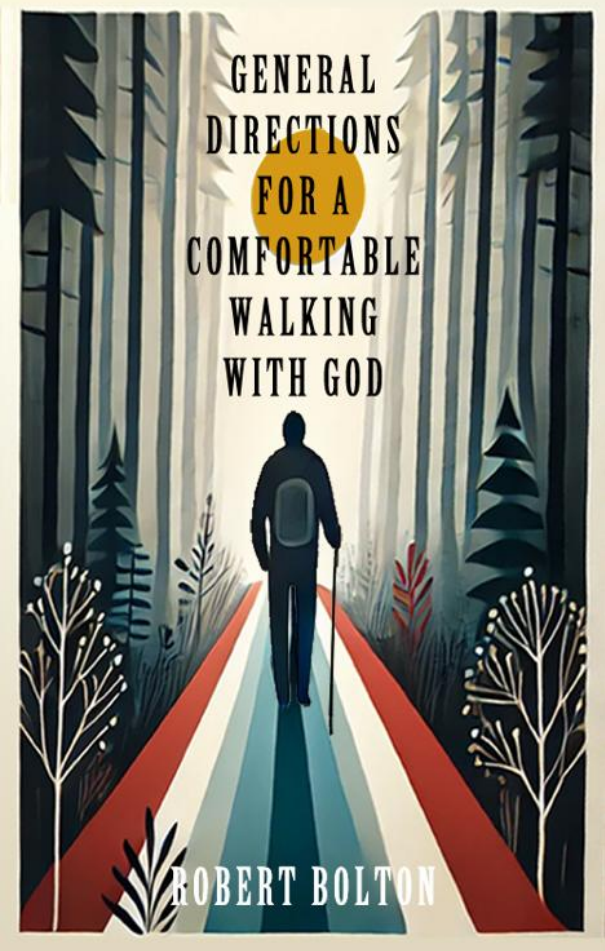
The book cover features a stylized illustration of a hiker in silhouette, walking away from the viewer down a path. The path is composed of a central blue-green strip flanked by two wide red stripes. The hiker is wearing a backpack and holding a walking stick. The background is a forest of tall, thin trees in shades of grey and blue, with some smaller plants and bushes in the foreground. A bright yellow sun is partially obscured by the text in the upper center.

**GENERAL
DIRECTIONS
FOR A
COMFORTABLE
WALKING
WITH GOD**

ROBERT BOLTON



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General Directs for a Comfortable Walking with God

Robert Bolton

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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My apologies in advance where such errors occur. Also, the symbol <H&G>, when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

Contents

PREF. – To the Right Honorable.

1. CHAP. I. – Preliminaries.

2. CHAP. II. – General Preparatives.

3. CHAP. III. – Directions Particular.

4. CHAP. IV. – Combating Natural Actions.

5. CHAP. V. – Concerning Civil Affairs.

6. CHAP. VI. – Works of Mercy, False Accusations & Earthly Mindedness.

7. CHAP. VII. – Spiritual Estate, Avoiding Two Extremes.

PREF. – To the Right Honorable.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, and Truly Noble, Edward Lord Montague of Boughton, a fruitful increase of all heavenly graces; and all watchful preparation for the Glory that shall be revealed.

Much Honored and Noble Lord;

Although the eminency of your other personal worth, great Wisdom, and noble parts, a sufficient attractive to every honest heart, by reason of the particular interest it hath in the common state of goodness; or your special bounty to myself, which ought to stir up an ingenuous mind, to apprehend any opportunity of due and deserved acknowledgement; or your public deportment in the face of our Country, so worthy, and Honorable; and managed with such true honesty, grave moderation, and nobleness of spirit, which cannot but draw from every heart truly sound to our great Lord in Heaven, and His Royal Deputy our highest Sovereign upon earth, a great deal of reverence and love; I say, though any of these severally, might exact from me, a more exact and able demonstration of the thankful devotions of my heart: yet my Lord, (and you may believe me) there is another thing

besides all these, which was the strongest, and most predominant motive to quicken me to this Duty, and Dedication; even your sincere and invincible affection to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His faithful Ministers, and most precious Ways. And this, to tell you the truth, is far the fairest, and most orient flower in the Garland of all your goodness; and incomparably above all your Greatness, were you advanced even to desert; nay, to the highest top of all earthly felicities, and mortal honor. For howsoever, the world ever beside itself in point of salvation, and stark blind in the right apprehension of Heavenly things, doth dote upon gilded miseries, stinging vanities, golden setters; and wickedly deems pursuit of purity, the height of folly: yet I can assure you in the Word of life and truth; the richest, and rarest confluence of all human happiness; the most exquisite excellency, and variety of the greatest worldly pomp and splendor, that ever the Sun saw, since the first moment of its creation, or shall look upon while it shines in Heaven, is but dust in the balance, to one grain of grace; it is but dung to an humble mind, savingly enlightened with a forecast, but of the least glimpse of that incomprehensible, endless glory which shall shortly be revealed: It is all in the true valuation, but as a vain smoke; which doth not only vanish, as it riseth, and utterly loseth itself at the highest; but also draws tears from a man's eyes; nay, at last, wrings the very heart-strings of every impenitent soul, with that extremist everlasting horror, which would burst ten thousand hearts, seriously and sensibly to think upon beforehand. It is not only vanity, but also vexation of spirit. Let worldly wisdom say what it will, and hold them melancholic, and mad, who by the help of the holy Ghost hold a constant counter-motion to the course of the world, and corruptions of the time, that they may keep a good conscience, the richest treasure, and dearest Jewel that ever the heart of man was acquainted with; who infinitely desire,

rather to be religious, then rich; to be good, then great; to enjoy the favor of God, then the sovereignty, and pleasures of all the kingdoms of the earth: yet assuredly, when all is said, and truly summed up; it is only the true fear of God's blessed Name; a zealous forwardness for his glory, goodness, and good causes; at this day, unhappily, and to the ruin of infinite souls, called by the world, pragmatism, and, Too much preciseness, which can truly beautify, and adorn both all other personal sufficiency's; and indeed sanctify and bless all public employments and services of State.

For the first: A Professor even something Popish, doth yet truly teach, that Heroical nobility is an illustrious eminency shining in a man by the heavenly infusions of supernatural grace, whereby he is made by adoption the son of God, the Spouse of Christ, the Temple of the holy Ghost; without which, all other Nobilities are nothing; not worth a button. Suppose a fair and goodly horse to the eye, as exquisitely featured, colored, paced, as that feigned by Bartas, to be managed by Cain; yet if he wanted mettle, he were worth nothing to a man of spirit. Give me the most magnificent glorious Worldling, that ever trod upon earthly mold; richly crowned with all the ornaments, and excellencies of nature, art, policy, preferment, or what heart can wish besides; yet without the life of grace to animate and ennoble them, he were to the eye of heavenly Wisdom, but as a rotten carcass stuck over with flowers, magnified dung, gilded rottenness, golden damnation. And that which is more dreadful; when the sun of his short Summers day is set, the hot gleam of transitory prosperity past, and the bitter tempestuous winters night of death approacheth; from which all the Gold and Pearl of East and West can no more deliver him, then can an handful of dust; I say, then shall be poured upon his head, that terrible shower of snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest. His soul sinks immediately in a moment

into the depth of remediless misery, and is desperately plunged forever into the bottom of the burning Lake. His body descends into the grave, as into a dungeon of rottenness and horror, arrested, as it were, by the second death, in the devils name, and at length hailed and dragged unto the terror of that great and last Day; where no creature can rescue him, no mountain cover him, from that unquenchable wrath, and never-dying Worm, which shall ever lastingly, day and night feed upon his soul and flesh. Whereas now, on the other side, that poor neglected One, who hath in truth given his name unto Christ and his gainful service, perhaps by the World most disdainfully and contemptuously trampled upon even into the dust, with the feet of cruelty and pride; at least most certainly, ever made extremely vile, and contemptible by the villainy of tongues, and cruel mocking's; yet is such an One as the World is not worthy of: in the meantime, in the meaning of the holy Ghost, a Crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, as beautiful and amiable, as the blood of Christ and his righteous robe can make him; crowned full gloriously with God's own comeliness which he hath put upon him; designed from all eternity in due time, (for so his sanctification now assures him) to wear an everlasting Crown of bliss. And when his pilgrimage is past, death is to him the daybreak of eternal brightness. Upon his last Bed, his blessed soul shall find that fresh-bleeding Fountain for sin and for uncleanness set wide open unto it, by the hand of Faith, ready now at its departure, to raze out the last sinful stain: It may confidently, in the Name of Christ cast itself into the open arms, enlarged bowels, and dearest embracement's of the Father of all mercies: It may feel the glorious presence of the sweetest Comforter, presenting unto it a foretaste of Heavenly joys: It shall have the last sweetness, and triumphant truth of all the promises of life, able to confront and confound the utmost rage, and

very Powder-plot of all the powers of darkness, made good unto it: A mighty guard of blessed Angels shall attend upon it; waiting with longing and joy to bear it triumphantly into the bosom of Abraham. His body shall go into the grave, as into a chamber of rest, and bed of Down, sweetly perfumed unto it, by the sacred body of the Son of God lying in the Grave; locked there full fast with the bars of the earth, and fenced with the omnipotent Arm of God, as a rich Jewel in a Casket of gold, until the Resurrection of the just. And then, after their joyfullest meeting, and glorious re-union, they shall both be forever filled with all those unmixed pleasures, blessed immortalities, and crowned joys, which the dwelling place of God, the glory of Heaven, and the inexhausted fountain of all bliss, Jehovah himself blessed forever, can afford. Now let the scornfullest opposite to the power of godliness, tell me in cold blood; whether that honorable wretch; or this honest man be more truly noble and happy?

For the second: So natural, saith Hooker, is the union of Religion with justice, that we may boldly deem, there is neither, where both are not. For how should they be unfeignedly just, whom Religion doth not cause to be such; or they religious, which are not found such by the proof of their just actions? If they, which employ their labor and travail about the public administration of Justice, follow it only as a Trade, with unquenchable and unconscionable thirst of gain, being not in heart persuaded that Justice is God's own Work, and themselves his Agents in the business, the sentence of right, God's own verdict, and themselves his Priests to deliver it; for maladies of justice do but serve to smother right, and that which was necessarily ordained for the common good, is through shameful abuse, made the cause of common misery. Full well did this learned man perceive, and rightly apprehend, that the purity and power of Religion alone, doth

truly honor all Honors, dignify all dignities, actuate with acceptation and life all moral virtues and endowments of art, sweeten all government, strengthen all States, settle fast all Imperial Crowns upon Princes heads: That it is no humorous conceit, but a matter of sound consequence, that all, either personal duties, or employments of State, are by so much the better performed, by how much the men are more religious, from whose abilities the same proceed: That when Heaven is made too much to stoop to Earth; Piety to Policy; Public good, to private ends; there authority is embittered, inferiors plagued, and too often, Law and Justice turned into Wormwood and rapine. He truly intimates, what a deal of hurt is done; what a world of mischief is many times wrought, insensibly and unobservedly; when a wicked wit, and wide conscience weld the sword of authority. For it is easy, and ordinary for a man so mounted, by legal sleights; putting foul businesses into fair language; and by a dissembled pretense of deeper reach, to compass his own ends; either for promotion of iniquity; or oppression of innocence: especially, since he knows himself backed with that Principle in Policy: It is not safe to question or reverse transactions of State, though tainted perhaps with some impressions of miscarriage and error: And that it is holden a Solecism in State-wisdom, and unseemly, for private innocence to contest too busily with passages of public Tribunals. These things I thus discourse, and declare unto your Lordship, to represent unto you the vanity of that honor, which is not directly and sincerely subordinate to the Honor of God: (at the best, it is but a breath, and yet not able to blow so much, as one cold blast upon ungodly great Ones, when being suddenly carried from their stately and sumptuous dwellings, they shall be cast into unquenchable flames.) To let you see the excellency, and worth of those happy ways, to which it hath pleased the Lord of Heaven, out of his special mercy, to bend

the eye of your Noble mind: and that you may know what it is alone hath had power, and the prerogative, (and shall forever, in whomsoever takes God's part) to make you, both more truly Honorable in your Self, and more faithfully serviceable to our King and State; both to cast a Diviner luster upon your personal virtues, and to make your managing of public businesses (many times most unworthily swayed awry, by that foul fiend, Faction, partiality and private ends) worthy, conscionable and just. For which, every honest eye in our country that looks upon you, blesseth you; and shall mourn most bitterly for your absence from amongst us, when you shall be gloriously gathered to your Fathers. So let all that truly love the Lord Jesus, His blessed Gospel, and Servants, be as the Sun, when he goeth forth in his might, and at last full sweetly set in the boundless Ocean of immortal bliss. In these ways of life, my Noble Lord, which in the sense and censure of Truth itself, are ways of pleasure, and paths of sweetest peace; it is the infinite desire of my heart, and drift of this Treatise I now offer into your Honors hands; that you would still advance forward, and do more nobly still. That you would improve to the utmost, the height of your excellent Understanding to a further, and more full comprehension of the Mystery of Christ; which though it be a Sealed Book, to the sharpest sight of the most piercing human wisdom; yet reveals to every truly humble, spiritual eye, the rich and Royal treasures of all true sweetness, contentment and peace. That you would hold it your greatest honor and happiness, as it is indeed, to grow still in fruitfulness in every good Work; in fervency in spirit, in purity, in Heavenly-mindedness, in precise walking, &c. with singular watchfulness, and the more punctual, and frequent search and perusal of your spiritual state; both because the depths and delusions of Satan are most intricate and infinite: and because Not many noble, &c. 1

Cor. 1:25. That you would hold on in that valiantness for the Truth, and all good causes; which ordinarily gathers vigor and puissance proportionably to the swelling fury of all adversary, either mortal, or infernal powers: Ever patiently passing by with generous magnanimity, and brave contempt, all the vile railings and contradictions of Satan's Revelers, and Popish insolency; (For vainly to affect the acclamations, and applause of worthless men: or to be dejected unmanlily with their unjust accusations and anger; are both equally ignoble, and most unworthy a man of Honor, and virtuous resolution. Yours shall be the Crown and comfort, when all Popery and profaneness shall lie buried in the dust, and dungeon of Hell. In a word, the thirsty longing of my heart, and heartiest prayer shall ever be; That you may shine every day, more and more gloriously in all personal sanctity, plantation of godliness in your own Family, and where you have anything to do; and in a holy zeal for setting forward the affairs of God, when, and wheresoever you have any power or Calling. That when the last period of your mortal abode in this Vale of tears, which draws on apace, shall present itself: You may look death in the face without dread; the grave without fear; the Lord Jesus with comfort; and Jehovah blessed forever, with everlasting Joy. Thus let all the saving blessings of our most bountiful heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost, be plentifully and forever upon your Honorable Self, and all your sweet and Noble Children.

Your Honors most truly in all services for the salvation of your Soul,
ROBERT BOLTON.

CHAP. I. – Preliminaries.

GEN. 6:8,9.

8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

9. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

In this dreadful and dismal story of the old Worlds degeneration and destruction, falling away, and final ruin, here stands in my Text a right orient and illustrious Star, shining full fair with singularity of heavenly light, spiritual goodness, and God's sincerer service, in the darkest midnight of Satan's universal reign, and amidst the horriblest hell of the strangest confusions, idolatrous corruptions, cruelties, oppressions and lust, that ever the earth bore. Noah I mean, a very precious Man, and Preacher of Righteousness, to whose Family alone, the true worship of God was confined, when all the world besides lay drowned in Idolatry and Paganism, ready to be swallowed up into an universal grave of Waters, which was already fashioned in the clouds by the angry, irresistible hand of the all-powerful God, who was now so implacably, but most justly provoked by

those rebellious and cruel generations, that He would not suffer His Spirit to strive anymore with them; but inexorably resolved to open the windows or floodgates of heaven, giving extraordinary strength of influence to the Stars, abundance to the Fountains of the great deep, commanding them to cast out the whole treasure, and heap of their waters; and taking away the retentive power from the clouds, that they might pour down immeasurably; for the burying of all living creatures which breathed in the air: Noah and his family excepted. From whence by the way, before I break into my text, take this Note.

Doct. The servants of God are men of singularity: I mean it not in respect of any fantasticalness of opinion, furiousness of zeal, or turbulency of faction, truly so called: but in respect of abstinence from sin, purity of heart, and holiness of life.

Reas. 1. God's holy Word exacts and expects from all that are new-borne, and heirs of Heaven, an excellency above ordinary, Prov. 12:26, Matth. 5:20,47. Being taken forth as the precious from the vile, Jer. 15:19, by the power of the Ministry, they must not only go beyond the highest civil perfections of the exactest moral Puritan amongst the most honest Heathens, Heb. 12:14, but also exceed the righteousness, and all the outward religious conformities of the devoutest Pharisees, whose sufficiency's, Luk. 18:11,12, many thousands in these times come short of, and yet hope to be saved: or they can in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But lest any be proudly puffed up with sense of this singularity, and excellency above his neighbor; let him know, that humility is ever one of the fairest flowers in the whole garland of his supernatural and divine worth; and that self-conceitedness would empoison even Angelical perfection.

2. They must upon necessity differ from a world of wicked men; by a sincere singularity of abstinence from the course of this world; the lusts of men; the corruptions of the times; familiarity with graceless companions; the worldling's language, profane sports; all wicked ways of thriving, rising, and growing great in the world, &c.

3. They make conscience of those duties and divine commands, which the greatest part of men, even in the noontide of the Gospel, are so far from taking to heart, that their hearts rise against them. As, to be hot in Religion, Rev. 3:16. To be zealous of good works, Tit. 2:14. To walk precisely, Ephes. 5:15. To be fervent in spirit, Rom. 12:11. To strive to enter in at the strait gate, Luke 13:24. To pluck out their right eyes; that is, to abandon their bosom delights, Matth. 5:29. To make the Sabbath a delight, Isa. 58:13. To love the Brotherhood, 1 Pet. 2:17. With a holy violence, to lay hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 11:12.

4. Experience, and examples of all ages, from the creation downward clearly prove the point. At this time, as you see, the Saints of God were all harbored under one roof, and yet not all sound there. Survey the ages afterward: The time of Abraham; who was as a brand taken out of the fire of the Chaldeans: The time of Elijah, when none appeared to that blessed man of God: The time of Isaiah, who cried, chap. 53:1, Who hath believed our report? The time of Manasseh, who built altars for all the host of Heaven, in the two Courts of the House of the Lord: The time of Antiochus, when he commanded the Sanctuary, and holy people to be polluted with Swine's-flesh, and unclean beasts to be sacrificed, the abomination of desolation to be set up upon the Altar: That darksome time, when the glorious Day-Star, Christ Jesus himself, came down from Heaven to enlighten the earth: The time of Antichrist, when all the world wondered after the Beast: Our times,

wherein, of six parts of the earth, scarce one of the least is Christian. And what a deal of Christendom is still over-grown with Popery, and other exorbitant distempers in point of Religion? And where the Truth of Christ is purely, and powerfully taught, how few give their names unto it? And of those who profess, how many are false-hearted or merely formal?

5. Me thinks worldly wisdom should rather wonder that any one is won unto God; then cry out, and complain; Is it possible, there should be so few? Since all the powers of darkness, and every devil in hell oppose might and main the plantation of grace in any soul: since there are more snares upon earth, to keep us still in the invisible chains of darkness and sin, then there are stars in heaven: since every inch, every little artery of our bodies, if it could, would swell with hellish venom to the bigness of the greatest Goliath, the mightiest Giant, that it might make resistance to the sanctifying work of the holy Ghost: since our souls naturally would rather die, and put off their immortality and everlasting being, then put on the Lord Jesus: In a word, since the new creation of a man is holden a greater work of wonder, then the creation of the world.

6. Lastly, let us set aside in any Country, City, Town, Family: First, all Atheists, Papists, and distempered exorbitants, from the blessed Truth of doctrine taught in our Church: Secondly, all Whoremongers, Drunkards, Swearers, Liars, Revelers, Worldlings, Usurers, and fellows of such infamous rank: Thirdly, all merely civil men, who come short of Cato, Fabricius, and other honest Heathens, and wanting holiness, shall never see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. Fourthly, all gross Hypocrites, whose outsides are painted with superficial flourishes of holiness and honesty, but their inward parts filled with rottenness and lust; who have their hands in godly exercises, when their hearts are in hell. Fifthly, all formal Hypocrites, who

are deluded in point of Salvation, as were the foolish Virgins, and that proud Pharisee, Luk. 18:11. Sixthly, all final back-sliders, of which some turn sensual Epicures, and plunge themselves into worldly pleasures, with far more rage and greediness, by reason of former restraint by a temporary profession; others become scurrile deriders of the holy way; some, bloody goads in the sides of those with whom they have formerly walked into the house of God, as friends. Seventhly, all unsound Professors for the present, of which you would little think, what a number there is: I say, let these and all other strangers to the purity and power of godliness be set apart, and tell me how many true-hearted Nathanael's we are like to find?

