his heart, and his hands, continually governed by this two-fold eternity, may be justly said to be fast asleep, to have no awakened sensibility of himself. And a life devoted to the interests and enjoyments of this world, spent and wasted in the slavery of earthly desires, may be truly called a dream, as having all the shortness, vanity, and delusion of a dream ; only with this great difference, that when a dream is over, nothing is lost but fictions and fancies ; but

when the dream of life is ended only by death, all that eternity is lost, for which we were brought into being. Now there is no misery in this world, nothing that makes either the life or death of man to be full of calamity, but this blindness and insensibility of his state, into which he so willingly, nay obstinately, plunges himself. Everything that has the nature of evil and distress in it takes its rise from hence. Do but suppose a man to know himself; that he comes into this world on no other errand, but to rise out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity; do but suppose him to govern his inward thoughts and outward actions by this view of himself, and then to him every day has lost all its evil; prosperity and adversity have no difference, because he receives and uses them both in the same spirit; life and death are equally welcome, because equally parts of his way to eternity. For poor and

miserable as this life is, we have all of us free access to all that is great, and good, and happy ; and carry within ourselves a key to all the treasures that heaven has to bestow upon us. We starve in the midst of plenty, groan under infirmities, with the remedy in our own hand ; live and die, without knowing and feeling anything of the *One, only Good*, whilst we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality, as we know and feel the power of this world over us : for heaven is as near to our souls, as this world is to our bodies ; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our conversation in it. God, the only good of all intelligent natures, is not an absent or distant God, but is more present in and to our souls, than our own bodies ; and we are strangers to heaven, and without God in the world, for this only reason, because we are void of that spirit of prayer, which alone can, and never

fails to unite us with the *One, only Good*, and to open heaven and the kingdom of God within us. A root set in the finest soil, in the best climate, and blessed with all that sun, and air, and rain can do for it, is not in so sure a way of its growth to perfection, as every man may be, whose spirit aspires after all that which God is ready and infinitely desirous to give him. For the sun meets not the springing bud that stretches toward him with half that certainty as God, the source of all good, communicates himself to the soul that longs to partake of him.

We are all of us, by birth, the offspring of God, more nearly related to him than we are to one another; for in him we live, and move, and have our being. The first man that was brought forth from God had the breath and spirit of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost breathed into him, and so he became a living soul. Thus was our first father born

of God, descended from him, and stood in paradise in the image and likeness of God. He was the image and likeness of God, not with any regard to his outward shape or form, for no shape has any likeness to God; but he was in the image and likeness of God, because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own nature and spirit into him. And as the Deity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are always in heaven, and make heaven to be everywhere; so this spirit, breathed by them into man, brought heaven into man along with it; and so man was in heaven as well as on earth, that is, in paradise, which signifies an heavenly state, or birth of life.

Adam had all that divine nature, both as to an heavenly spirit, and heavenly body, which the angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a lord and ruler of a new world, created out of the chaos or ruins of the kingdom of fallen angels; so it was necessa-

ry that he should also have the nature of this new created world in himself, both as to its spirit and materiality. Hence it was, that he had a body taken from this new created earth, not such dead earth as we now make bricks of, but the blessed earth of paradise, that had the powers of heaven in it, out of which the tree of life itself could grow. Into the nostrils of this outward body was the breath or spirit of this world breathed; and in this spirit and body of this world did the inward celestial spirit and body of Adam dwell: it was the medium or means through which he was to have commerce with this world, become visible to its creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus stood our first father; an angel both as to body and spirit, (as he will be again after the resurrection,) yet dwelling in a body and spirit taken from this new created world; which however was as inferior to him, as subject to him, as the earth and al