

THE

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"The Lord God is a Sun and Shield"

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HEAVENLY CONTEMPLATION.

FROM BAXTER'S SAINTS' REST.

"Draw yet nearer, O my soul! with thy most fervent love. Here is matter for it to work upon, something worth thy loving. O see what beauty presents itself! Is not all the beauty in the world united here? Is not all other beauty but deformity? Dost thou now need to be persuaded to love? Here is a feast for thine eyes, and all the powers of thy soul: dost thou need entreaties to feed upon? Canst thou love a little shining earth, a walking piece of clay? and canst thou not love that God, that Christ, that glory, which are so truly and unmeasurably lovely? Thou canst love thy friend, because he loves thee; and is the love of a friend like the love of Christ? Their weeping or bleeding for thee, does not ease thee, nor stay the course of thy tears or blood; but the tears and blood that fell from thy Lord, have a sovereign, healing virtue. O my soul! if love deserves, and should beget love, what incomprehensible love is here before thee! Pour out all the store of thy affections here, and all is too little. O that it were more! O that it were many thousand times more! Let him be first served, that served thee first. Let him have the first-born and strength of thy soul, who parted with strength, and life, and love for thee. O my soul! dost thou love for excellency? Yonder is the region of light; this is the land of darkness. Yonder twinkling stars, that shining moon, and radiant sun, are all but lanterns, hung out of thy Father's house, to light thee while thou walkest in this dark world. But how little dost thou know the glory and blessedness that are within! Dost thou love for suitableness? What person more suitable than Christ? His Godhead and humanity, his fulness and freeness, his willingness and constancy, all

proclaim him thy most suitable friend. What state more suitable to thy misery, than mercy? or to thy sin and pollution, than honor and perfection? What place more suitable to thee than heaven? Does this world agree with thy desires? Hast thou not had a sufficient trial of it, or dost thou love for interest and near relation? Where hast thou better interest than in heaven, or nearer relation than there?

"Dost thou love for acquaintance and familiarity? Though thine eyes have never seen thy Lord, yet thou hast heard his voice, received his benefits, and lived in his bosom. He taught thee to know thyself and him; he opened thee that first window, through which thou sawest into heaven. Hast thou forgotten since thy heart was careless and he awakened it; hard and he softened it; stubborn and he made it yield; at peace, and he troubled it; whole and he broke it; and broken, till he healed it again? Hast thou forgotten the times when he found thee in tears; when he heard thy secret sighs and groans, and left all to come and comfort thee; when he took thee, as it were, in his arms, and asked thee, Poor soul, what ails thee? Dost thou weep, when I have wept so much? Be of good cheer; thy wounds are saving, and not deadly; it is I have made them, who mean thee no hurt; though I let out thy blood, I will not let out thy life. I remember his voice: How gently did he take me up! How carefully did he dress my wounds! Methinks I hear him still saying to me, 'Poor sinner, though thou hast dealt unkindly with me, and cast me off, yet I will not do so by thee. Though thou hast set light by me and all my mercies, yet they and myself are all thine. What wouldst thou have, that I can give thee? And what dost thou want, that I cannot give thee? If any thing I have will give thee pleasure thou shalt have it.'