Uses. 1. Try then the truth of thy spiritual state by this mark of a sober and sincere singularity. If thou still holdest correspondence with the world, and conformity to the fashions thereof; if still thou swimmest down the current of the times, and shiftest thy sails to the sitting of every Wind; if thine heart hanker still after the tasteless fooleries of good-fellowship, and follow the multitude to do ill; if thou be carried with the swinge and sway of the place where thou livest, to uphold by a boisterous combination, lewdness and vanity, to profane the Lord's day, to scorn Profession, oppose the Ministry, and walk in the broad Way; In a word, if thou doest as the most do; thou art utterly undone forever. But if with a merciful violence thou be pulled out of the world, by the power of the Word, and happily weaned from the sensual, insensible poison of all bitter-sweet pleasures; and fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness; If by standing on God's side, and hatred of all false ways, thou art become the Drunkards song, as David was, and a by-word amongst the sons of Belial, as was Job; If the world lower and look sour upon thee for thy looking towards Heaven, and thy good-fellow companions abandon Thee, as too precise; If thy life be not like other men's,

and thy ways of another fashion, as the Epicures of those times charged the righteous man, when the book of Wisdom was written; In a word, if thou walkest in the narrow way, and be one of that little flock, which lives amongst Wolves, and therefore must needs be little; so that by all the Leopards, Lions, and Bears about thee, I mean all sorts of unregenerate men, thou art hunted for thy holiness, as a Partridge on the mountains, at least by the poison and persecution of the tongue; I say, then thou art certainly in the hie way to Heaven.

2. If the Saints of God be men of singularity, in the sense I have said; then away with those base, and brainless cavils, against those who are wise unto salvation: What? Are you wiser than your forefathers? Then all the Town? Then such and such learned men? Then your own Parents? Are you wiser than your Head, may the Husband say, &c. Nay further, to Noah it might have been said by the wretches of those times, Art thou wiser than all the world? (He out of the height of his heroical resolution, easily endured and digested the affronts and indignities of this kind from millions of men.) But take thou these spiteful taunts, and bind them in the meantime, as a Crown unto thee, and advance forward in thine holy singularity with all sweet content and undauntedness of spirit, towards that glorious immortal Crown above; and let those miserable men, whose eyes are hood-winked by Satan, and so blinded with earthly dust, that they cannot possibly discern the invisible excellencies and true nobleness of the neglected Saints, follow the folly of their worldly wisdom, and sway of the greater part, to endless woe; and then give losers leave to talk.

3. Let everyone, who in sincerity of heart seeks to be saved, ever hold it a special happiness, and his highest honor, to be singled out from the universal pestilent contagion of common profaneness, and the sinful

courses of the greatest part; and to be censured as singular in that respect. Neither is this a singular thing, that I now suggest; but it hath been the portion of the Saints in all ages, to be trod upon with the feet of imperious contempt, as a number of odd despised underlings, whereas indeed they are God's Jewels, and the only excellent upon earth. Behold, saith Isaiah, chap. 8:18. I and the Children whom the Lord hath given me, and for signs and wonders in Israel, I am as a monster unto many, saith David, Psal. 71:7. I am in derision daily, everyone mocketh me, saith Jeremiah, chap. 20:7. We are made, saith Paul, a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men, 1 Cor. 4:9. We are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things, v. 13. In Austin's time, those that made conscience of their ways, durst not plunge into the corruptions of the times, and play the good fellows, were scornfully pointed at, not only by Pagans, but even by unreformed Professors, Professors at large, as we call them, as fellows that affected a preciseness and purity above ordinary and others: They would thus insult and scoffingly fly in the face of such an holy one: You are a great man, sure, you are a just man, you are an Elias, you are a Peter, you come from Heaven, &c. In after-times, if a man were but merely civil, ingenuous, chaste, temperate, he was made a by-word and laughing stock to those about him. They presently said; He was proud, singular, beside himself, Hypocrite, &c. Thus it was, is at this time, and will be to the worlds end, that every stigmatical Whoremonger, beastly Drunkard, ignorant Lozell, scoffing Ishmael, and Self-guilty wretch will have a bitter gird, a dry blow, as they say, a scurrile gibe, to throw like the Mad-man's fire-brand into the face of God's people, as though they were a company of odd humorous fellows, and a contemptible generation. This, I say, ever was, and ever will be the world's opinion of the ways of God. The children of darkness ever

harbor such conceits, and peremptorily pass such censures upon the children of light.

It is strange! Men are content to be singular in anything, save in the service of God, and salvation of their souls. They desire, and labor too, to be singularly rich, and the wealthiest in a Town; to be singularly proud, and in fashion by themselves; to be the strongest in the company to pour in strong drink. They would with all their hearts be in honor alone, and adored above others. They would dwell alone, and not suffer a poor man's house to be within sight. They affect singularity in wit, learning, wisdom, valor, worldly reputation, and in all other earthly precedencies; but they can by no means endure aloneness, and singularity in zeal, and the Lord's service. In matters of Religion, they are resolved to do as the most do, though in so doing they certainly damn their own souls, Matth. 7:13. Basest cowardliness, and fearfulness fit for such a doom! Rev. 21:8. They are afraid of taking God's part too much; of fighting too valiantly under the Colors of Christ; of being too busy about the salvation of their souls; lest they should be accounted too precise, fellows of an odd humor, and engrossers of more grace than ordinary. It is one of Satan's dreadful depths, as wide as hell, and brim-full with the blood of infinite souls: To make men ambitious, and covetous of singularity in all other things; but in godliness, and God's services; not to suffer it in themselves, and to persecute it in others.

Now in this Story of Noah, so highly honored with singularity of freedom from the sinful contagion of those desperate times, and happily exempted from that most general, and greatest Judgment upon earth that ever the Sun saw, a universal drowning; gloriously mounting up upon the wings of

salvation and safety, both of soul and body, when a world of Giant-like Rebels sunk to the bottom of that new Sea, as a stone, or lead, I consider,

1. The cause of such a singular blessed preservation; which was the free grace and favor of God: But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, ver. 8.

2. The renown, and honor of Noah's name: in that he stands here as the Father of the new world, holy seed, and progenitors of Jesus Christ: These are the generations of Noah, ver. 9.

3. The description of Noah's 1. Personal goodness: 2. Preservation: 3. Posterity. These two latter follow. His personal description stands in the end of ver. 9. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. Where we find him honored with three noble Attributes, which make up the Character of a complete Christian: 1. Honesty. 2. Uprightness. 3. Piety. And they receive much excellency and luster from a circumstance of time: In his generations: which were many and mainly corrupt.

Without any further unfolding my Texts coherence and dependence upon either precedent or following parts, (for Historical passages are plainer, and do not ever exact the length and labor of such an exact resolution, as other Scriptures do,) I collect from the first point, wherein I find God's free grace to be the prime and principal cause of Noah's preservation, this Note:

Doct. The free grace and favor of God is the first mover and fountain of all our good. Consider for this purpose such places as these, Jer. 31:3, Hos. 14:4, Deut. 7:7,8, Rom. 9:11-13, John. 3:16, Jos. 24:2,3, Ephes. 1:5.

And it must needs be so. For it is utterly impossible that any finite cause, created power, or anything out of Himself, should primarily move and incline the eternal, immutable, uncreated, omnipotent will of God. The true

original and prime motive of all gracious, bountiful expressions and effusions of love upon His Elect, is His εὐδοκία. His *merum beneplacitum*: The good pleasure of His will. And therefore to hold, that election to life is made upon foresight of faith, good works, the right use of free-will, or any created motive, is not only false, and wicked; but also an ignorant and absurd Tenet. To say no more at this time, it robs God of his All-sufficiency, making Him go out of Himself, looking to this or that in the creature, upon which His will may be determined to elect. The School-men though otherwise a rotten generation of Divines, yet are right in this.

1. That distinction which I learn from my Master, in his heavenly Sermons published since his death, doth lead unto aright, and truly enlighten this Head-spring of all our good. 1. Some actions of God's love unto us, saith he, are so in Christ, that they are wholly suspended on Him, and His merits are the only procuring cause of them: For example, Forgiveness of sins, is an action of God's love unto us, and yet this wholly depends upon Christ, and his merits; so that His precious Blood must either procure this mercy for us from God, else they will never be forgiven; and this, and the like love of God, is both in Christ, and for Christ. 2. There are some other actions of God's love, which arise merely and only out of the absolute will of God, without any concurrence of Christ's merits; As the eternal purpose of God, whereby He hath determined to choose some men to salvation; this is an action of God's love merely rising out of His absolute will, without Christ's merits. For Christ is a Mediator, and all his merits are the effects of his love, not the cause of it. And yet this love, though it be not for Christ, yet is it in Christ, Ephes. 3:11. According to the eternal purpose, which he wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord: that is, in regard of the execution of it; for even this eternal purpose, and all the actions of God's

love, which arise from his absolute Will, are effected, and brought to pass in and through Christ.

3. We may take an estimate of the absolute, and infinite frankness of this inconceivable love of God to his, which reacheth from everlasting, to everlasting, by looking upon that goodly, fair, sweet, amiable creature described, Ezek. 16. In the beginning of the Chapter, she lies most filthy and foul, tumbling in her own blood, pitied by no eye, abhorred of all; which loathsomeness should rather have begot loathing, then love: aversion and hate, then affection, and liking: yet God Himself doth there profess, out of a melting pang, and over-flowing abundance of His free grace, that, that time was unto Him the time of love: He spread his skirt over her, and covered her nakedness. In a word; after she was dressed, and adorned with God's most skillful merciful hand, she became a most lovely thing: First, washed with water, cleansed from blood, anointed with oil; then clothed with broidered work, shod with Badgers skin, girded about with fine linen, covered with silk, decked with ornaments of silver and gold; with bracelets upon her hands, a chain on her neck, a jewel on her forehead, earrings in her ears, and a beautiful Crown upon her head; fed with fine flower, honey and oil; so that she became exceeding beautiful, and renowned through the whole World, for her perfect comeliness, even mine own comeliness, which I put upon her, saith the Lord God.

Uses. 1. All praise then is due unto Jehovah, the Author of all our good, the Fountain of all our bliss, the Wellspring of immortality and life, whereby we live, and move, and have our being; our natural being, the being of our outward state; our gracious being, the everlastingness of our glorious state. Were the holiest heart upon earth enlarged, to the vast comprehension of this great Worlds wideness; nay, made capable of all the

glorious and magnificent Halleluiahs, and hearty praises offered to Jehovah, both by all the militant, and Triumphant Church; yet would it come infinitely short of sufficiently magnifying, admiring, and adoring the inexplicable mystery, and bottomless depth of this free, independent mercy, and love of God, the Fountain, and first Mover of all our good! We may, and are bound, to bless God for all the means, instruments, and second causes, whereby it pleaseth God to confer, and convey good things unto us: but we must rest principally, with lowliest thoughts of most humble and heartiest praisefulness, at the Well-head of all our welfare, Jehovah, blessed forever. We receive a great deal of comfort, and refreshment from the Moon and Stars; but we must chiefly thank the Sun: from the greater Rivers also; but the main Sea is the Fountain. Angels, Ministers, and Men may pleasure us; but Jehovah is the principal. Let us then imitate those Lights of Heaven, and Rivers of the Earth; do all the good we can with those good things God hath given us by his instruments; and then reflect back towards, and return all the glory and praise unto the Sun of righteousness, and Sea of our salvation. The beams of the Moon and Stars return as far-back to glorify the face of the Sun, which gave them their beauty, as they can possibly, until they be reflected, or determine by necessary expiration, the Sun's exclamatory power being finite: Let us semblably ever send back to God's own glorious Self, the honor of all His gifts, by a fruitful improvement of them, in setting forth His glory, and by continual fervent ejaculations of praise, to the utmost possibility of our gracious hearts.

And here I cannot hold, but must needs most justly complain of the hateful, intolerable unthankfulness of us in this Kingdom, the happiest people under the Cope of Heaven, had we hearts enlarged to conceive aright of God's extraordinary love, and such miraculous mercies, as never Nation

enjoyed! Walk over the World: Peruse the whole face of the Earth, from East to West, from North to South, which is above one and twenty thousand miles about both ways; and from one side of Heaven to another; thou shalt not find such another enlightened Goshen, as this Island, wherein we dwell. Of six parts of the Earth, five are not Christian; and in Christendom, what other part is so free from the reign of Popery, the rage of Schism, or the destroying Sword? Or where besides doth the Gospel shine with such glory, truth and peace? Or in what nook of the World are there so many faithful Souls, who cry unto God day and night, against the abominations of the times; for the preservation of the Gospel; that God's Name may be gloriously hallowed, His Kingdom come, His will be done in every place, and themselves serve him with truth of heart? And yet we are too ready, if we have not the height of our desires, and our wills to the full, instead of patience, tears, and prayers, which best become the Saints; to embitter all other blessings, and to discover most horrible unthankfulness for them, by repining, grumbling, and discontent; I am sure, by not rejoicing (as we ought) in every good thing, which the Lord our God hath given unto us; and by not improving the extraordinariness of His mercies, to our more glorious service of Him, and more humbly and precisely walking before Him. Give me leave therefore in short, to revive and refresh your memories, with representation of some general heads only of those innumerable special favors, with which God's merciful hand hath crowned this Kingdom, for the stirring up, and enlarging our hearts, to the entertainment and exercise of this most necessary, and most neglected duty of praising Jehovah. And here, we of this Nation may a great deal more justly, and rightly say, then the French Chronicler, in the Preface to his Story, That we have lived in a time of Miracles: our Posterity will hardly believe the wonders done in our days.

Was it not a miraculous mercy, that such a glorious noon tide of the Gospel, as we have enjoyed all our life long, should spring out of the darkest midnight of damned Popery, which unhappily seized upon the face of this Kingdom, in the time of Queen Marie; especially watched extraordinarily, and most strongly guarded by all the policy of hell, and power of the Pope? That the blood of those blessed Martyrs should bring forth since, such a world of God's sincere worship, and so many thousands of gracious Souls, who are already crowned with everlasting bliss? That Queen Elizabeth, that matchless Princess, and Pearl of the World, should in those fiery times be preserved in safety, as a sweet harmless Lamb, amidst so many merciless Romish Wolves, who implacably thirsted for her precious life? Was it not a wonder, that the sacred hand of that self-same crowned blessed Lady, next under God's Almighty One, should in despite of all the Powers of Darkness, and Popish rage, raise our true Religion, as it were by miracle from the dead, a thing which the World so little hoped to see; that even they, which beheld it done, scarcely believed their own senses at the first beholding? That afterward, the Silver line of her much-honored life should be hid in the endless maze of God's bottomless mercies, from the fierce assaults of so many Popish Bulls, such a prodigious variety of murderous complotments against her sacred Person; and all those desperate Assassins of Rome, who all her life long hunted full greedily after her Virgin blood? And was not our deliverance in 88' a Miracle, when the Sea fought for us, and her proud waves enlarged themselves, to swallow up quick their prouder burden? There was a day, as many of us may remember, which the Papists called, The long-looked-for Day; the Day which should pay for all: They meant the Day, when Queen Elizabeth should die. About which, their false prophets were so confident and hopeful, that they expected upon the blood of that

Day, to have built their Idolatrous Babel again: For they would needs foretell, that it would be a bloody Day. By the uncertainty of the next Heir (said one of them in the late Queens days) our Country is in the most dreadful, and desperate case; in the greatest misery, and most dangerous terms, that ever it was since, or before the Conquest; and far worse than any Country of Christendom, by the certainty of most bloody, civil, and foreign wars: all our wealth and felicity whatsoever, depending upon a few uncertain days of Queen Elizabeth's life. Clouds of blood (saith another) hang in the Air, which at the death of Queen Elizabeth will dissolve, and rain down upon England, which then is expected as a prey to the ambition of neighbor-Nations. I am sure, the false prophet spake to this sense. And what comes of all this, when the Day came? God, even wrought a miracle of mercy for the comfort of this Kingdom, and further confusion of such tellers, and foretellers of lies: For the Sun set, and no night followed: the same merciful hand at the same time crowned Queen Elizabeth with immortal glory, and set the earthly Crown of this Kingdom upon King James his head, without sheading so much, as one drop of blood. And was it not a miraculous mercy to have such a King, after such a Queen? Who hath already, next under that mighty God, by whom Kings reign, continued the Gospel unto us, and preserved us from the destroying Sword now full twenty years: And what do you think, were twenty years Peace, and the enjoyment of the Gospel, worth, were it to be bought? Who hath ennobled this Kingdom forever, by his excellent Writings, in the cause of Religion against Antichrist, which would have created a great deal of honor to a private man, minding nothing else: How illustrious then do they make our King? The child unborn will bless King James, for his premonition to all the Princes, and free States of Christendom; and that Royal Remonstrance,

against the rotten, and pestilent Oration of the French Cardinal, to the utter, and triumphant overthrow of it; penned in that style, that none can possibly reach, but a learned King: his Golden pen hath given such a blow to that beast of Rome, that he will never be able to stand upon his four legs again: he hath shot out of his Royal bow such keen arrows, taken out of the quiver of God's Book, which will hang in the sides of that scarlet Whore, and make her lame as long as she lives. Did he not seal us an Instrument of his hand, as it were, to testify his invincible cleaving to the Truth, which he hath so excellently, and unanswerably defended with his Pen, the same day he gave the Noble Princess, a second Elizabeth, to the Palatine? Hath he not most happily and seasonably stopped the hasty torrent of the Arminian Sect, and the domineering rage of bloody Duels, &c? And was not the discovery and deliverance from the Powder-plot, that great astonishment of Men and Angels, one of the most unparalleled and merciful Miracles, that ever the Church of God tasted? Is it not admirable in the eyes of all Christendom, that the only Daughter of our King, unworthily hunted up and down like a Partridge in the Mountains, should with such Heroical height of spirit pass thorough so many insupportable dangers, difficulties, and indignities, impossible to be forced upon Ladies by generous spirits, and as impossible to be borne and overcome, but by an invincible spirit; and that She and all her Royal little Ones should be still safe in the golden Cabinet of God's sweetest providence? And to crown all with a wonder of greatest astonishment, do not we all, that are the Kings faithfulest Subjects, almost fear still, lest we be in a dream, that Prince Charles, the Flower of Christendom, should return home so! To say no more: Away then with all sour, melancholic, causeless, sinful discontent. And, Praise ye the Lord, sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of the

Saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: He will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the Saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. In a word, let us of this Island, as we have just cause, above all the Nations of the earth, and above all Ages of the Church, from the very first creation of it, praise Jehovah most heartily, infinitely, and forever.

2. Never hit any in the teeth with deformity of body, dullness of conceit, weakness of wit, poorness in outward state, baseness of birth, &c. For who makes thee to differ from another? Either,

In natural gifts, as comeliness of body, beauty, feature, stature, wit, strength, &c. See Job 10:10,11, Psal. 139:13-15.

In civil endowments, or any artificial skill; until it come even unto matters of Husbandry: See Isaiah 28:26.

In outward things, see Psalm. 127. More particularly, in preferment, and promotion, see Psal. 75:6,7. In children, 1 Sam. 1:27, Psal. 127:3. In a good wife, see Prov. 19:14.

In spiritual things, see Ezek. 16. In anything thou canst name. We are all framed of the same mold, hewed out of the same Rock, made as it were, of the same cloth, the shears, as they say, only going between; it is therefore only the free love and grace of God, which makes all the difference.

Whereupon, it was an excellent speech of the last French King, as his Chronicler reports: When I was borne, there were a thousand other souls more borne: what have I done unto God, more then they? It is his mere grace and mercy, which doth often bind me more unto his justice: for the faults of great men are never small.

Let none then, I say, overlook, disdain, or brow-beat their brethren, by reason of any extraordinariness of gifts, eminency of parts, singularity of God's special favor, or indulgence towards him in any good thing, which he denies to others. Especially, thyself being vouchsafed the mercy of conversion; never insolently and imperiously insult over those poor souls, who are beside themselves in matter of salvation, who like miserable drudges, damn themselves in the Devils slavery, and suffer their corrupt nature to carry them to any villainy, lust, or lewd course. Alas! Our hearts should bleed within us, to behold so many about us, to imbrue their cruel hands in the blood of their own souls, by their ignorance, worldliness, drunkenness, lust, lying, scoffing at profession, hating to be reformed, &c. What heart, except it be hewed out of the hardest rock, or hath sucked the breasts of merciless Tigers, but would yearn, and weep, to see a man made of the same mold with himself, willfully, as it were, against the Ministry of the Word, a thousand warnings, and God's many compassionate invitations, to cast himself body and soul into the endless, easeless, and remediless miseries of Hell? And the rather should we pity, and pray for such a one, who follows the swing of his own heart, to his own everlasting perdition, because, as I said before, there went but the shears between the matter whereof we were all made; only the free mercy, goodness and grace of God makes the difference. If he should give us over to the unbridled current of our corrupt nature, we might be as bad, and run riot into a world of wickedness, as well as he: if the same God visit him in mercy, he might become every way as good or better, than we.

3. If the free love of God, be the fountain of all our good; away then with that feigned fore-sight of faith, right use of free-will, good works, which should move God to elect before all eternity; and that Luciferian self-

conceit of present merit, fit monstrous brood of that Beast of Rome, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God. For works meritorious fore-seen, are equally opposite to Grace, as works meritorious really existing. Here you must call to mind those eight considerations, which I opposed against that wicked Tenet of Merit, which doth justly merit never to taste of God's free mercy.

From the second point in these words; [These are the generations of Noah] whereas the fame and memorial of all the Families upon Earth besides, lay buried and rotting in the gulf of everlasting oblivion, as their bodies in the universal grave of Waters; the family of Noah, a righteous and holy man, is not only preserved in safety from the general Deluge; but his generations registered and renowned in the Book of God, and conveyed along towards the Lord Jesus, as his Progenitors and precedent Royal Line; I observe this point:

Doct. Personal goodness is a good means to bring safety, honor, and many comfortable blessings upon posterity: see Deut. 5:29, Exod. 20:6, Psal. 37:26, Prov. 20:7, & 11:21, Psal. 112:1,3, Act. 2:39.

Reas. 1. Parents professing Religion in truth, make conscience of praying for their children, before they have them, as did Isaac, Hannah: When they are quick in the womb, as did Rebekah: When they are borne, as did Zachariah: In the whole course of their life, as did Job: At their death, as did Isaac. And prayers, we know, are for the purchasing of all favor at the hands of God, either for ourselves, or others, the most undoubted sovereign means we can possibly use.

2. Godly Parents do infinitely more desire to see the true fear of God planted in their children's hearts, then, if it were possible, the Imperial Diadem of the whole Earth set upon their heads. And therefore their

principal care is, and the Crown of their greatest joy would be, by good example, religious education, daily instruction, loving admonitions, seasonable reproofs, restraint from wicked company, the corruptions of the times, &c. by all dearest means, and utmost endeavors, to leave them gracious, when they go out of this world. And Godliness, saith Paul, hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It gives right and full interest to all the true honor, blessings and comforts which are to be had in Heaven, or in Earth.

3. Children are ordinarily apt, out of a kindly instinct of natural lovingness, from many and strongest motives, to imitate, and follow their Parents, either in baseness, or better carriage, to Heaven, or Hell.

4. A father that truly fears God, dare not for his heart heap up riches, or purchase high rooms for his children, by wrong-doing, or any wicked ways of getting; whereupon, both he and his fare far the better, and happily decline the flaming edge of those many fearful curses denounced in God's Book, against all unconscionable dealers. Such as that, Eccl. 5:13,14. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travel, and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. And Hab. 2:9,10. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on hie, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul.

Uses. 1. Wouldest thou then have thy little babes thou lovest so dearly, blessed upon earth, truly noble, God's favorites, meet thee in heaven? Be holy thy Self. Men are very careful and curious to have their seed-corn, and breed of cattle choice, and generous; and will they not endeavor to nurture,

manage, and conduct the immortal souls of their children with grace, by godly education, to the highest advancement of which those noble natures are capable, everlasting bliss, fruition of all heavenly joys, world without end?

2. This may also serve to reprove, and correct those covetous Bedlams, that labor more to have their children great, than good; rich, than religious. It is a madness of that kind, which wanteth terms to express it: That a Man should go to Hell himself, and fit his children to follow him, in seeking to establish his house, and raise his posterity, by Sacrilege, Simony, Bribery, Usury, Oppression, Depopulation, or any other course of cruelty, and wrong. For so they lay their foundation in fire-works, which is able to blow up themselves and their posterity, body and soul, root and branch.

3. Let this fill the heart of the dying Christian with sweetest peace. For whereas the bloody knife of profane men's unconscionable and cruel negligence in training up their children religiously, doth stick full deep in their souls; and leaving this life, they bequeath unto them the curse of God, together with their ill-gotten goods: he haply finds his conscience, by reason of his former thirsty desire and sincere endeavor to do his children good spiritually, freed from the horror of such blood-guiltiness, and leaves them to that comfortable outward estate, which no injury or usury hath empoisoned, and to that never-failing providence of our heavenly Father, which then is wont to work most graciously, and bountifully for us, when we, renouncing the arm of flesh, the favor of man, riches of iniquity, and all such broken staves of reed, depend most upon it. If we will needs be our own carvers for things of this life, either by right or wrong, fraud or fair dealing, all is one, so that we may thrive and grow great in the world; then are we justly cast off from all merciful care over us, and exposed to ruin and

curse. But if we rest sincerely for ourselves and ours upon the all-powerful Providence, it will never fail, nor forsake us, but ever exercise, and improve its sweetness and wisdom, for our true and everlasting good.

In the third Point, a description of Noah's spiritual state, which is the complete Character of a true Christian; consisting of three Attributes: 1. Justness. 2. Sincerity. 3. Piety. I collect from the first this note:

Doct. Every truly religious Man, is also a righteous, and true-dealing man. From the second, this:

Doct. Sincerity is the sinew, and Touch-stone of true Christianity.

But these two, I have so often pressed in the course of my Ministry, that I will pass by them at this time.

Look what kind of honesty to men that is, which is not accompanied with Religion towards God; the same is that Religion towards God, which is not attended with honesty to men. Unhonest religion, irreligious honesty, insincere religion and honesty, are all in one predicament, as they say, and all out of the right path. If thou have respect only to the commandments of the first Table, and outward performance of religious services; but neglect duties of the second, and conscionable carriage to thy brethren; Thou art but a Pharisee, and formal Professor: If thou dealest justly with thy neighbor, and yet be a stranger to the mystery of godliness, canst not pray, sanctify the Lord's Day, submit to a sincere and searching Ministry, &c. which the first Table enjoins; Thou art but a mere civil man: If thou put on a flourish, and outward face only, of obedience and conformity to both, and yet be true-hearted in neither, as did the Pharisees, Matth. 23:14,23, thou art but a gross Hypocrite. Bear thyself holily towards God, honestly towards Man, and true-heartedly towards both, or thou art no Body in Christ's Kingdom, but still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. Put on righteousness,

and true holiness in this life, or thou shalt never put on a Crown of glory in the life to come.

[In His generations] which were many, and mainly corrupt. In that then Noah stood out, and stuck unto God thorough so many ages; and against so wicked a world; we may learn,

Doct. That constancy is ever an inseparable Attendant upon true Christianity. But because a double constancy is here implied: 1. One in respect of continuance of time: 2. Another in respect of opposition to the corruptions of the times; I may observe two points.

Doct. 1. Grace once truly rooted in the heart, can never be removed. See for this purpose, Rom. 11:29. Matth. 24:24, 1 John. 2:19,27, John. 10:28, Rom. 8:35, Luk. 22:32, 2 Cor. 1:21,22, Ephes. 4:30, &c.

Reasons may be taken, from,

1. The dearness, strength, constancy, inviolableness of God the Fathers love unto His Children. It is dearer then a Mothers to her sweetest Babe, Isa. 49:15. It is stronger than the mountains, Isa. 54:10. It is as constant as the courses of the Sun and Moon and Stars; of the day and of the night, Jer. 31:35,36, and 33:20,21. It is as sure, as God Himself, Psal. 89:35, &c.

2. Christ's triumphant session and intercession at His Fathers right hand. Which may forever, with sweetest peace, and freedom from slavish trembling, assure us of our rootedness in Christ, constancy in grace, and everlasting abode with him in the other World. He that will rent us from Christ's mystical Body, being once implanted into Him by a lively fruitful Faith, and blessedly knit unto Him by His Spirit, as fast as the sinews of His precious Body are knit unto His bones, His flesh to his sinews, and his skin to His flesh; must pull Him out of heaven, and remove Him from the right hand of His Father. What so furious or infernal power can or dare lay a

finger on us in this kind! He hath taken the poisoning power out of everything, that should hurt us, or hale us back to hell. He hath conquered, captivated, carried in triumph, and chained up forever all the enemies of our souls, and enviers of our salvation. They may exercise us in the mean time for our good; but they shall never be able to execute their malicious wills, or any mortal hurt upon us, either here, or in the next life.

3. The irrevocable obsignation of the blessed Spirit, Eph. 1:13,14, and 4:30. And who or what, can or dare, reverse the Deede, or break up the Seal of the holy Ghost?

Here then, as you see, the blessed Trinity is the immovable ground of our going on in grace.

4. The lasting and immortal power of the Word, once rooted in a good and honest heart, Luke 8:15, 1 Pet. 1:23.

5. The certainty and sweetness of promises to this purpose, Jer. 32:39,40, Zech. 10:12, John. 8:12, 2 Sam. 7:14,15, Psal. 89:31, &c.

6. The force and might of Faith, 1 Pet. 1:2-5.

7. The efficacy of Christ's Prayer, Luk. 22:32, John. 17:15,20, Rom. 8:34.

8. The durable vigor of saving graces, John. 4:14. Rom. 11:29.

9. The inability, nay, impossibility of all causes, or creatures to pluck out of God's hand, John. 10:29, or to draw any of His to a total or final falling away.

1. It is not the Devil himself can do it, 1 John 5:18.

2. It is not the world, 1 John. 5:4, John. 16:33.

3. It is not the concurrent fury, and united forces of all the powers of darkness, Matth. 16:18.

4. It is not sin, 2 Sam. 7:14,15, Psal. 89:31, &c.

5. It is not weakness of Faith, and other graces, Matth. 12:20, Isa. 42:3.

6. It is not the imposture of false prophets, Matth. 24:24.

7. It is no creature, or created power, Rom. 8:38,39.

Uses. 1. This Point thus confirmed, doth confound that forlorn Tenet of the Popish Doctors, which tells us that a justified and sanctified Man may fall finally and totally from grace. In which I have heretofore upon other occasion in your-hearing, punctually refuted those which I conceived Bellarmine's best Arguments. I will not then trouble you now with his Sophistry again.

2. This sweet and precious Truth may crown the hearts of all those that are truly Christ's, with joy unspeakable and glorious. Let new Converts and Babes in Christ, who are wont to be very fearful and much troubled, lest they should not hold out, because upon their first entrance into the ways of Christianity, they are cunningly and concurrently encountered with so many oppositions: From the Devil, which then rageth extraordinarily: From the World, which then tendereth more and more alluring baits: From the Flesh, which naturally is very impatient of any spiritual snaffle: From carnal Friends, who cannot endure their forwardness: From their old Companions, who cry out, They are turning Puritans: From the Times, which lower and look four upon their zeal: Sometimes from the Father which begat them; from the Mother which gave them suck; from the Wife which lies in their bosom; from a world of enemies to grace: I say, in such a case let them grasp in the arms of their Faith, the proofs and promises in the present Point, and ride on, because of the Word of Truth. Let them sweetly, with full assurance, and unconquerable resolution, repose upon that everlasting encouragement, for the finishing of their spiritual building, which Zerubbabel received from the mouth of God Himself, for success of the material, a Type of this: Not by might and power, but by my Spirit, saith the

Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shouting's, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

And that they may more comfortably and constantly go on, let them cast their eyes betime upon these and the like cautions, at their very first giving their names unto Christ.

1. Propose such interrogatories as these to thine own heart: Art thou content to abandon thy bosom sin; the sensual froth of former pleasures, hereafter to delight in God, as thy chiefest joy? Canst thou take up thy cross, and follow Christ His Truth and holy track, amidst the many by-paths that lead to hell, and different opinions of multitudes of men? Art thou willing to suffer adversity, disgrace, and discountenance with the righteous, and contemned godly Ones? Canst thou endure to have things laid unto thy charge, thou never didst, thoughtest, or dreamdst on? To become the Drunkards song; a By-word to those that are viler than the earth; music at the feasts of those that sit in the gate, &c? In a word, for Christ's sake to deny thyself, thy worldly wisdom, natural wit, carnal friends, old companions, pleasures, profits, preferments, ease, excellency of learning, acceptance with the world, outward state, liberty, life, or what else thou canst name dearest unto flesh and blood? If thine heart answer not affirmatively, (I mean, out of the resolution of a well-advised regenerate judgment; for I know, the flesh will grumble and reclaim:) thou wilt certainly fall away, or end in formality.

2. Look to thy repentance; that it be sincere, universal, constant; from the heart-root, for all known sins, to thy dying day. 1. If some worldly cross be the continued principal motive: 2. Or the humor of melancholy: 3. If it be confusedly only for sin, and in general: 4. Or for someone special notorious

sin only: 5. Or for some lesser sins, with neglect of greater, as for tithing Mint, &c. 6. If it be only legal: 7. But for some sins, of what kind soever; leaving but so much as one known sin not taken to heart: 8. Or but for a time: All will come to naught. A foundation of godly sorrow, leisurely, advisedly, and sincerely laid at first, will be forever after a comfortable encouragement to Faith, spiritual joy, well-doing, and walking with God.

3. Take the touch-stone of fruitful, powerful, and special marks, to discern and difference justifying saving Faith, from all false and insufficient faiths. For a temporary may go far.

4. Let knowledge and affection, like two individual twins, grow up together in thee; and mutually transfuse spiritual vigor into each other. Presume not upon any knowledge, without a humble inflamed affection; neither build too much upon the heat of zeal, without the light of knowledge: Either of these may be single in some, and that in singularity, who after may fall away shamefully.

5. Above all, look unto thy heart. If thy change were Angelical, in words, actions, and all outward carriage, and yet thy thoughts still the same and reserved: thou art but a gilded Tomb, and cannot be saved. Let a man take a Wolf, beat him black and blue, break his bones, knock out his teeth, cut away his claws, put upon him a Sheep's skin, yet still he retains his Wolvish nature: Let a man become never so harmless outwardly, yet without a new heart, all is naught.

6. Incorporate thyself into the company of God's people, by all engagements and obligations of a profitable, intimate, and comfortable fellowship in the Gospel. There is a secret tie unto constancy in the communion of Saints. He is not like to walk long, that walketh alone,

especially, if he might enjoy good company. Shunning society with the godly, is too shroud a sign of a temporary.

7. Consider well, (for the contrary is a notable discovery of counterfeits) that thy calling to grace must settle thee more surely in thine honest particular calling; and make thee therein more faithful, conscionable, and painful.

Let Christians also of longer standing, and more strength, in their assaults about perseverance, have recourse unto this Tower of Truth, and labor to prevent that which they fear:

1. By constancy, in a careful use of all the means; the Word, Prayer, Conference, Meditation, Sacraments, &c. To which, let them preserve appetite: and practice that they hear, without omission or delay. He that gives way to a heartless neglect, or customary hardness of heart, in the use of the Ordinances, may justly suspect his nearness to some fearful sin, or fierce temptation; to some heavy judgment, or dangerous Apostasy.

2. As soon as they discover any spiritual weakness, or decay; assault, or temptation; let them complain betime unto the Throne of Grace, and mightily oppose with the ferventest prayers of extraordinary private humiliation.

3. Let them keep perfection still in their eye, and aim; and towards the attainment thereof, acquire and acquaint themselves with Rules of holy life, daily directions, courses of most mortified men, &c.

4. Let them watchfully decline all occasions of falling back: Spiritual pride, known Hypocrisy, desire to be rich, under-valuing and declining the most searching means, form, and perfunctoriness in religious duties, discontinuance of intimateness with the godly, neglect of distractions upon the Lord's Day, &c.

5. Let them consider that all is lost which is past, if they fall off, 2 John. 8.

This former Point of constancy in grace, did arise from consideration of blessed Noah's continuance in goodness through so many ages: Now in that he did not conform to the iniquities of the times, but did stand unstained, amidst the wickedest generations that ever dwelt upon earth; I collect the necessity of another constancy, and that is in respect of opposition to the corruptions of times.

Doct. The servant of God must not serve the times. Or thus: The true Christian ought to stand at staves end with the corruptions of the time.

Reas. He is bound unto it by his Baptism. Of such as profaned themselves, being Christians, with irreligious delight in the Ensigns of Idolatry, heathenish spectacles, shows and stage-plays, Tertullian, to strike them the more deep, claimeth the promise which they made in Baptism. He is not of the world, John. 15:19. His life is hid with Christ in God, Col. 3:3. There is a secret heavenly vigor infused into every gracious Soul, by the sanctifying Spirit, which deads it to the world, and makes it delight in God. He ought to shine in the world, as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, Phil. 2:15. Light and darkness cannot endure one another; neither the power of Grace, those works of darkness in which the world lies drowned. He is by no means to be conformed to this world, Rom. 12:2, nor to run with the wicked to the same excess of riot, 1 Pet. 4:4. He is now new-borne, and become a Child of Eternity; whereby his heart is fallen in love with new and everlasting delights; and the eye of his soul turned from the dung of this world, towards the glory of the second Life. As the worldling cannot relish the sweet joys of gracious exercises: so neither can the Christian, the frothy pleasures of good-fellowship. You can as hardly draw

the sound Professor to a Conventicle of swaggering companions; as a good-fellow to a day of humiliation.

Uses. 1. Howsoever then, thou mayst seem to stand on God's side, by an artificial acting of some affected forms in Religion, by countenancing the Ministry, if thou beest a great Man, and outwardly conforming to the Ordinances; yet, if in thy practice thou beest plunged into the corruptions of the present, and thine heart hanker still, and hunt in secret after youthful delights, the lusts of men, most applauded fashions of the greater part, thou art not a Christian in truth, but a true counterfeit. Assure thyself, if thou swim down the current, and sails with the tide of the time, thou mayest justly look every moment, to fall upon the sudden, perhaps in the height of thy temporal happiness, and hottest gleam of thy worldly glory, into the irrecoverable and everlasting Lake of brimstone and fire, &c.

2. Let everyone, who hath given his name unto Christ, ever hold it his Crown and comfort, to hold a strong and unconquerable counter-motion to the courses of the world. Let him still discover the true nobleness of his Christian spirit, and of a mind spiritually generous by gathering vigor, and growing invincible, from the very oppositions of the wicked, and villainies of the time. See Psal. 119:126,127, 1 King. 19:14, 1 Thes. 2:2.

It was the saying of a moral Heathen; That to do well, where was no danger, was a common thing; but to do well, where was both peril and opposition, was the peculiar office of a man of virtue: much more, say I, of a man of God.

[And Noah walked with God.] Walking with God, is the top and flower of all Noah's excellencies, and spiritual felicities upon earth. Whence note,

Doct. That walking with God, is the Crown of the Christians character.

It is the duty and property of every true Christian, to walk with his God.

By walking with God, I mean, a sincere endeavor, punctually and precisely to manage, conduct, and dispose all our affairs, thoughts, words and deeds; all our behaviors, courses, carriage, and whole conversation, in reverence and fear, with humility and singleness of heart, as in the sight of an invisible God, under the perpetual presence of his All-seeing, glorious, pure eye; and by a comfortable consequent, to enjoy by the assistance and exercise of Faith, an unutterable sweet communion, and humble familiarity with his holy Majesty: In a word, to live in Heaven upon earth.

Proofs. God's Covenant and commandment to Abraham, and in him, to all the faithful unto the Worlds end, requires it, Gen. 17:1.

The practice and protestations of the Saints and servants of God, seal unto it. Enochs walking with God, chap. 5, was a happy preparative to his extraordinary translating to glory.

The Lord, before whom I walk, saith Abraham, chap. 24:40, will do thus and thus.

I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the living, saith David, Psal. 116:9.

O Lord God of Israel, saith Solomon, 2 Chron. 6:14. There is no God like thee in the Heaven, nor in the Earth; which keepest covenant, and showest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts.

I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, saith Hezekiah, 2 King. 20:3.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men, saith Paul, Acts 24:16, which sounds the same way.

Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the World, worth one days society with Jesus Christ, and his holy Spirit, said that

Noble Marquess of Vico, well skilled and experienced in an heavenly conversing with his God.

Reas. 1. And it must needs be so: For howsoever natural men and worldlings, out of their obnoxiousness, and secret terrors, slavishly retire, do not willingly, neither dare they draw near to that God, which to them is a consuming fire; yet all those, who have truly tasted how gracious and glorious he is, shall find their hearts, out of a secret sense of God's love unto them first, kindly inflamed with infinite desire to live under the comfortable influence of his pleased countenance, to enjoy his holy Majesty with constant peace, and an humble spiritual access and acquaintance continually. His spirit of Prayer, infinite love, exercise of repentance, temptations and troubles from Satan; pressures and oppressions from the World, loss of inward peace, faintness of Faith, want of spiritual strength, assault of some special sin, sweetness of meditation, daily favors showered down upon him without number, and above measure; sore thought of the great and last Account, motions of the blessed Spirit, spiritual desertion, &c. but above all, the inexplicable blessedness, goodness, and excellency of that highest Majesty itself, drives him to his God many times a day.

2. All God's loves unto us; His loving kindnesses, protections, preservations, bounty, patience, divine illuminations, spiritual blessings: in a word, every link of that golden chain of Mercy, Grace and Glory, far thicker set with sweetest blessings in all kinds, then the Heaven with Stars, which our happy Souls have, do, or shall enjoy from the first springing of it up (if everlasting could have any beginning) out of the adored Fountain of his free Grace, to the last moment of eternity in highest heavenly bliss, (if eternity could possibly ever determine) should be so many keen spurs, deepest obligations, strongest chains, to draw our hearts most greedily to

this infinite delight in him, and thus with an humble familiarity to converse with his holy Majesty.

3. Consciousness of our former walking comfortably with God, sanctified by the life of Faith, will mightily and incredibly support our spirits and courage in the times of confusions and fear. The hearts of sensual worldlings, for want of reconcilment, and acquaintance with God in calm and comfortable times, sink and tremble in the Day of distress, and God's dreadful visitations, as the heart of a woman in her pangs, and fall asunder in their breasts like drops of water. But that happy One, who in his prosperity hath made God his portion, and walked humbly in his presence, shall in the time of trouble stand like a strong unmovable mountain, impregnable against the rage of wind and weather, against the cruel incursions of all adversary power: when the wicked shall tire the Mountains with bootless cries to cover them; he shall be able to say with David, The Lord is my refuge and my strength, &c. therefore will I not fear, though the earth be moved, and the Mountains fall into the midst of the Sea. He shall by the mercies of God, and humble dependence upon his omnipotent Arm, encounter, and entertain the terrors even of the evil day, of the hour of temptation, of the King of fear, and last Judgment, with confidence and peace.

4. Thy walking with God, will make thee extraordinarily powerful, and mightily prevail in prayer; one of the greatest blessings, and sweetest comforts, which can be named, or enjoyed in this life. As the Kings Favorite, who stands still in his presence, and under the immediate, and gracious influence of his Royal eye, doth far sooner, and much more easily obtain both his own and friends suites, then those who are more estranged from the Court: So it is in this case.

5. But above all, that which should most quicken, and kee us to this duty, is that particular interest we have by Jesus Christ, in Jehovah himself, blessed forever. A mystery, which if I should offer to open and enlarge, I should be endless, and yet come infinitely short.

Oh then, let us infinitely love, and learn exactly the most sweet and heavenly Art of walking with God! For a more comfortable alighting, and guiding us wherein, before I come to give some general instructions, give me leave to premise these quickening preparatives.

1. Look that thou liest not in any one known sin against thy conscience, hating to be reformed: do not cherish, allow, or go on in any lust, corruption, or lewd way in thine heart, life, or calling: suffer not any work of darkness, or service of Satan to reign, and domineer in thee. For if so, thou art so far from ability, or possibility of walking with God, or delighting in him, that thou wearest the Devils brand, and art yet most certainly one of his. See and search the true meaning of such places, as these; 1 John. 3:6,8,9, James 2:10, Ezek. 18:21, Psalm. 66:18 and 119:6,101, Ezek. 18:30, Matth. 18:8,9, 2 Cor. 7:1.

Suitable hereunto is the concurrent judgment, and doctrine of our best Divines, and worthiest Writers, graciously instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven. These are their several assertions to the same sense, in their own words:

1. A man can have no peace in his conscience, that favoereth and retaineth any one sin in himself against his conscience.

2. A man is in a damnable state, whatsoever good deeds seem to be in him, if he yield not to the work of the holy Ghost, for the leaving but of any one known sin, which fighteth against peace of conscience.

3. So long as the power of mortification destroyeth thy sinful affections, and so long as thou art unfeignedly displeased with all sin, and doest mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, thy case is the case of salvation.

4. A good conscience stands not with a purpose of sinning; no, not with an irresolution against sin.

5. The rich and precious box of a good conscience is polluted, and made impure, if but one dead Fly be suffered in it. (He means, any one known sin, lain and delighted in impenitently.)

6. Where there is but any one sin nourished and fostered, all other our graces are not only blemished, but abolished, they are no graces.

7. Most true is that saying of Aquinas; That all sins are coupled together, though not in regard of conversion to temporal good; for some look to the good of gain, some of glory, some of pleasure, &c. yet in regard of aversion from eternal Good, that is God; So that he that looks but toward one sin, is as much averted, and turned back from God, as if he looked to all. In which respect Saint James says, He that offendeth in one, is guilty of all.

8. Every Christian should carry in his heart, a constant and resolute purpose, not to sin in anything: for faith, and the purpose of sinning can never stand together.

Thou seest then, if Satan keep possession, but by one reigning sin, it will be thine everlasting ruin. Thou shalt then be so far from ever enjoying any humble holy acquaintance with our God, that thou art gone body and soul forever. One breach in the walls of a City, exposeth it to the surprise of the enemy: one leak in a ship neglected, will sink it at length into the bottom of the Sea: the stab of a penknife to the heart, will as well speed a man, as all the daggers that killed Caesar in the Senate-house: If thou hedge thy Close as high as the middle Region of the Air in all other places, and leave but one

gap, all thy grass will be gone: If the Fowler catch the bird, either by the head, or the foot, or the wing, she is sure his own. It is so in the present case: If thou live, and lie with allowance and delight, in any one known sin, without particular remorse, or resolution to part with it; thou as yet carriest the Devils brand, he hath thereby marked thee out for his own. As obedience is universal and Catholic, if sincere; so repentance, if true, is also general. It strips us stark naked, as a worthy Divine says well, of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind: in this rotten building, it leaves not a stone upon a stone. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants: so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest, and most profitable sins.

The premonition therefore I tender in the first place, is this: Thou canst never possibly be fitly qualified, either for the right understanding, or saving practice of this sacred and sweetest Art, of walking with God; except thou resolve, to stand forever sincerely at the swords point against all sin. Even thy bosom sin must be abandoned, if thou look for any blessing in this kind: Thou must put off the shirt from thy sinful soul; for as the shirt is to the body, so is the beloved sin to the soul; it sticks closest and nearest, and is done off with most ado.

CHAP. II. – General Preparatives.

AND BECAUSE THIS DARLING-PLEASURE, minion-delight, *Peccatum in deliciis*, as the Fathers call it, is Satan's strongest Hold, his Tower of greatest confidence and security, when he is driven out elsewhere, and so by consequent most powerful and peremptory to keep a man's heart estranged with largest distance, and incompatible aversion from all holy acquaintance with God; I will in short labor to enlighten, and dis-entangle any one, who unfeignedly desires an utter divorce from this bosom-devil; by telling him, first, what it is: secondly, what his is: thirdly, how he may be deceived about it.

1. As in every man, there is one element, one humor, and ordinarily one passion predominant; so also one work of darkness, and way of death. And it is that which his corrupt, and original crookedness, upon the first elective survey, and prospect over the fools Paradise of worldly pleasures, fleshly lusts and vanities of this life, by a secret sensual inclination, and bewitching infusion of Satan, singles out, and makes special choice of, to follow and feed upon, with greatest delight, and predominant sweetness: afterward, by

custom and continuance, grows so powerful, and attractive, that it extraordinarily endears, and draws unto it the heat of all his desires, and strongest workings of his heart, with much affectionate impatency, and headlongness: and at the height, by an irresistible tyranny, it makes all occasions and occurrences, friends and followers, the deepest reach of policy, and utmost projects of wit, Religion, conscience, credit with the world, the universal possibility of body, soul, outward state, serviceable, and contributory unto it, as the Captain, and commanding sin; as to the Devils viceroy, domineering in the wasted conscience. In some, it is worldliness, wantonness, ambition, opposition to godliness, usury, pride, revenge, or the like: In others, it may be drunkenness, the swaggering vanity of good fellowship, gluttony, pleasures of Play-house hunting, gaming, scurrile jesting, &c. obstinate insatiableness in allowed recreations, idleness, or such like.

2. Thou mayest discover it by such marks as these:

1. It is that, which thy truest friends, thine own conscience, and the finger of God in the Ministry, many times finds out, meets with, and chiefly checks thee for.

2. It is that, which if it break out into act, and be visible to the eye of the world, thine enemies most eagerly observe, and object, as matter of their most insultation, and thy greatest disgrace.

3. That which thou art loathest to leave, art oftenest tempted unto, hast least power to resist, and which most hinders the resignation and submission of soul and body, of all thy courses and carriage, heartily and unreservedly to the Word and will of God.

4. It is that which God oftenest corrects in thee, even in the interpretation, and guilty acknowledgement of thyself-accusing heart. It may be, at several

times thou hast been afflicted with some heavy cross in thine outward state, loss of a child, some fits and pangs of bodily pain, terrors and troubles of mind, or some such proportionable visitations: now in all these, and like afflictions, upon the first smarting apprehension, thy conscience, if any whit awaked, on its own accord seized upon that sin we now seek for, as the principal Achan and author of all thy misery.

5. If ever thou wast so sick, as out of extremity to receive sentence of death against thyself, and despair of recovery; if thy conscience was stirring, this sin affrighted thee most, and gave the deadliest blow to drive thee to final despair. And if thou shouldest die in it without repentance, which God forbid, it would infuse most hellish vigor, and venom, into the never-dying worm, which would thereby more mightily gnaw upon thy conscience, thorough all eternity. If ever the sword of the Spirit shall cleave it from thy bosom, which is infinitely to be desired, and strike thorough thy sensual heart with true remorse, it will cost thee the bitterest tears, most sighs, and deepest groans.

6. It is that, which thou art loathest, and wouldst least be acknown of. If it were possible, thou couldest be well content, that no John the Baptist should ever hear of thy Herodias. And therefore thou bearest thy brains, and improvest thy wit, to devise (if it be capable of daubing) distinctions, evasions, excuses, extenuations, whole cart-loads of fig-leaves, to color and cloak this soul Fiend, though favorite to thy bewitched soul.

7. That, which thou art in a bodily fear, the Minister will meddle and meet with, when thou art going towards a conscionable, and searching Sermon. For thou thinkest with thyself, If this day he disclose my bosom, I shall both be disgraced amongst my neighbors that know it, and cast also into dumps, and melancholy by his denouncing of terror against it.

8. Thoughts, plots, and projects, about it, a thousand to one, ordinarily seize upon thine heart, with first and most acceptable entertainment at thy very first waking; if they have not broken off thy sleep, and troubled thee in thy dreams.

9. The cares, pleasures, and appurtenances of it, are wont to thrust, and throng upon thee on the Lord's Day, with extraordinary eagerness, importunity, and unresistableness. For the Devil that desires to have thy mind most distracted upon that Day, makes choice of the fittest, and pleasingest baits, to draw away and detain thy heart, and the most alluring objects, for diversion.

10. In the darkness, and discomforts of the night, if thou beest suddenly awakened with some dreadful thunder, lightning, or terrible tempest, the guilt and accusations of thy beloved sin is wont to come into thy mind in the first place, and with greatest terror.

Thirdly, a man may be deceived, in conceiving, that he is utterly divorced, and quite delivered from his bosom sin, and yet it be but a mere exchange, or some other mistake. This gross, affected self-imposture, may be seen in such cases as these:

1. He may change only the outward and visible form of it. For instance: Whereas the same sin of covetousness doth utter and express itself by usury, simony, sacrilege, bribery, grinding poor men's faces, crushing, and unmercifully keeping under the poorer of the same trade, stealing, over-reaching by tricks of wit, all manner of wrong-doing, all kinds of oppression, detaining ill-gotten goods without restitution, &c. he may insensibly glide out of one gulf of griping cruelty, into another; he may fall from one of these, being a more notorious, and cursed trade of hoarding, to some other of them less observed, and odious in the world, and yet still

abide in the chambers of death, and under the tyranny of a reigning sin. The soul sin of uncleanness doth actuate itself by fornication, adultery, self-pollution, brutish, and immoderate abuse of marriage, and such other abhorred impurities. Now, he may pass from one of these pollutions, more crying and abominable, to some other of them, not affrighting the conscience with such grisliness and horror, and yet still lie in the impenitent and damnable shares of lust.

2. He may surcease, and refrain from the outward gross acts of such hateful villainies; and yet his inward parts be still defiled with insatiable sensual hankerings after them, delightful revolving them in his mind, and contemplative commission of them. For instance: He may hold his hand both from the crying violence of oppressions and wrong, and the closer conveyances of cunning and fraud; and yet covetousness may still reign in him, by the earthly exercise of the heart. He may forbear the external acts of uncleanness, and yet lie and languish abominably in speculative wantonness, and adulteries of the thought; the visible executions of revenge, and yet nourish in his distempered affections, the hellish Vipers of heart-burning hatred, and spite; all indirect ambitious climbing into high rooms, and yet be passingly proud, and over greedy of precedence.

3. Nay, he may change the kind of his bosom sin, in respect of matter, form, object, every way; and yet upon the matter, it is but the exchange of one foul fiend for another. For instance: wantonness may be his sweet sin in youth, and worldliness in old age: reveling in his younger years; down-right drunkenness in his declining time: prodigality may sway in some part of his life; pinching in some other: Hypocrisy may reign at one time; Apostasy at another: furious zeal for one while; profane irreligiousness for another.

4. When the blasting frosts and feebleness of old age, have with a sottish deadness and listlessness emasculated and wasted the ambitious vigor of his mind, and the boisterous heat of his affections, have dried and drunk up the milk in his breasts, and marrow in his bones; his darling sin may then at length bid him adieu, without any penitent discharge, and he may say unto it, I have no more pleasure in thee. Whereupon he may falsely conclude a mortification, and final conquest over it; a secure deliverance from the guilt and curse of it.

5. He may unsoundly please himself with an involuntary, and enforced cessation from it; when there is no want of good will, as they say; but only, of matter, means, opportunity, enticement, company, provocation, or something for the full and free acting and enjoyment of it. So want of money may restrain a man, but full sore against his will, from strange apparel, gaming, Ale-house haunting, buying of Benefices, Offices, high rooms, &c.

6. He may for a time pull his neck out of this strongest yoke of Satan, only out of melancholic pang of slavish terror, serious fore-thought of death, and lying everlastingly in Hell, true apprehension of the impossibility of being saved without abandoning it; upon some desperate horror of bringing again his beloved sin in his bosom to the Communion, after so many causeful provocations of Divine Justice; observation of some remarkable vengeance seized upon his fellow-delinquents; or sensible smart of some terrible blow from God's visiting hand in one kind or other: I say, upon some such occasion, he may for a time forbear his bloody oaths, usury, drunkenness, gaming, Playhouse haunting, self-polluting, walking in the black and dark night after the strange Woman, or what other sin soever doth reign in him, and retain him strongliest in the devils slavery. But

because it is not the work of the Word, humbling him soundly under God's mighty hand, planting faith, and infusing mortifying power, he is not able to hold out long; but the unclean spirit returns, and rules in him again far more imperiously, and sensually, out of indignation of its discontinuance, and proportionally to the parties new-collected strength, and eagerness, to recommit it, after his extraordinary, and impatient forbearance. I know, it is not impossible, but that a man, after his conversion, by the sudden surprisal of some violent temptation, and cunning train of Satan, may be hailed back to commit his sweet sin again; especially if it be of some nature, (though it be a very heavy case, and to be lamented, if it were possible, with tears of blood:) yet he never doth, nor can return to wallow in it again, or allow it. After such a dreadful relapse, his heart bleeds afresh with extraordinary bitterness of penitent remorse, he abhors himself in dust and ashes, as exceedingly vile, cries more mightily unto God in a day of humiliation, for the return of his pleased countenance, repairs and fortifies the breach with stronger resolution, and more invincible watchfulness, against future assaults, and all assays of re-entry. But now the temporary I talk of, after his formal enforced forbearance, engulfs himself again, with more greediness, into the pleasures and sensuality of his bosom sin, lies, and delights in it again, as the very life of his life, and hardens himself more obstinately in it, as a thing impossible to leave, and live with any comfort. Upon his return, the unclean spirit rages more than before.

Thus to lend thee some light, for a more full discovery, and thorough disentanglement out of its pleasing snares; I have intimated briefly what a beloved sin is; what thine may be; and how thou mayest be deceived about it. For if thou wouldest truly taste how gracious, and glorious the Lord is in a sweet communion with His blessed Majesty; if thou wouldest be

intimately acquainted with the mystery of Christ, wherein are hid infinite heavenly treasures, and such pleasures, as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man; if thou wouldest ever be fitly qualified to walk humbly with thy God in the way which is called Holy; as thou must fall out forever with all sin, so must thou principally and impartially improve all thy spiritual forces, and aide from heaven, utterly to demolish and beat to the ground the devils Castle; to dethrone and depose from its hellish tyranny over thee, that grand empoisoner of thy soul, and strongest bar to keep out grace, all acquaintance, and sweetest intercourse with God; thy bosom sin.

Take notice by the way, that since we concurrently, and constantly teach, that justifying Faith doth purify the heart from the reign and allowance of any lust, or lewd course, and plants by the power of the holy Ghost, a sincere universal new obedience, and regular respect to all God's commandments, to all good works of Justice, Mercy, and Truth; and that we neither do nor dare give any comfort to any man of his being justified and assured of God's love, that goes on impenitently in any one known sin against his conscience, hating to be reformed; I say, since it is thus, take notice how unworthily, and wrongfully, the Antichristian Doctors, having received foreheads from the Whore of Babylon, deal with us in this point. Hear them speak:

So that their justification, (meaning ours) saith Fitzherbert, may according to their opinion, stand with all wickedness.

These words, saith Arnoux, (meaning of the French Confession) are set down to assure the wickedest man that is, of the righteousness of the Son of God.

By the application of Christ's satisfaction by faith, saith Lessius, he (meaning the Protestant) is reputed just before God, though he find no change of will at all within.

The scarlet Fathers in the Trentish Conventicle, say, that Luther from justification by faith alone, collected, not only that good works are not necessary, but also that a dissolute liberty in observing the Law of God, and of the Church, will serve the turn.

Bellarmino also comes in, with his *videtur*. They seem, saith he, altogether to think, that a man may be saved, although he do no good works, nor observe God's Commandments. Which he there only seems and assays to prove, but indeed plays the calumniating Sophister.

The justifying faith of the Adversaries, saith he in another place, takes clearly away Prayer, Sacraments, Good works, and whatsoever God hath instituted for our salvation.

The Protestants, saith Stapleton, will have certainty of grace to be in a man, not only without any respect, necessity, consequence, presence, or conveniency of good works, but also whatsoever sins being present.

The Rhemist's also most slanderously affirm, that we condemn Good works, as unclean, sinful, hypocritical.

Arnoldus also swells with malicious Popish poison, and the rancor of a slanderous spirit, when he fathers upon us such falsehoods as these: as though we should teach, that all men are bound to believe, that they are elected to eternal life: that we bid all wicked men be secure, as those who can fall from salvation by no villainies.

Now the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, who sittest with such extreme malice and falsehood in the foul mouths of the Popish Proctors, and Rabshakeh's of Rome, that they should with such prodigious lies and villainous slanders,

revile the Lord's Champions, and traduce the glorious heavenly truth of our most holy and righteous Religion.

But to my purpose, and to conclude the point; Thou must either with a resolute and everlasting divorce abandon, and abominate thy bosom sin, thy darling delight, to the pit of hell, whence it hath formerly received much enraged sensual poison, to the woeful wasting of thy conscience, and the stronger, and longer barring thee from grace; or else thou must continue an everlasting stranger from all communion and conversing with God; thou shalt never be able to meet him in his Ordinances with true reverence and delight, or look him in the face with comfort at the last day.

II. Scorn with an infinite, and triumphant disdain, to serve the mighty Lord of heaven and earth, servilely, slavishly, or formally; for by-respects, private ends, or anything, save his own sweet, gracious, glorious Self. Hate hypocrisy from the very heart-root: Which foul fiend painting herself more unobservedly in the warm Sun, and shining prosperity of the Gospels flourishing estate with an outward gilt, and superficial tincture, doth with greater variety, and stronger imposture, deceive both men's own souls, and others, in the glorious noon-tide thereof: Nay this great Agent for the Prince of darkness, is so political and pragmatical, that he prevails too much many times, even in the declination of that glorious Sun, in the disacceptation and damp of profession and forwardness. For though at this day, Professors of the gracious Way be in greatest disgrace with the most; and a drunkard, a swaggering Good-fellow, an Usurer, a son or daughter of Belial, shall find more favor, applause, and approbation with the world, then a man which makes conscience of his ways; so that it may seem the greatest madness that may be, to make profession of Religion hypocritically: yet even in these

times there are some causes, in which the devil takes occasion to cause some to play the Hypocrites notoriously.

1. Some there may be, who being weak and worthless, yet vain-glorious, and over-greedy of reputation, finding, that they find no such acceptance and applause with worldlings, by reason of their worthlessness, and that natural men entertain them not with that estimation and account proportionable to their proud expectation; and conceiving also, that by their association, and siding with the Saints, (who in preciousness of regard, and dearness of love, ever infinitely prefer the poorest Christian before the proudest Nimrod) (for one Lark is worth a thousand Kites) they shall be prized above vulgar esteem, and ordinary valuation, purposely put on a visor of outward conformity to the courses of Christianity, that thereby they may procure and purchase some special credit, and remarkable respect, and with some at least, be accounted somebody in the world.

2. Others there are, who seeing they cannot so easily and excessively satisfy and glut their greedy humors, by their commerce, dealings, and mutual negotiations with natural men; for such are well able with equal cunning, to counter-mine against their crafty and cozening undermining's; their consciences will serve them to encounter and retaliate their unconscionableness, with like over-reaching retributions of circumvention and wrong; they can well enough sound and fathom with the crooked line of their own deceitful hearts, the invisible depths of their Machiavellian projects and plots and knavery; I say, others there are, who upon such occasion, that they may thrive in the world, and grow in wealth more easily, and unobservedly, put on a cloak of outward profession, and in policy only and hypocrisy draw towards the better side; mix and join themselves with God's children, hang upon, and adhere unto true Christians; because they

pitch upon them, make special choice of, and single out such upon purpose, as those, from whom, by reason of the singleness and simplicity of their hearts, unsuspectingness of their charity, the equity, and conscionableness of their dealings, in these cozening, supplanting, and undermining days, they may most fairly and easily suck out the greatest advantage, and prey upon most plentifully, with the devouring teeth of covetousness and craft, gilded over only with a veil of seeming, and varnish of hypocrisy.

3. Some there may be, whom only the very terrors, and sting of slavish fear, and fore-thought of the wrath and torment to come, may drive, and restrain from the execution of grosser villainies, excite and enchain to the outward exercises of holy duties, and many actual religious conformities. For instance, some may repair to the House of God upon the Lord's Day, not for any such great love unto God's Truth or conscionable Ministry; but for fear, that being then alone, or walking idly abroad, their guilty consciences should work more fearfully and fiercely upon them; and that thoughts of their sins, death, hell, damnation, and other such terrible considerations would come into their minds, with affrighting grisly forms, and apparitions of horror. Some, it may be, for fear they should be justly censured, and marked out by men acquainted and experienced in the mystery of grace, and ways of God, with the odious deserved brand of Prayerless, and Atheistical wretches; or lest they should be seized upon with some remarkable judgment, in their own persons, families, or goods, by fire, robbery, tempest, ill success, death, horror, despair, or other fearful accident, dare not for their lives, but continue a course and formal task of Prayer Evening and Morning in their houses. Some also, in times of trouble and terror especially, as of extraordinary thunders, impetuous tempests, dreadful apparitions in the air, &c. fly into the company and communion of

Christians, driven thither by the fearfulness of their spirits, and hope to receive protection of their guiltiness, and preservation from wrath, by the prayers, presence, and acceptance of such holy Ones. We see in men's carriages to human laws, that even fear of them restrains many from many lawless outrages, and constrains to many civil conformities, against which their sensual hearts and humors do infinitely rise and reclaim, with much distaste and aversion. Do you not think, that many drunkards would as well live in murder, and upon the spoil, as in their present abominable swinishness; did they not hold it a more horrible thing to be hanged, than to pay five shillings, or sit in the stocks? Would not many at Sermon time, rather be in the Ale-house, than in the House of God, were not the constitutions of men a curb unto their corruptions? Would not some desperate wretches as well strike thorough at once, and quite dispatch those they hate, as kill them all the year long, with their cruel thoughts and bloody malice; were not thought free, and actual murder death by the laws of men? Would not many malicious Papists, think you, as well speak traitorously of the King, as tear God's glorious name with their oaths, and blasphemous tongues; were they not terrified with fear of Tyburne? It may be so proportionably in men's behaviors towards divine Laws, the holy Statutes of Heaven, and that highest Tribunal. But as in the former we ought to be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake: so in the latter much more, not only for terror of God's Judgments; but also for love of His Truth.

A worthy Divine sums up all I would say in this point, thus: Sometimes, saith he, the fear of God's Judgments, as of the rack of an accusing conscience, of the torments of hell-fire, &c. holdeth men in a slavish obedience.

I fear me, there are too many abroad in the world, especially great Ones, who by forbearance of other gross sins, to which their sensual affections are not so endeared, outward performance of some holy duties, formal presence at religious exercises, countenancing, and patronage of godly Ministers and good men, hope to make amends, as it were, and to purchase protection and dispensation, for the vengeance due unto the sinful pleasures of some bosom and beloved lust wherein they secretly lie. And therefore their outside conformity in other things, is caused by fear of being horribly and remarkably plagued for that close darling delight.

4. Others there are, who by reason of awfulness, unto correspondence with, dependence upon, gainful expectation from some gracious great One, Christian friend, reverend Pastor, Patron, Land-lord, or Governor, religious rich kindred, &c, or other such by-respects, conform to the outward forms of Religion, and live reservedly under the Canopy of a counterfeit profession. The false and hollow hearts of men, harbor many times, many private ends in their outward services of God, and howsoever they openly pretend Religion, yet they secretly intend, and plot the satisfaction of their humor, and serving of their own turns, by an artificial, enforced, temporary taking part with the better part. Such servile Professors as these, ordinarily in the meantime stand at a stay in an external conformity to Christian courses; for no spiritual-life warms their affections, no root of grace grows in their hearts: Formality in this kind, is ever void of all vital vigor, vegetation, and activity; constant only in an heartless plodding course and coldness; and many times, at length, when the motive of their religious representations and shows is removed, and the end compassed, for which they counterfeited, they put off their vizors, and appear again plain carnal

men, and down-right good-fellows, as they were before. The Play being done, they are Rogues again.

5. Some there may be, who out of a greedy pursuit of a general applause from all sorts of men, and ambitious hunting after a promiscuous reputation, and equal acceptance, both with Professors of Religion, and men of this world, put on a show of religious deportment, at least, in the company of such as are ready and forward to commend their conformity and forwardness that way, and by relation abroad, to enroll their names amongst the number of those who are noted to be on the best side. In a word, such fellows as these, out of a base and unblessed ambition to be well spoken of by all, though a woe waits upon such, Luke 6:26, furnish themselves, both with a form of profession to content Christians, and flourishes of good-fellowship to please the profane.

6. Others there are, who may gloriously pretend, and protest with great bravery and confidence, their assent and assistance to the best and holiest courses; put on a temporary counterfeit profession, and fashionable conformity to the communion of Saints; that thereby they may pass more fairly and plausibly, out of one calling into another: from a baser, lower, more neglected, and toilsome Trade, into some other of more liberty, acceptation and ease: or else break out of all Callings; and so, by the unhallowed mystery of a sacred cozening, if I may so call it, live upon their profession; and by amusing the tender consciences of weak Christians, with the controlling and countermanding tyrannies, as it were, of an affected furious zeal, suck out of them no small advantage, and prey too plentifully upon the people of God. Such as these, are ready to pretend, and intimate, that such base, earthly, and worldly employment, and spending of their time, is disgraceful, and derogatory to the providence of God, and their

Christian liberty: that with unworthy detainments, and avocations, it interrupts them in the pursuit of their general Calling; disables and hinders them in the discharge of holy duties. But let them know, that Christianity, if sound and true, doth not nullify, but sanctify our particular Callings. Thou oughtest to continue with conscionableness and constancy in that personal Calling, wherein thy calling to grace did find thee, if it be warrantable and lawful. See 1 Cor. 7:20. No comfortable change of a Calling, but in case of 1. private necessity, or 2. common Good: and that truly so, not hypocritically pretended, or for by-respects.

If any man then, upon giving his name to Religion, shall grow into neglect, distaste, or dereliction of his honest particular Calling; we may ever strongly suspect him of hollowness and hypocrisy. It is the confident conclusion of a very learned and holy Divine:

Though a man be endued with excellent gifts, and be able to speak well, conceive Prayer, and with some reverence to hear the Word, and receive the Sacraments, yet if he practice not the duties of godliness within his own Calling, all is but hypocrisy.

1. What son or daughter of Adam can challenge and plead exemption from that common charge laid upon them by the Lord of Heaven: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; Either by travail of body, or toil of mind, or both?

2. Diligence in a civil Calling, is necessary for a comfortable provision of earthly necessaries.

3. He is a cursed Drone, a child of idleness and sloth, the very Tennis-ball of temptation, most unworthy the blessings and benefits of human society; who doeth not one way or other cooperate, as it were, and contribute to the common Good, with his best endeavors in some honest particular Calling.

4. A seasonable employment in a civil Calling, is a Sovereign preservative, and curb for prevention of infinite swarms of idle, melancholic, and exorbitant thoughts; and for restraint from many wicked and unwarrantable meddling's and miscarriages.

5. An honest Calling, is a School of Christianity. In which a man performing duties for the Lord's sake, may daily profit in the practice and increase of many heavenly graces; Faith, Obedience, Patience, Meekness, Constancy, Truth, Fidelity, Invocation, Thanksgiving, experience of God's providence, &c.

A true Convert therefore is so far from casting off his personal Calling; that after his calling to Christianity, he is wont to discharge the duties thereof with far more care and conscience, though with a better mind, more moderate affections, and for a blessed end.

7. Some there may be, who seeing the iniquity of these last, and worst times, lying in wait for the surprise and suppression of forwardness and zeal; and that they may gain, or grow into credit with the world by some special service against the forwarder sort, serve themselves, in the meantime (plausibleness of profession taking away the sense of their intrusion) into the company and communion of the most noted religious people; that at length they may do them the more mischief, and drive to the head the bitterness of their lurking malice, with a more desperate and deadly sting. These are men of great imposture and cunning in their carriage. They inform themselves thoroughly, and exactly, in the ways and zealous behavior of Profession; and so with great satisfaction and contentment, apply and accommodate themselves for a time to their desires and devotions. But if once they pry into a point of seeming advantage, which by their wresting and outfacing, may create matter of molestation,

and spy their supposed season, to win by betraying; they turn Turks and traitors to those which are true of heart, to serve their own turns.

8. Many there are, who out of a fond and groundless conceit, that only an outward conformity to the Word, Sacraments, and other religious exercises, will serve their turn for salvation, give their names to profession, and so walk on plodding in the comfortless unzealous forms of a frozen outside Christianity, many times even unto their dying day. These men mar, and unsanctify themselves, by making moderation in Religion a Saint: and undo their souls, by adoring discretion as an Idol. Moderation and discretion truly so called, and rightly defined by the rules of God, are blessed and beautifying ornaments to the best and most zealous Christians; but being tempered with their coldness, and edged with their eagerness against forwardness, and fervency in spirit, which the Apostle enjoins, Rom. 12:11, become the very desperate cut-throats to the power of godliness, and pestilent consumption of the spirits, heart, and life of true zeal. These fellows are most insolent, and confident in their Pharisaical brags, spiritual security, and hopes for Heaven. They admire, and applaud with much self-estimation of their singular skill, and rare felicity, in pitching just upon the golden mean, as they conceive, between profaneness and preciseness; infamous notoriousness, and persecuted strictness. But that Proverb, in the meantime falls pat upon their pates: There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes: and yet is not washed from their filthiness: And at length most certainly, the just execution of that terrible commination, Rev. 3:16, will crush their hearts with everlasting horror, confusion and woe.

But I should be endless in the discovery of this hidden and hellish gulf of hypocrisy, wherein thousands are swallowed up, even in this glorious Mid-day of the Gospel. For a man may as soon find out the way of an Eagle in

the Air, the way of a Serpent upon a Rock, the way of a Ship in the midst of the Sea, and the way of a man with a maid, as to track the cunning and crooked footsteps of this foul fiend in the false hearts of Satan's followers. Only take notice, that thou canst never possibly delight in God, or ever comfortably come near him, if thou give any entertainment unto it, in what form soever it represent itself, or whatsoever vizard it offers unto thee, though never so fairly varnished, and gilded over with the Devils angelical glory.

III. Build, and erect all thy resolutions and conclusions for Heaven and God's service, upon that strong and purest pillar, that main, and most precious Principle of Christianity, Self-denial. No walking with God, no sweet communion, and sound peace at his Mercy-Seat, except for his sake, and keeping a good conscience, thou be content to deny thyself, thy worldly wisdom, natural wit, carnal reason, acceptation with the world, excellency of learning, favor of great Ones, credit and applause with the most; thy passions, profit, pleasures, preferment, nearest friends, ease, liberty, life, everything, anything. And fear no loss; for all things else are nothing, to the least comfortable glimpse of God's pleased face.

From this Principle sprung all those noble resolutions, and replies of God's worthiest Saints and Soldiers: That of Hester for the preservation of the people of God: Well, saith she, I will go in unto the King, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish. That of Micaiah, solicited strongly by the messenger to temporize, in managing his Ministry with suitableness, and conformity to the Kings pleasure, and plausibleness of the false prophets: As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak. That of Nehemiah; Should such a man as I flee? As if he should have said; Tell not me of fleeing, my resolution was pitched long ago, if need

require, to lay down my life, and lose my blood in the Lord's battles. That of Paul, when his friends were weeping, and wailing about him: What mean you to weep, said he, and to break mine heart? For I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. That of Jerome: If my father stood weeping on his knees before me, and my mother hanging on my neck behind me, and all my brethren, sisters, children, kinsfolk, howling on every side, to retain me in sinful life with them; I would fling my mother to the ground, despise all my kindred, run over my father, and tread him under my feet, thereby to run to Christ when he calleth me. That of Luther, dealt with, earnestly, and eagerly, not to venture himself amongst a number of perfidious, and bloodthirsty Papists: As touching me (saith he) since I am sent for, I am resolved, and certainly determined to enter Worms in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, although I knew there were so many Devils to resist me, as there are tiles to cover the houses in Worms. That of a most renowned Italian Marquess, Galeacius Carracciolus, tempted by a Jesuit with a great sum of money, to return from God's Blessing at Geneva, to the warm Sun in Italy: Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the Gold in the world, worth one days society with Jesus Christ, and his holy Spirit. That of George Carpenter, Martyr: My wife and my children are so dearly beloved unto me, that they cannot be bought from me, for all the riches and possessions of the Duke of Bavaria: but for the love of my Lord God, I will willingly forsake them. That of Kilian, a Dutch School-master, to such as asked him, if he loved not his wife and children; Yes, said he, If the world were Gold, and were mine to dispose of, I would give it to live with them, though it were but in prison; yet my soul and Christ are dearer to me then all.

IV. Exercise thyself continually, and be excellent in that only Heaven upon Earth, and sweetest Sanctuary to a hunted soul, the Life of faith. Which to live in some good measure, is the duty and property of every living member of Christ Jesus. Love therefore, and labor to live by the power of faith, the life of salvation, sanctification, preservation. 1. Of salvation, thus: Let thy truly-humbled soul, grieved and groaning under the burden of sin, throw itself into the meritorious, and merciful arms of Jesus Christ, wounded, broken, and bleeding upon the Cross; and there let it hold, and hide it self forever in full assurance of eternal life, by virtue of that promise, John. 3:36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. For having thus laid hold upon him, He by his Spirit doth communicate first himself unto thee; then both the merit of his death for remission of thy sins; and of his active obedience for thy right to salvation and happiness; and withal, the power of his Spirit, to quicken thee to the life of grace in this World, and to raise up thy body to the life of glory at the last day. 2. Of sanctification: If thou keep thy faith, the fountain, root and heart, as it were, from which all thine other graces spring, in life and vigor, thou shalt pray more comfortably, be more courageously patient, hear the Word more fruitfully, receive the Sacraments more joyfully, pass the Sabbaths more delightfully, confer more cheerfully, meditate more heavenly, walk in all the ways of new obedience with more strength, and conquest over corruptions. For ordinarily, every Christian shall find the exercise of other graces to be comfortable, or cold, according to the liveliness, or languishing of his faith. 3. Of preservation, both temporal and spiritual.

In crosses, afflictions, and all God's outward angry visitations, by the power of such promises, as those, Psal. 89:33, and 50:15, Heb. 12:7,8,11, 1 Thes. 3:3, Act. 14:22, Luke 9:23, Isa. 63:9.

In the course and carriage of thy particular Calling: the duties and works whereof, if thou discharge with conscience, diligence, and prayer, thou mayest go on with comfort, contentment, and freedom from that torturing and racking thoughtfulness; from those restless and cursed carkings of carnal worldlings, wherein they basely languish, and lose their souls; and leave the success, issue, and event of all thy labors and undertakings unto the Lord, whatsoever it may be, resting sweetly, and ever relying upon that gracious promise, Heb. 13:5. I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.

In ordering and guiding the affairs of thy family, depend by faith upon God's blessing, the strength and sinew of all sound comfort, and true contentation that way. See Psal. 127.

In the loss of outward things for thy love, and service unto God; by believing that Man of God, 2. Chron. 25:9. The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.

Nay, in the loss of all earthly things in every kind: see Hab. 3:17,18. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines: the labor of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation. Consider also for this purpose, Job's patient blessing of God upon the surprise and concurrence of a universal misery, Job 1:21.

In pangs of the New-birth, spiritual infancy, weaknesses of faith, prayer, godly sorrow, and other graces; by those cordial refreshing promises, Rev. 21:6, Matth. 5:6. Isa, 42:3, 40:11, and 57:15.

In oppositions against the raising or restauration of spiritual buildings by the Ministry of the Word: or in temptations against a man's personal progress, and holding out against God's ways unto the end; by renouncing

our own strength, disclaiming the arm of flesh, and crying in every encounter: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts, What art thou, O great mountain, &c?

In languishing's and trembling's after relapse into some old, or fall into some new sin; by such precious places as these: 1 John. 2:1, Luk. 17:4, 1 Sam. 12:20, 1 John 1:9. From this last place a reverend Divine collects this comfort: If we see our unworthiness, and with broken hearts acknowledge it, God is faithful and just to forgive it, be it never so great. But this is a jewel fit only for the ear of a sincere Christian, when out of the fearfulness of his distrustful spirit, he puts off all comfort, though truly humbled, after ensnarement in some more special affrighting sin. Let no swine trample upon it.

In all kinds of temptations, by the power of that promise, 1 Cor. 10:13. Nay, even amidst variety of them by obeying that precept, Jam. 1:2. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations.

In spiritual desertion, by refreshing, and resting thy sinking soul, in the meantime until the Lord return, upon that surest Rock, Isa. 30:18. Blessed are all they that wait for him. Most blessed, dear, and sweetest Sanctuary! If the Christian die in that waiting state, he shall be certainly saved: For the holy Ghost pronounceth him blessed.

In the deep, and almost despairing apprehensions of thine extreme vileness, and, as it were, nothingness in grace, by apprehending that most merciful promise from God's own mouth, Isa. 43:25.

In thy perplexed and troubled thoughts about return after backsliding; by those comfortable encouragements, Jer. 3:1,12-14,22, Hos. 14:1,2,4.

In doubts of losing the love of God, and life of Grace; by consideration of those passages in God's Book, where it appears, that the love of God unto

his child, in respect of tenderness, and constancy, is infinitely dearer than that of a most loving mother to her little one, Isa. 49:15, stronger than the stony Mountains, and Rocks of flint, Isa. 54:10, as constant as the courses of the Sun, and of the Moon, and of the Stars, and of the day, and of the night, Jer. 31:36, and 33:20, nay, as sure, as God himself, Psal. 89:33-35.

In the Hail-storms of slanderous arrows, and empoisoned darts of disgrace, by cleaving to most glorious promises, 1 Pet. 4:14, Matth. 5:11.

In the valley of the shadow of death; by an assurance of God's merciful omnipotent presence, Psal. 23:4.

In the extremity and depth of such desperate distresses, and perplexities; wherein in thy present feeling, thou canst see, and find no possibility of help from Heaven or Earth, God or Man; but art both helpless and hopeless, as the Church complains, Lam. 3:18, by such like places as those, Isa. 33:9,10, 2 Chron. 20:12, Gen. 22:14, Exod. 14:13, Psal. 78:65.

In everything, or anything that shall, or can possibly befall thee; prosperity, or poverty; cross, or comfort; calmness of conscience, or tempests of terror; life or death, &c. by extracting abundance of unconquerable patience, and peace of soul, from those three heavenly golden conduits of sweetest comfort, Rom. 8:18,28,32.

Thus in any trouble of soul, body, good name, outward state, present, or to come; thou mayest by the sovereign power of faith working upon the Word, not only draw out the sting, and expel the poison of it; but also create a great deal of comfort to thy truly-humbled soul, and maintain it in despite of all mortal or infernal opposition, in a constant spiritual gladness. For all those promises, whereupon thy heavy heart in such cases may repose, and refresh itself, have their being from the blessed name Jehovah: see, Exod. 6:3, and therefore are as sure, as God himself: they are sealed with the

bloody sufferings of his only Son, and therefore as true, as truth itself: and, if thou be in Christ, are all as certainly thine, as the heart in thy body, or blood that runs in thy veins. Nay, and a little more for thy comfort, the glory of God's truth is mightily advanced, and himself extraordinarily pleased, by thy more resolute, steadfast, and triumphant cleaving unto them. What a blessed, sweet, and heavenly life then is the life of faith?

V. Apprehend in thy mind, and settle in thine heart, a true estimate, and right conceit of the substance and power, marrow, and materials of Christianity. Which doth not consist, as too many suppose,

In outward shows, profession, talking: in holding strict points, defending precise opinions, contesting against the corruptions of the times: in the work wrought, external forms of religious exercises, set-tasks of hearing, reading, conference, and the like: in some solemn outward extraordinary abstinences and forbearances, censuring others, &c. But, in righteousness, peace, joy in the holy Ghost: in meekness, tender-heartedness, love: in patience, humility, contentedness: in mortification of sin, moderation of passion, holy guidance of the tongue: in works of mercy, justice, and truth: in fidelity, painfulness in our Callings, conscionable conversing with men: in reverence unto superiors, love of our enemies, an open-hearted real fruitful affectionateness, and bounty to God's people: in heavenly-mindedness, self-denial, the life of faith: in dis-esteem of earthly things, contempt of the world, resolute hatred of sin: in approving our hearts in God's presence, a sweet communion with him, comfortable longing for the coming of the Lord Jesus, &c.

Yet mistake me not; thou must make a show, profess and talk, if thou wouldest have Christ Jesus to own thee at that last and dreadful Day, Mark. 8:38.

It is therefore an idle and brainless cavil of some lewd ignorant Lozels, to say; We can by no means endure these shows; Cannot a man be religious to himself, except he hang out his flag, and let all the world know it? For where the power of Religion is, there will be the show also. Painted fire shines not, ascends not, heats not: but true fire is ever inseparably attended with these properties. We cannot put a Candle in a Lantern, but the light will show itself thorough the horns: if true grace be planted in the heart, it will shine forth in our words, gestures, actions, all carriages, and our whole conversation. He that will take shows from the substance of Religion, let him take brightness from the Sun, glistening from Gold, breathing from a live-body. Show and profession of Christ before men, is commanded, as well as the substance and soundness of heart, Rom. 10:9,10.

Thou must be a patron, and in some good measure, a practiser of precise points, if ever thou wilt have true peace and assurance of walking in the narrow path, that leads unto life: as, of walking precisely, Ephes. 5:15. Being fervent in spirit, Rom. 12:11. Striving to enter in at the strait gate, Luke 13:24. Self-denial, 14:26. Surpassing the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. 5:20. Laying violent hands and hold upon the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 11:12. In a word: of the way which is called holy, and yet so spoken against everywhere, Act. 28:22. For I mean only that preciseness, which is commended unto us, and commanded by the blessed Spirit in God's pure and holy Word. I know, all passages of sanctification are too precise; and paradoxes, intolerable and burdensome to flesh and blood, and in the interpretation of worldly wisdom, which notwithstanding are easy and sweet to mortified men.

Thou must stand at the staves end, against the sins of the times, and like the Eagle, prune up thyself against a storm, or else thou art a temporizer.

Outward exercises of Religion, are as it were the body, without which, the soul of Christianity hath no existence.

Thou must be content to abridge, and confine thy Christian liberty at any time, according to opportunities, and exigence, for the enlargement of God's glory, the building up of thy brother, and snaffling thine own rebellious nature.

Thou mayest, and must judge by the fruits. It is Christ's Rule, Matth. 7:16. If therefore thou seest the abominable and unsavory fruits of lying, swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, usury, scoffing at Religion, &c. hanging out in the fight of the Sun; thou mayest justly censure the tree to be rotten, and for the present, fuel for the fire of Hell. Thou mayest judge no man rashly, nor of his final estate: (If we see a malefactor cast, and condemned for some grievous crime, yet reprieved unto the next Assize; no man can say, he shall be certainly hanged, because a pardon may be procured, and come from the King in the meantime: it is so in the present case.) But thou mayest call a spade, a spade; a drunkard, a drunkard; a usurer, a usurer. Otherwise, if thou daub and dissemble, how shalt thou ever be able to escape liableness to that abomination, Prov. 17:15. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just: even they both are abomination to the Lord? And to the sting of that woe, Isa. 5:20. Woe unto them that call evil, good; and good evil; that put darkness for light; and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Yet know, that speaking the evil thou certainly knowest by another, must be seasonable, charitable and discreet: not out of humor, spleen, imperiousness, at thy pleasure; but for God's honor, the good of the party, thine own discharge, upon a warrantable calling, &c. according to those Rules I shall hereafter deliver for guiding the tongue.

My meaning then in this point is; that those greater matters be dearest prized, and principally plied proportionably to their worth and weight: and yet these lesser things not neglected. It is too true, that those who are more fierce, and forward about the ceremonials, and circumstantial's, then truly hot and zealous in the essentials, and substantial's of Christianity, prove too often vain-gloriously, and proudly mounted upon that foul hellish fiend, Hypocrisy, and posting apace towards some fearful Apostasy, or Anabaptistical frenzy.

VI. Let thy spirit, mindful of its own heavenly birth, immortal nature, and everlasting home, ever generously fortify itself with victorious resolution against worldliness, the canker and cut-throat of all heavenly-mindedness, and hearty conversation above. Of all the foul fiends, that haunt the hearts of carnal men, there is none that holds a stronger opposition, and counter-motion to walking with God, then covetousness. Ambition, sensuality, and other ways of death, cut off their slaves with an accursed disacquaintance, and estrangement far enough from all comfortable access unto the Throne of Grace: but affections nailed and glued to the Earth, have this pestilent precedency, that they hold the remotest point of declination, from the warmth and influence of any sweet communion with the Sun of righteousness, and God's glorious face. All earthly-minded men ordinarily, howsoever they may be outwardly restrained and reserved, are secret deriders of the power of godliness, holy strictness of the Saints, and mysteries of Grace. And the Pharisees also, saith Luke, chap. 16:14, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him: even mocked, and made themselves merry with the searching, and heart-piercing Sermons of the Son of God. Their hearts, and hopes are wholly anchored upon the Earth, and locked up in their chests: and therefore they dream of no other

heaven, then their golden hoards, heaps of wealth, and present temporal happiness. Whereas notwithstanding, one refreshing glimpse shining, and shed into our hearts from God's pleased face, and well-grounded assurance of being His, is infinitely more worth than all the Gold that ever the Sun made, or shall make while it stands in Heaven.

VII. Let thy holy affections be ever thoroughly warmed, and ravished extraordinarily with the love of God. To which, there are infinite inflaming motives and Obligations.

1 He being absolutely considered, is immeasurably lovely. The most attractive objects of insatiable love, and all amiable excellencies, are eminently and transcendently triumphant in him eternally; Beauty, Glory, Worth, Wisdom, Greatness, Goodness, Holiness, Purity, anything, everything that is any ways admirable and lovable.

2. Or consider Him in relation to thyself; and shouldst thou every moment thorough an interminable time, lay down ten thousand lives for His sake, thou couldest never come near the requital of the least inch of His infinite love towards thee, which reacheth from everlasting, to everlasting.

1. He bore thee in the bosom of this His free love from all eternity, and that so dearly, that from the same eternity, He decreed that His own dear Son should die for thee. 2. He brought thee out of the abhorred state of being nothing, into the rank of his reasonable and noblest creatures. 3. He bought thee again, when thou hadst willfully lost thyself, with the hearts-blood of His only Son. 4. He preserves thee every day from a thousand dangers, a thousand deaths, which might seize upon thee, both from within, and from without. 5. He will shortly crown thee with everlasting life, fullness of joy, and pleasures at his right hand for evermore.

3. Thirdly, consider the unquenchable impatency of Christ's inflamed love unto thee, now washed with His Blood, and beautified with His grace, Cant. 4:9. Thou hast ravished my heart, saith He to the Church, and by consequent to every true Christian, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. Now love is of that alluring nature, that many times it will draw love from a man, when there is no lovely part in the party loving. What a deal of love then doth the Sovereign Lord of all goodness, the well-spring of all beauty, excellency, and sweetness exact at our hands? Especially since we are his mere creatures, in respect both of our natural being, outward state, gracious state, and state of glory? See how His spiritual amiableness is shadowed by outward beauties, Cant. 5:10.

VIII. Prize the fruition of God's pleased face, a nearer communion and acquaintance with His blessed Majesty, the love and light of His countenance; and thereupon a free and frequent access, with a humble boldness, unto the throne of Grace, at a far higher and more invaluable rate, than heaven and earth; as a very real fruitful fore-taste of eternal joys. For to say no more at this time; If thou hold an holy familiarity with thy God, and He look pleasedly upon thee, thou shalt grasp Jesus Christ more sweetly and feelingly in the arms of thy Faith; partake more plentifully of the joyful freedom, presence, and communication of His comforting Spirit; be guarded more strongly and narrowly by His glorious Angels; suck more sweetness and heavenly Manna out of the Ministry, and other His blessed Ordinances; walk in safety amongst the creatures, like an unconquerable Lyon: Thou shalt be in a league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee: when thou goest, thy gate shall not be strait; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not fall: when thou sleepest, thy

sleep shall be sweet; thou shalt dwell safely, and none shall make thee afraid: Thou shalt never more be afraid of any evil tidings, or of destruction when it cometh: when thou passest thorough the waters, thy God shall be with thee; and thorough rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest thorough the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, &c. And if at any time thou be seized upon with any cross or calamity from any of the creatures; any trouble or temptation, from man or Devil; any lowering or cruelty from the iniquity of the times, or persecutors of the Truth; yet the refreshing beams of God's pleased face shining upon thy heart, through the darkness of such discomforts, will sweetly mitigate, revive, and infinitely make amends for all. The poison and curse of them shall never come near thy soul. The Lord in the meantime, like an Eagle fluttering about her nest, will most tenderly defend and protect thee, Isa. 31:5, and at length most certainly come like a young Lyon roaring on his prey for thy rescue and glorious enlargement, Isa. 31:4.

IX. Labor by a constant watch to keep thy heart in a spiritual temper still, and still sweetly content, and fruitfully conversant in the Mystery of Christ, and Secrets of His Kingdom, which thou shalt more easily do; If thou first rejoice in God, his Word and Graces, as thy chiefest joy, and greatest advantage. 2. By all earthly things, be drawn to the love of heavenly. For though God hath appointed but one Sabbath in seven days for his more solemn public worship, yet to a Christian, every day is sanctified to be a rest from all the deeds of the flesh, wherein he is to walk with his God, and show forth the religious keeping of his heart and good conscience, in every action of his whole life; so making every passage of his particular Calling, a part of Christian obedience, and duty unto God. 3. Let the nobleness of thine enlarged Spirit, as infinitely disdain to be any ways, upon any terms,

in bondage to the corruptions of the times; so find a far sweeter relish, and take incomparably more contentment in the services of thy Lord, and his holy Ordinances, then in all his outward benefits, and favors of this life. For as the best of these abused, will most certainly at the Barre of God, turn scourges and Scorpions to the worldling; conscience; and in the meantime, there is no man so assured of his honor, of his riches, health, or life; but that he may be deprived of either, or all, the very next hour, or day to come; so the other will prove unto the Christian, having been conscionably and constantly exercised in them, as a rich stock, to bring in comfort, patience, and inward peace, in his most need and greatest extremity. 4. As soon as thou discoverest any spiritual weakness or decay, any extraordinary assault, temptation, deadness, &c. complain betime, cry mightily unto God, give him no rest; neither give over seeking, until he return unto thy soul, with power, and life again. If ordinary means will not prevail, press upon him with extraordinary: if then he do not revive thee with wonted quickening vigor, wait with a patient wakeful longing of all the powers of thy soul; and then all this while thy soul is still in its true spiritual temper, and a most blessed state. See Isa. 30:18. 5. Decline watchfully all occasions of falling from thy first love, fervency, and heavenly-mindedness: as spiritual pride, known hypocrisy, desire to be rich, discontinuance of thine intimateness with the godly, neglect of thy particular Calling, or daily watch over thy heart; ungodly company, form in religious duties, coldness and customariness in the use of the means, &c. 6. Suffer not thine affections to be chained down, and set too much upon those things which the common sort and greatest part of men seek after insatiably, and slavishly sink under; praise, profit, credit, acceptation with the world, favor of great Ones; mirth, pleasures, ease, fear, sorrow, earthly contentment, preferment, wealth, long

life, or any worldly thing: but debase, and dis-esteem all other delights in respect of doing God's will; which should ever be unto thee meat and drink, thy chiefest and choicest recreation, and only Paradise upon earth.

X. Let thy soul full often so are aloft upon the wings of faith, unto the glory of the Empyrean Heaven, where God dwelleth, and bathe itself beforehand with many a sweet meditation in that everlasting bliss above. Oh think with thyself, (though it far pass the reach of any mortal thought) what an infinite inexplicable sweetness it will be, to look forever upon the glorious Body of Jesus Christ, shining with incomprehensible beauty; and to consider, that even every vein of that blessed Body bled to bring thee to heaven: and that it being with such excess of glory hypostatically united unto the second person in the Trinity, hath honored and advanced thy nature, in that respect, far above the brightest Cherub! To say nothing of the beauty and brightness of that ever-blessed Place, that unapproachable Light, which besets God's dreadful Throne, the walking arm in arm with the Angels of God, that everlasting joyful communion, and conversing with the dearest Christian friends, and all the crowned Saints, and innumerable felicities more, which infinitely surpass in excellency and sweetness, the comprehension of the largest heart, and expression of any Angels tongue: contemplate principally the Fountain of all thy bliss; how the mighty JEHOVAH, God blessed forever, will pour out of Himself, by the influence of Beatifical Vision, as they call it, perpetual rivers of unutterable joys, and pleasures upon thy glorified Body and Soul, thorough all eternity; even as the Sun pours out his beams and shining every day afresh upon the world, without emptiness or end: and with such variety, (for he is infinite) that they shall be unto thee, as fresh, as new, as sweet, as ravishing, millions of years after thou hast dwelt in those Mansions of rest, as they were, the very first

moment thou enteredst that blissful Place. Such fixed considerations as these, of things above, will serve as notable helps to draw and keep thy heart Heaven-ward, and may mightily move thee to delight in God, and to hold it the sweetest life upon earth, to walk with him in the ways of Purity and Peace. Me think's, if a man do but once a day seriously and solemnly thus cast up the eye of his Faith, upon that never-fading Crown of Life, which after an inch of time, shall eternally rest upon his head, the goodly splendor thereof, and beams of that incomparable joy, should be able to dispel those mists of fading vanities, and hurtful fumes of honors, riches, and earthly pleasures, which this great dung-hill of the World, heated by the fire of inordinate lust, doth evaporate, and interpose between the sight of the soul and celestial Bliss: So that he might with more affectionate freedom, and contempt of earth, have his conversation above; and turn the current of all his delights, love, and longings, with more resolution and constancy towards his heavenly home.

These Preparatives thus premised, I proceed to some general directions for a more comfortable walking in the way that is called Holy.

1. First, and before all other things, have a special eye and attendance to a sincere, constant, and fruitful performance of holy duties, God's services. And to say nothing punctually and particularly at this time, of private reading the Scriptures, public hearing the Word, personal Prayer, and with thy yoke-fellow, if thou live in that estate, singing of Psalms, Meditation, Conference, days of humiliation, &c. of which thou must proportionably make conscience in their due place, observing also in them the ensuing Cautions: for a known gross, customary neglect of any holy duty, religious exercise, divine Ordinance, in its season, may bring a damp upon the rest, and a consumption upon the whole body of Christianity; I say, to leave

these and the like, in their courses and turns to be performed also with all good conscience and following Cautions, I only at this time purposely advise, for the better sanctifying thyself and all about thee, to a more comfortable and successful managing of all affairs, businesses, and undertakings, either spiritual or civil; that thou being Master of a Family, for I single out such an one for instance, be ever sure to glorify God amidst thy people, by Morning and Evening sacrifice of Prayers and praises to his heavenly Highness.

CHAP. III. – Directions Particular.

IN THE DISCHARGE OF which main duty of Christianity utterly neglected by the most, and empoisoned to many, by their resting only in the work wrought, take heed of growing into form, customariness, perfunctoriness, which will most certainly draw the very life-blood and breathing out of those holy businesses; being ever the canker and cutthroat of all true godliness, and gracious acceptation with God. Labor therefore by a reverent recollecting all the powers of thy soul, and fresh renewing and strengthening thy watch at every several time, to preserve heart and spirit in those daily devotions, and family-duties. Which thou shalt the better do, if thou look to, 1. A right disposition before: 2. A spiritual behavior in the doing: 3. A holy carriage afterward.

1. For the first: 1. Come not before God with any sin lying upon thy conscience unrepented of, or delighted in, see Psal. 66:18. 2. Neither with passion, wrath, or heartburning against any. 3. Stir up and quicken the activeness, and particular apprehensions of thy Faith, about the things desired and deprecated. In a word, in the Apostles words, for that is my

meaning; Lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Bring, 1. Resolution against all sin, in respect of God: 2. Peace and appeased passions, in respect of men: 3. Assurance to be heard, in respect of thyself. Or thus: Before thou fall upon thy knees, shake off three empoisoning and heavy hindrances, which will clog and clip the wings of thy prayers, that they will never be able to ascend up unto Heaven: sin, anger, distrust: And possess thy heart of three excellent helps, and inflaming furtherance's: 1. A right apprehension of God's dreadfulness, purity, power, &c. 2. A true sense of thy own vileness, abominableness, nothingness, &c. 3. A hearty survey of the infiniteness, and unexpressableness of God's bounty, blessings, and many compassionate forbearances towards thee.

2. For the second, 1. Repel with an undaunted spirit, and resolute contempt, Satan's blasphemous injections, if he be busy that way (and he is ordinarily most spiteful against the best businesses,) and the rather, because if they be heartily abominated and abandoned with heart-rising and loathing, they are put upon the Devils score, and are only thy crosses, not thy sins. 2. Watch over the World with all care and timely opposition, that if it be possible, not an earthly thought may creep into thy heart all the while. 3. Strive to hold thy heart in heat, as well in confession as deprecation; in deprecation as petition; in intercession as for personal blessings; as well for purity of heart, as pardon of sin, throughout; though there may be difference of heat, and crying unto God, according to the necessity and nearness of the passage in the prayer, to our particular, or the more universal good desire. Prayer is the creature of the holy Ghost, every part whereof, we should heartily wish, and earnestly wrestle, that He would proportionably animate as it were, and thoroughly enliven, even as the soul doth the body.

For the third, with all intention and watchfulness, pursue and press after the things prayed for, by a timely apprehension, fruitful exercise, and utmost improvement of all occasions, ordinances, helps, and heavenly offers, which may any ways concur to the compassing of them. For instance: Thou prayest for knowledge: walk then, when thou hast done, with a constant endeavor, in the strength of this prayer, thorough all the means, reading, hearing, conferring, practicing (for even that also is a means to increase knowledge, John. 7:17, especially experimental) catechizing, &c. for the storing of thy understanding with all sacred illuminations and holy senses of God's saving Word. Let no opportunity pass, be violent in catching all occasions, for the enriching thy brain with such heavenly stuff, and hoarding up in thine heart such hidden treasures. If thou criest after knowledge, saith Solomon, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, chap. 2:3, there is the prayer; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her, as for hidden treasures, ver. 4, there is the endeavor: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, ver. 5, there is the blessing: see Psal. 27:4. Again, thou prayest to be preserved out of ill company: thou doest well: but when thou hast done, doest thou make conscience of that counsel of Solomon, Prov. 4:14,15, and by the power and impression thereof, confront and oppose the cunning enticements, and cursed importunities of thine old companions, and brethren in iniquity? Enter not, saith Solomon, into the path of the wicked; and go not in the way of wicked men. Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away, &c. He that makes Prayer the end of Prayer, prays only to pray, and rests in his prayer, thinking when that holy duty is done, that there is no more to be done, prays to no purpose. There must be good doings, as well as good duties. He that doth not earnestly, and in good sadness

afterwards set himself against sins deprecated, and pursue with zeal and conscience the graces and good things petitioned, his prayer is not worth a button.

II. Decline idleness, the very rust and canker of the soul, the Devils cushion, pillow, chief reposal; his very tide-time of temptation, as it were, wherein he carries with much ease, and without all contradiction, the current of our corrupt affections, to any cursed sin. And be diligent with conscience and faithfulness, in some lawful, honest, particular Calling (a good testimony, if other saving marks concur of truth, and true heartedness, in thy general Calling of Christianity) not so much to gather gold, and engross wealth, as for necessary and moderate provision for family and posterity: and in conscience and obedience to that common charge, laid upon all the sons and daughters of Adam to the Worlds end; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. 1. But ever go about the affairs of thy Calling with a heavenly mind, seasoned, and sanctified with habitual prayer, exclamatory elevations, willingness, if God so please, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; pregnant with heavenly matter and meditation, picked out of the passages of thy present business. For instance; Let the Husbandman in Seedtime, collect this sacred Soliloquy, and heavenly thought; If I now take not the season, I shall have no harvest, but starve in winter. So proportionably; if I gather not Grace in this Sun-shine of the Gospel, and day of my visitation, I shall find nothing but horror upon my bed of death, and burn in Hell forever hereafter, &c. 2. In all the civil businesses of thy personal Calling, let thy eye and aim be upon God's glory, as the prime and principal end of all thy actions, 1 Cor. 10:31, and in them seek and serve that glorious end of God's honor, not so much in procuring thine own, as the good of Church, Common-wealth,

Neighbors and Family, &c. 3. By earthly employments, do not become an earth-worm. In using the world, grow not a worldling, and such a one as finds more sweetness and pleasure in worldly dealings, and the coming in of thy Profits, then in thy heavenly traffic and treasures through the practice and trade of Christianity.

III. In thy solitary seasons: 1. Single out some special profitable choice matter to meditate on all the while; thereby both to prevent the ordinary intrusion of many vain, foolish, noy some thoughts, impertinent wanderings, and woeful trifling out thy precious time; and also to keep thy spirits, and the powers of thy soul awork, lest as millstones wanting grist, grate and grind one another, they waste themselves in a fruitless barren melancholy. When canst thou be alone, and not have just cause, either to busy thy mind about some lawful affairs of thy Calling; or wrestle with some corruption, which troubles the peace of thy conscience, or break out into the praises of God, or some other holy passages of heavenly meditation, whereof there is so great variety and store? 2. Watch and withstand, with all godly jealousy and care, two dangerous evils: 1. Thoughts of pleasures from thy youthful sins, and unregenerate time, which at such times are ready to make re-entry, and very eager, being aided by the Devils cunning and hearts-corruption, to re-infect and pollute thy soul again with sensual filth, and renewed guiltiness. And in this point, take heed lest the Devil delude thee in the glory of an Angel, or by the flashes of his counterfeit light, cast into thy heart his secret wild-fire, and sparks of lust. For in thy solitary musing, thou mayest resume into thy memory, the abominations of thy former life, especially of that sin, which was thy minion-delight, and darling-pleasure, upon purpose to bewail and detest them; and yet without a very vigilant eye, the Devil in sinuating some secret

tickling's of wonted sinful sweetness; that which was intended for an exercise and increase of repentance, may cursedly end in the iteration and re-enjoyment of old filthy pleasures. 2. Take heed also at such times of acting any new sins, upon sensual suppositions, and imaginary plots: as of worldliness, lust, speculative wantonness, ambition, revenge, dishonoring God's providence by an unnecessary distrustful forecasting of fearful accidents upon thyself, family, goods, posterity, the State, &c. Some sons of Belial there are, who make no bones, as they say, of acting all manner of uncleanness (horrible impurity in the inward parts!) by the mere work of imagination. When they cannot compass and attain the real accomplishment of their furious and filthy projects in outward acts, and upon objects abroad, their abominable desires rebounding as it were, with an impetuous and unsatisfied rage upon their heated and envenomed passions, act and execute any kind of villainy, upon the invisible forge of a cursed contemplation. It is strange to consider, how many, who carry a counterfeit heaven in their outward behavior, should harbor such execrable hells in their hearts! 3. Let not pass such a golden opportunity for thy spiritual good, without some sweet comfortable conference with thy God in secret. Call and cry out towards Heaven for some special Graces, by which thou mayest be most enabled to glorify God most, and to keep in thy breast a cheerful and heavenly spirit, as for precious and incomparable jewels to be purchased with the loss of ten thousand Worlds, but not to be parted with for as many Worlds as thou hast hairs upon thy head. Begg with greatest earnestness, and extraordinary intention of spirit, mortifying grace, and spiritual strength, for the crushing and conquering of those special lusts, and unruly passions that most haunt thee, and hurt the peace of thy conscience. Let a sorrowful survey of all thy sins draw from thee some hearty groan, and

fervent ejaculations for mercy and pardon: or a summary view of God's blessings and favors towards thee, fill thy heart with many joyful, lowly, and most thankful thoughts, &c. Thus, or in the like manner, let some part of thy solitary time be sure to be seasoned with holy musings, and talk with God.

IV. Concerning company, I advise,

I. That thou never cast thyself into wicked company, or press amongst the profane, especially upon choice, voluntarily and delightfully; and abide no longer with them at any time, upon any occasion, then thou hast sound warrant, and a calling thereunto. It is uncomely, and incompatible with good conscience; it is not for the honor or comfort of God's children, to keep company, or familiarly converse with graceless men.

In which point to prevent misconceits and mistaking's, consider there is a double fellowship:

1. Common, cold, and more general. In treading, bargaining, buying, selling, saluting, eating and drinking together; and in other passages of humanity, and intercourse of civil society; to which charity, nature, necessity, or the exigence of our general, or particular calling do warrantably lead us.

2. Special, dear, intimate: In consultations and counsels about matters of special secrecy, greatest weight, and highest consequence. In spiritual refreshments, religious conferences, prayer, marriage, all manner of nearest engagements. In a free unreserved communication of their souls, mutual exchange of the thoughts of their hearts, faithful revelations of the spiritual state of their consciences one unto another, and in such like blissful pangs and passages of Christian love, and ardent sanctified affection.

The former of these the Christian must of necessity entertain, and exercise sometimes with the men of this world; except he will go out of the world, 1 Cor. 5:10. But the second fellowship is the Saints peculiar The Christian is bound out by the Book of God, the Law of heaven, upon his allegiance to his Lord and Sovereign, and by the common Charter of God's children, from conversing with delightful intimateness, and from the exchange and exercise of those special passages of dearest acquaintance with profane men, children of darkness, and enemies of God. For these and the like reasons,

1. He thereby incurs a double hazard: The one, of infection with sin: the other, of infliction of punishment.

1. He that toucheth Pitch, saith the Wise man, shall be defiled therewith; and he that hath fellowship with a proud man, shall be like unto him. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can a man go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? Prov. 6:27,28. Neither can any familiarly and intimately converse with a profane man, but he shall be corrupted.

There is a strange attractive, and imperious power in ill company, to empoison and pervert even the best dispositions:

1. By holding familiar correspondence with lewd companions, there first steals upon a man a secret and insensible dislike of his former sober courses: He begins within himself to censure, and renounce his former ways of innocence, and harmless conversation; as too restraining and distasteful to the ordinary liberty of youth, and common frailty of flesh and blood; and as too much dissweetened, and straitened with unnecessary strictness and abridgement.

2. Secondly, there slyly insinuates into his heart a pleasing approbation, and delightful assent to the sensual courses, and sinful pleasures of his lewd companions.

3. Thirdly, there follows a resolved, and habitual change of affections and conversation, a transformation into the manners and conditions of those with whom he doth so familiarly converse.

4. Fourthly, he grows ill-affected, and disconcerted towards good men and godly exercises, because in their profane, boisterous, and furious conventicles of good-fellowship, he hears them daily railed upon, jested at, belied, and slandered; and not a man amongst them to take their parts, and to stand on God's side. And therefore by little and little, he himself is also transformed into a scoffing Ishmael, a breathing-Devil, and so becomes at last, as much the child of hell, as any of that graceless company and damned crew. Thus, and by such steps and degrees as these, many, many times especially in the Universities, and Inns of Court, of good nature, honest disposition, and perhaps religious education, are by little and little caught and fearfully corrupted, and at length brought to horrible and utter confusion both of reputation and outward state, both of soul and body, by the infectious villainies of lewd and naughty companions.

But ordinarily God's children are not in such danger from notorious sinners, and from men of such desperate and reprobate conversation. For who in his right wits will run upon a man which he clearly sees hath the plague sore running upon him? What Christian in his right mind spiritually, having any fear of God in his heart, life in his soul, or tenderness in his conscience, will delightfully thrust himself into the company of swearers, drunkards, scorners, filthy talkers, profane jesters, or any fellows of such

infamous rank? Especially since the soul is a thousand times more capable of the contagion of sin, then the body of any infectious disease?

The hurt which the Christian doth take in this regard, is most from merely civil men, as such as only profess in form; who being more tolerable and plausible companions, and yet disacquainted with the great Mystery of Godliness, unseasoned with the power of inward sanctification, and unpracticed in the ways of sincerity, do secretly and insensibly infuse, if not a notorious infection with some scandalous sin; yet many times a fearful defection from zeal, forwardness, and fervency in the ways and services of God. Throw a blazing fire-brand into the snow, or rain, and its brightness and heat will be quickly put out and quenched: let a Christian but for a while abandon his holy conference, and comfortable communion with God's children, and plunge himself into the company of those who are but cold and careless, lazy and luke-warm Professors; and he shall in very short time find his zeal to be very much cooled, his forwardness abated, the tenderness of his conscience too much qualified with worldly wisdom; much dullness of heart, deadness of spirit, drowsiness, and heartlessness in his affections to holy things, and an universal decay of his graces insensibly to grow upon him.

In this respect many Christians do themselves much wrong, and afflict their souls with many unnecessary spiritual miseries. For they do sometimes unadvisedly, by reason of kindred, for old acquaintance, advantage, and carnal contentment, because of the worldly wisdom, immunity from gross sins, and other good parts of the parties, hold a too near, intimate, and delightful correspondence with such as are but only civil men, or Pharisees at the best, with whom spending most of their time, and they wanting both heart and skill to uphold any holy conferences, or to afford any reciprocal or

mutual help, in the feeling passages of sanctification, are occasions to put God's Children out of use and [habit] with the language of Canaan, from the embracement of many joyful considerations, and exercise of those comfortable Meditations, and holy conversation above, which Christian company would occasionally and seasonably put into them, and keep fresh and working in their minds; and by consequent, bereave them thereby of much zeal, comfort, feelings of God's favor, joyful springing's of heart, boldness in their ways, cheerfulness in the exercises of Religion, and that comfortable fruition of other prerogatives of Christianity; which many other of their brethren do, and they, by the benefit of religious companions, and delightful conversing with the Saints, might plentifully enjoy.

Apprehend this passage aright: I say, a Christian may be much worsened and weakened in his graces, by companying too much, and conversing delightfully with the mere civil man, or Whited Tombs: For he may spend with such men whole weeks, nay, months and years, and have not one word of sanctified discourse, and holy talk ministered unto him. Scarce a word to be had from them of the Word of God, and way to heaven; no conference of the secrets of Sanctification, of perplexities of conscience, of their everlasting abode together in the Mansions of heaven. Motions that way would be very irksome and tedious unto them: such talk would quickly beget silence, melancholy, sadness, and a desire to break off company. Now the Christian by this means, neither having his tongue exercised, nor his ears much acquainted with edifying Christian discourse, grows neglective of storing his memory with holy things, unzealous, and cold in the apprehensions of heaven, dull and heartless to godly duties.

If thus; what infection then from notorious and lewd companions? But above all, in this point the fellowship of the Papist is most pernicious; for

by him a man is in danger both of having his understanding and judgment corrupted with heresy; and his life and conversation infected with impiety. There are two steps and passages, as it were, out of the state of profaneness, into the Paradise of Christianity. 1. Illumination of the understanding with saving knowledge. 2. Sanctification of the heart with special grace. Now the Papist labors to pervert and empoison both. For commonly you shall find the Papist to be stigmatized, and branded with a double mark: He receives one immediately from the Beast, a brand of Idolatry: And Satan commonly fastens upon him another special mark, some notorious and scandalous sin in his conversation; as swearing, lying, uncleanness, the vanities of good-fellowship, Sabbath-breaking, or such like. For we must know, that Antichristianism cannot produce sanctification; and therefore you shall commonly find every Papist to lie in some reigning sin; howsoever formal devotion is the highest perfection attainable in that Antichristian state. By Popish company then a man is in danger of corruption, both in his understanding, and conversation: By the lewd, which yet make profession of God's Truth, of infection with notoriousness in conditions: By mere civil honest men, and formal Professors, of defection from zeal, and forwardness at the least.

2. As the Christian incurs by the company of profane men, evident hazard, either of infection with their sins, if they be notorious; or defection from zeal, and forwardness, if they be something more tolerable and formal: so he is every hour which he is in their company, without a warrantable calling, and just dispensation out of the Word, and from a good conscience, in great danger of being involved within the flames of the just confusions, and inwrapt within the compass of those outward curses and plagues which God's indignation enkindles and inflicts upon wicked men. All profane men,

being unreconciled to God, are every moment liable to all those miseries and fearful judgments, which either man or devil, any of God's creatures, or his own immediate hand can bring upon them: They are only respited and reserved by God's mercy, and deferred only unto those opportunities and seasons, which seem best and fittest to his holy Wisdom. Now, if when they light upon them (as they may justly at any time) any of God's Children be found amongst them unwarrantably and delightfully, it is righteous with God, that he receive his portion amongst them at that time, and be fearfully enfolded within the fury of the greatest temporal visitation. It is righteous with God, that if his own Child will needs be unwarrantably familiar with his enemy, that he also be partaker of any temporal plague, especially with his enemy, even to the loss sometimes of his natural life. Take then I beseech you the holy counsel of the blessed Apostle, Eph. 5:7. Be not therefore companions with them: And let his reason fright you out of their company: Let no man deceive you (saith he) with vain words: for, for such things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. [For such things] to wit, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, jesting, and such like. Take heed therefore of conversing with the practicers of these uncomely things.

2. Secondly, there must very shortly be an everlasting separation between the Christian and profane men: at the farthest, they must part upon their death-beds, and never see one another again unto the day of Judgment: and then they must shake hands for world without end. For there is set betwixt them, by God's immutable and irrevocable Decree, a vast and immeasurable gulf, which stands as fast and unremoveable, as God Almighty in his Throne of Majesty; so that they can never possibly meet. Between us and you, saith Abraham to the rich man in hell, there is a great gulf fixed, so that

they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. If it be so then, that after an inch of time, there must be betwixt them an endless divorce, and an unpassable distance through all eternity; it is best for the Christian to begin this separation and disacquaintance in time, and not to repose his special love, the sweetest and noblest of all his affections, upon an object where it must not eternally rest, nor intimately converse with him, whose company he shall not have hereafter in heaven everlastingly. Let him ever only afford the dearest pangs of his kindest affection unto God's Children, and convey the sweetest melting's of his heart, and the most passionate embracement's of his soul into their bosoms alone: for he shall be sure to meet them in heaven, and there the lesser streams of their former Christian love shall grow into a mighty torrent, and falling into the great and universal confluence of the united zeal's and Seraphical fervors of all the Saints and Angels, run with a sweet and everlasting current, into the bottomless and boundless Sea of all love and lovely excellencies, God himself, blessed forever.

3. Thirdly, a good man conversing with those which be graceless, doth very foully distain and obscure, if not quite lose his Christian reputation and credit with good men; for a man is still reputed to be of their humor and conditions, with whom he doth ordinarily and intimately converse. All flesh, saith the Wise man, consorteth according to kind, and a man will clean to his like. What fellowship hath the Wolf with the Lamb? So the sinner with the godly. Now it is a most disgraceful and discomfortable thing, to be justly cast out of the conceits and good opinions of judicious and understanding Christians. I would have a Christian never much trouble himself, or labor with too much curiosity and intrusion, too anxiously, vexingly, and solicitously to give the world satisfaction, for the unjust

censures, and disconceits of witless and worthless profaneness; (only he may thence take occasion to examine his heart more narrowly, to walk more warily, to live more holily, and pray more heartily.) Let profane men rage, and swell, and burst, in despite of gall, I would have him sweetly and calmly to enjoy those blessed comforts, which God's compassionate hand hath put into his heart. But methinks, he should much take to heart, and be very sorry for the just dislike and disconceit of true Christians, or for any scandal taken upon good ground, from unadvisedness and aberration in his carriage and conversation. As the Christian then desires to be dearly esteemed of the godly, and tenders the preservation of his good name with good men; which is rather to be chosen than great riches, Prov. 22:1, than precious Ointment, Eccl. 7:1, and maketh the bones fat, Prov. 15:30, which indeed is the most inestimable Jewel he possesseth in this life, next unto his own Crown of Christianity: I say, as he would maintain and uphold a good opinion and conceit of him, in the hearts and consciences of Christians, let him fly the company of profane men: for there is no reason he should be reputed God's friend, who converses familiarly with his professed enemies.

4. No profane man can heartily, and directly love, and affect a Christian for his zeal and spiritual graces; nay, naturally and ordinarily he disconceits and hates all holy impressions, wrought upon him by God's sanctifying Spirit: 1. Partly by reason of that everlasting irreconcilable, and implacable enmity and antipathy between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the Serpent; between light and darkness; Christ and Belial; Grace and profaneness: 2. Partly also, because every unregenerate man, though furnished with the best perfections and excellencies attainable in that state, thinks, that his lukewarmness, and formality is censured and condemned by the zeal and forwardness of the true Christian; and that if those gracious

endowments and holy strictness be real, and necessarily required, they plainly proclaim the damnableness of his estate, which he securely reposes upon, as sufficient for salvation. David, a man after God's own heart, and of a sweet and loving disposition, yet was most heavily pressed and pursued with much causeless spite, and this hatred even for his goodness: They that hate me without a cause, saith he, are more than the hairs of my head: They that would destroy me, and are mine enemies falsely, are mighty; so that I restored that which I took not, Psal. 69:4. And in another place saith he; They that hate me wrong fully, are many: they also that reward evil for good, are mine adversaries, because I follow goodness. But yet understand this further in the point. The expression and exercise of this hatred of the forwardness and zeal in the Christian, which naturally and ordinarily lurks in the heart of every profane man, may be sometimes restrained for advantage, and in policy; by accident, and for by-respects. The sting and fury of it may be weakened, and lessened by the ingenuousness of the unregenerate man, or by other good natural and moral parts in the Christian. Nay, I do not see, but that sometimes it may be, as it were, quite dashed, and confounded by the extraordinary innocence, and heroical height of spiritual excellencies in a good man: As Moralists say of virtue, that though it be ordinarily attended by envy, as the body with a shadow, yet it may grow so incomparable and glorious, that envy is glad to hide its head, and fly away like a weak mist from the Sun shining in his strength. As soon as virtue, say they, is grown out of ignorance, she entereth by and by into envy, till mounting aloft, as the Sun being vertical abateth all shadows; so she in the top, and height of perfection, all envy. Why may it not be so in zeal and piety, that though it be ordinarily persecuted with extreme hatred; yet sometimes it may attain that extraordinariness, incomparableness and

excellency, that hatred may even hate it self, for opposing such unreprouceable sanctity? But to my purpose: If it be so, that a profane man cannot possibly love a Christian heartily for his Christianity and Grace, but rather maliciously and mortally hate him; what heart can a Christian have to converse intimately and delightfully with a profane man? Who would ever vouchsafe his company, and afford the best of his time, and dearest of his affections, to a fellow, which disdains and despises the most precious Jewel he bears about him, I mean, his religious zeal; and labors powerfully, though insensibly, to dim the brightness, and distain the glory of it; either by the contagion of his notoriousness, or at least, by his formality, coldness, and unzealousness?

5. Fifthly, no Christian ought to enter league, or entertain fellowship with the enemies of God. It is absurd, that a member of Christ should exercise familiarity, and intimate passages of love with a limb of Satan. What earthly Prince could endure with patience, to have one of his nearest servants, and of chiefest trust, to be conversant continually amongst professed Rebels, and open Traitors to his Crown and dignity; or to converse intimately with his deadliest enemy? Would any great Man in the State, retain any as a special favorite, who should be inward with his greatest counter-factionist? What ingenuous child would delightfully digest that company, wherein he should hear his father in a foul and shameful manner disgraced and railed upon? How then should Almighty God hold him his friend, who is familiar with strangers to the life of God, and enemies to his Grace? How can that man look for the prerogatives, and protections of a child of God, who haunts such company with delight, where he hears daily his Almighty Father foully, and shamefully dishonored, perhaps, with oaths and

blasphemies, with obscenities and railings; at least, with many idle and profane speeches?

6. Sixthly, conversing with profane men, doth cross and overthrow a common Christian duty, which is this; In all companies, either do good, or take good, or both. For in this case, the Christian both takes hurt, and doth hurt: he hurts, 1. himself, because he throws himself upon temptation, and hazard of being infected with notoriousness, if his companions be very lewd, and profane; or at least, with formality and coldness; if they be but only civilly honest, or formal professors. 2. He hurts also others: 1. He hardens his companions in their unregenerate courses, because they think, he would not so familiarly converse with them, except he were well conceited of their spiritual state; and so they rest with security and confidence in their unregeneration. 2. He is a stumbling block to the weak Christian, who by looking upon his example, may be led awry from the straight path of his profession, and by taking thereupon liberty of imitation, may have his young beginnings of Grace choked and smothered by the delightful vanities of good fellowship, in the press of profane company. 3. He grieves also strong and understanding Christians, to see him so far forget himself, and disgrace his profession, as to converse with the enemies of God, and by his practice to persuade the world, that the base fooleries of good fellowship, are more sweet and tasteful, then the glorious pleasures of the communion of Saints.

7. There is another reason, which though it be not very obvious to men's apprehensions, or much taken notice of; yet in my understanding, it should be very powerful, and of very great weight, to drive Christians out of the company of unregenerate men, and to restrain them from a familiar and delightful correspondence, and conversing with them (except they have a

warrantable Calling, and the testimony of their consciences to converse with them for their conversion and spiritual good.) It is this: when an unregenerate man observes, that a Christian presseth into his company, desires to spend time with him, and is well enough content to exchange mutually many offices of intimate kindness; he presently conceives and concludes, that sure he sees in him matter worthy of Christian company, and endowments sufficient to rank him amongst the Saints; else he could not take such contentment in his conditions and conversation. Whereupon he is fearfully hardened in his present courses, and settles with resolution, confidence, and security upon the plausible deceitfulness of his unregenerate state; and thinks himself well, that he may both enjoy the pleasures of the present, and also a good testimony and hope of his rightness in the way to Heaven; because it is well known and acknowledged, that his companion both knows, and walks in the right path. And since he hath one to take part, he takes it not much to heart, that other Christians are more unfamiliar, and strange unto him; for he imputes it only to their sourness and unsociableness. Assuredly, there are many Christians very faulty this way, and have very much to answer for in this kind. They familiarly converse with unregenerate men; and because they would not displease and be distasteful, they say nothing unto them of the cursedness of their condition towards God, and of the fearfulness of their case, in respect of salvation. Hereupon they grow into a conceit, that they are well conceited of their spiritual state, and so walk far more resolutely and confidently towards Hell, by reason of the society and silence of their Christian companions. I think verily, that profane men do not only sometimes desire the company of Christians, to win reputation from the better sort, and to guild over the rottenness of their conversation with some

little tincture, and lesser splendor reflected from the glory of their Christianity; but also to purchase some counterfeit comfort to their consciences, and false hope unto their hearts, that their case is the better towards God, because God's children vouchsafe to keep company, and converse more familiarly with them.

8. But above all, for this purpose peruse often, and ponder well, 1. The effectual prohibitions in God's Book: 2. the protestations and practice of the Saints, 3. and punishments inflicted for familiarity with the ungodly. For the last, see 2 Chron. 19:2, and 20:37. For the second, see Psal. 26:4,5, Jer. 15:17, 2 King. 3:14. For the first, see 1 Cor. 5:11, Ephes. 5:11, Prov. 14:7, 2 Thes. 3:6, where he solemnly commands them in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they withdraw themselves from every brother that walks inordinately, &c. He aims specially in that place at idle persons; by consequent then, and good proportion, at more notorious fellows. If we must withdraw ourselves from those, who have leisure to be for all companies, at all times, upon all occasions, and are therefore accounted the only companions: how fast must we run from liars, swearers, whoremongers, drunkards, scorners, revelers, and fellows of such infamous rank? Prov. 4:14, where iteration of the same sense in variety of phrase, argues the necessity of the duty and earnestness of the Divine Penman to persuade; Enter not, saith he, into the path of the wicked; and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass by it, turn from it, and pass away. Deep apprehensiveness of the excellency and worth of the matter, or extraordinary fervency to impress and persuade the point, doth many times in Scripture clothe the same thing with diverse forms of speech, and variety of phrase.

2. Now in a second place: If thou desirest to converse with some of thine unconverted kindred, friends, neighbors, old acquaintance, &c. for their spiritual good, observe these three rules: 1. Let there be good probability, proportionably, of more power of grace, knowledge, sanctification, spiritual wisdom, Christian resolution, &c. in thee to convert them, then poison of unregenerate stubbornness, sensual malice, sinful wit, worldly wisdom, Satanical sophistry in them, to pervert thee. 2. See that thy heart be sincere, and that in the singleness thereof, thou seek truly their conversion, and not thine own secret contentment: for in this point, thine own heart will be ready to deceive thee. Thou mayest offer thyself into such company, with pretense and purpose to solicit them for salvation, and prevail with them about the best things; and yet before thou be aware, be plunged and ensnared in the wonted unwarrantable delights of good fellowship, pleasant passages of wit, idle and impertinent follies and familiarities, which thou wast accustomed to exchange and enjoy with them in thy unregenerate time. So that instead of the discharge of a Christian duty, thou mayest both hurt thyself, and harden them. 3. As Physicians of the body arm and animate themselves with strong repercussives, preservatives, and counterpoisons, when they visit contagious and pestilential patients: so in such cases, be thou sure to furnish and fortify thyself beforehand with prayer, meditation, the sword of the Spirit, store of persuasive matter, strength of reasons, and unshaken resolution, to repel and beat back all noisome insinuations of spiritual infection.

3. Into Christian company, which thou shouldest prize thine only Paradise and Heaven upon Earth; the very flower and festival of all thy refreshing time in this vale of tears, ever bring 1. A cheerful and lightsome heart. Methinks, though thou shouldest come amongst the Saints with a sad heart, and

something over-cast with mists and clouds of heaviness and discomfort; yet the presence and faces of those, whom hereafter thou shalt meet in Heaven, and there, with incomparable joy behold forever, clothed and shining with eminency and eternity of glory, should disperse and dispel them all, and infuse comfortable beams of heavenly lightsomeness and spiritual mirth. I know them, who being cast sometimes full sore against their wills, amongst profane company, are quite out of their element all the while, struck dead in the place, as they say, as solitary as in the silentest Desert. But let them come amongst Christians, and they are quite other men, as full of lightsomeness and life, as full of heart and Heaven, as if they had the one foot in the Porch of Paradise already, Sadness is not seasonable, where such precepts as these have place; Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. 2. A fruitful heart, full as the Moon with gracious matter to uphold edifying conference, and sanctified talk. Being forward and free without any hurtful bashfulness, or vain-glorious aim, both to communicate to others the hidden treasures of heavenly knowledge, which thou hast happily digged out of the precious quarry, as it were, of the great mystery of Grace, and also by moving of questions, and ministering occasion mutually to draw from them with a holy greediness the waters of life, for a reciprocal refreshing and quickening of the deadness and unheavenliness of thine own heart. And here it will be a profitable wisdom, to take notice of, and observe each other's singularity of gifts, and several endowments, and thereafter with wise insinuations, to provoke and press them, to pour out themselves in those things, wherein they have best experience and most excellency. Some are more dexterous and skillful in discussing controverted points: others in resolving cases of conscience; some, in discovering the Devils depths, and

treading the Maze of his manifold temptations: others, in comforting afflicted spirits, and speaking to the heart of mourners in Zion, &c. I am persuaded many times, many worthy discourses lie buried in the breasts of understanding men, by reason of the sinful silence, I think I may say so, and barrenness of those about them. And therefore Christians ought to be more forth-putting, active, and fruitful this way. 3. A humble heart, ready and rejoicing to exchange and enjoy common comforts, soul-secrets, heavenly consultations, with the poorest and most neglected Christian. If thou be haunted with the white Devil of spiritual pride, it is likely thou wilt be either too prodigal and profuse, and so engross all the talk, which is sometimes incident to new converts or counterfeits; or else too reserved and curious, and so say no more than may serve to breed an applause and admiration of thy worth; which is a very filthy and fearful fault. There is no depth of knowledge, no height of zeal, no measure of Grace; but may be further enlarged, more inflamed, blessedly increased by conference with the poorest faithful Christian: See Rom. 1:12, and 15:24, how Paul, that great learned and divinely inspired Doctor of the Gentiles, stood affected in this point.

V. But above all, be most busy with thy heart: for it is the root that either empoisons or ensweetens all the rest; that is the fountain, which causes all the streams of thy desires, purposes, affections, speeches, and the whole current of thy conversation, to run either muddy or clear. Ply therefore amongst others, these three points of special and precious consequence for the present purpose, with all seriousness and zeal.

1. Captivation and conformity of the thoughts and imaginations of thy heart, to the sovereignty and rules of grace. If thy change in words, actions, and all outward carriage were Angelical; yet if thy thoughts were the same,

and unsanctified still, thou wert still a limb of Satan. Purity in the inward parts, is the most sound and undeceiving evidence of our portion and interest in the power and purity of Christ's saving Passion and sanctifying Blood-shed: See Jer. 4:14, Isa. 55:7. Now, that thou mayest the better conquer and keep the thoughts of thy heart in subjection and obedience unto Christ, be persuaded and acknowledge 1. The pestilency of that wicked Proverb, Thoughts are free. It is true, the immediate invisible productions and projects of the heart, lie not within the walk of human Justice, neither are liable to the censure of earthly Courts and Consistories. But there is an All-seeing and Omniscient Eye in Heaven, to which, the blackest Midnight is as the brightest Noontide, Psal. 139:12, which sees our secretest thoughts afar off, ver. 2, and sets them in the light of his countenance, Psal. 90:8. Hence it is that many humble souls, sensible of their secret provoking the glory of God's pure Eye, are more grieved (setting aside the ill of example and scandal, ordinary attendants upon open and visible miscarriages) for the rebelliousness of their thoughts, then the exorbitancy of their actions. For the sting of these is something eased and lessened, as they think, by the absence of Hypocrisy, and because the world sees the worst. But concerning the other, it cuts them to the very heart, that they are not as well able to preserve their inward parts in purity toward the All-searching Eye of that God, who stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; as their words and actions in plausibleness towards man, who shall die, and the son of man, which shall be made as grass. Whereas then the natural man is wont to let his heart run riot and at random into a world of idle imaginations, without remorse or restraint; do thou make thy sanctification sure unto thyself, by this infallible sign, That thou sufferest the consideration of God's All-seeing Eye, the curb of the last Commandment,

and check of a tender conscience, to range thy thoughts into order, to confine and keep them within a holy compass from their vain and impertinent vagaries. 2. That thou must be accountable and answerable for every wandering thought, as well as for idle words and wicked actions. Now consider what numberless swarms of imaginations pass the Forge of thy fantasy every day; and therefore, if thou be not extraordinarily and exactly vigilant and eye-full over thy heart, thou mayest justly fear, that upon the opening and alighting of the book of thy conscience, at those two dreadful days, of Death, and the last Judgment, innumerable armies of exorbitant thoughts, which have lain in ambush as it were, in the secret corners of thy deceitful heart, will charge upon thee with a far heavier account than perhaps thou art aware of, or hast seriously thought upon heretofore. 3. That God's glory must as well shine in thy thoughts, in the invisible workings, intentions, desires, and elevations of the heart; as in thine outward conversation. As God exacts and expects honor and service from his Children, in words and works; so there is also a Thought-service, a Thought-worship, that I may so call it, which is very pleasing and precious in his eyes, as springing more immediately from the heart, wherein he principally delights; and because the secrecy of it is attended with more sincerity. Remember therefore to render with all reverence and zeal unto the Father of Spirits, and Lord of thy soul, the daily tribute of thy Thought-service, as well as the Tongue-service and Hand-service. And the rather and more plentifully: 1. Because opportunities, abilities and means may fail for outward performance, but the heart is ever at leisure and liberty to think nobly. No times, no tyrants, no wants or restraint, can hinder it from an invisible fruition of God's own Self, with thoughts of sweetest rapture and reverence, of love, and lowliest adoration; from bathing itself in the

meritorious Blood of the Immaculate Lamb, with thoughts of inexplicable peace, joy, and triumph; from cleaving to the promises of life, and diving into the Mystery of Grace with extraordinary dearness, purest delight, and victorious faith; from being as a mountain of Myrrh and Incense, sending up a spiritual Sacrifice of praise-full thoughts, infinitely admiring and magnifying the glory and goodness of that merciful Hand, which writ thy name with the golden Characters of his endless love, in the Book of Life from all beginnings: suffered the dearest and warmest Blood in His Sons Heart to be spilled as water upon the ground, for the washing of thy body and soul from sin; and after a span of time, will set a Crown of Eternity upon thy head, composed of all comfort, rest, and peace, joys, pleasures, and felicities, &c. And also because, besides God's more special acceptation, and more certain sincerity of this inward invisible service, it is ordinarily full of more spiritualness, intention, and life, by reason that it is nearest and most immediate to the object of Adoration. The best man, though he may labor to do his best every way, yet he shall find a difference and degrees in his ability to discharge, and the executions of his Duties, Devotions, and services towards God. His works do not ever answer with that exactness to his words: His words cannot express so to the life, the thoughts of his heart: The thoughts of his heart come infinitely short of the excellency of God. Those streams which are next to the well-head, are strongest and purest: The thoughts of a sanctified heart, laying hold upon, with immediate apprehension and nearest embracement's, that most amiable, holy, and glorious Object, God Himself, blessed forever, and his sweetest Attributes, give Him His due and reverent Attributions, with more heartiness, life, and heavenliness, than his words or Actions are wont;

though all a man's best and utmost, in thought, word, and deed, falls too fearfully short of that which we owe and ought to do.

2. A continual excubation and narrow watchful guard over thy heart. It is like a City, liable every moment both to inward commotion and outward assault. The fountain of Original impurity, though its main stream and bloody issue be stayed, and in some good measure stopped, by the sanctifying power of Christ's saving Blood; yet it doth still less or more bubble up rebelliously. The world doth labor continually with her three great battering Engines, of Pleasures, Riches, and Honors, to lay it waste, and rob it of all heavenly treasures. The Devil watches every opportunity to hurl in his fiery darts, to cast all into combustion, and thereby further to envenom and enrage the already too much empoisoned viciousness and impetuosity of our corrupt nature. Precious therefore, and worthy all practice, is that Precept of Solomon: Keep thy heart above all keeping. Prov. 4:23, which thou mayest do with more success and comfort; if first thou watch over the windows of thy soul, the senses, as the Worthies of old were wont with extraordinary ward; See Job 31:1, Psal. 119:37. It is incredible what a deal of pollution and ill the Devil conveys insensibly through these Flood-gates of sin, into their bosoms who are careless and watchless this way. To instance in the ear and eye: What balls of Wild-fire, as it were, doth many an obscene and filthy tongue set on fire of hell, throw thorough their ears into men's hearts, with rotten and ribald talk, which after begets within, worlds of speculative wantonness, and flames of Lust? Many false reports drop from the slanderers mouth into the ear, which after in the heart becomes the cursed seed of heart-burning, spite, and mental murder at the least. And such wicked weeds cannot but fructify very rankly, in such a naturally sinful soil. A Tale-bearer tells thee, that such a one said of thee so

and so, when as in truth it was neither so nor so. Thou presently thereupon conceivest thoughts of unkindness, displeasure, and it may be, of rage, against that man that never thought the ill. Here thou spillest innocent blood, for thy heart may kill as well as thy tongue and hand. It is fit therefore for every honest face to furnish and fill itself with frowns of distaste and indignation at the approach of any Tale-teller. As the North wind driveth away rain, so doth an angry countenance a back-biting tongue, Prov. 25:23. Concerning the Eye, David's woeful example may warn the holiest men to the worlds end, to be very watchful with a most restless and eye-full jealousy over that wandering sense. An idle glance upon Bathsheba, was like a thievish boy thrust in at a rich man's window, which lets in a number of villainous desperate Cut-throats, to ransack and rob the house; it being not resisted at the first, drew after it such a black and bloody train, that robbed his royal heart of much heavenly wealth, and wounded his soul as deeply and dangerously, as perhaps any of God's servants ever since.

2. Resist and crush every exorbitant thought, which draws to sin at the very first rising. Encounter it with this dreadful Dilemma: Say unto thyself; If I commit this sin, it will cost me invaluablely more heart-break and spiritual smart, before I can purchase assurance of pardon and peace of conscience, then the sensual pleasure is worth: If I never repent, it will be the death and damnation of my soul. See what a world of misery man brings upon himself, by giving way to the first wicked thought, *Disc. of true Happiness, pg. 150.*

3. Entertain ever with all holy greediness, and make exceedingly much of all good motions put into thy heart by the blessed Spirit howsoever occasioned, whether by the Ministry of the Word, mindfulness of death, Christian admonition, reading some good Book, some special cross, extraordinary mercy, anyway, at any time. Feed; enlarge, and improve them

to the utmost, with Meditation, Prayer, and Practice. So thou shalt preserve thine heart in a soft holy comfortable temper, and heavenward, which is a singular happiness.

3. Elevation, and often lifting up of the heart towards heaven. What Christian heart can endure to discontinue its sweet familiarity and humble intercourse with God for one day? Let thy broken heart therefore every day, besides solemn and ordinary ejaculations, Evening and Morning, and upon other special occasions, be sure 1. To bathe itself deliciously in the blissful depths of God's boundless mercies in Christ, that it may be happily kept, spiritually merry, thankful, and in heart to all holy duties. 2. To kiss sweetly the glorified Body of our crucified Lord, with the lips of infinitely dearest, and unexpressably affectionate love; though the distance be great, yet the hand of Faith will bring them easily together; that it may be preserved in peace, purity, and revengeful opposition unto sin; for as the application of his meritorious Blood is a sovereign Plaster to heal the wounded conscience, to turn Crimson and Scarlet into snow and wool; so me-thinks a serious and compassionate commemoration of the dear effusion thereof, should be both a precious corrosive to eat out the heart of corruption, and a special preservative to keep from sin; since sin was the principal in slaughtering the Lord of life. 3. To cast the eye of hope upon the glory, everlastingness, and unutterable excellencies of that immortal shining Crown above; which after this life (and this life is but a bubble, a smoke, a shadow, a thought) shall be set upon thy head by the hand of God: a very glimpse of the goodly splendor and ravishing beauty whereof, is able both to sweeten the bitterest villainies and basest wrongs from the world and wicked men; and to dispel those mists of fading vanities and hurtful fumes of honors, riches, and earthly pleasures, which this great dunghill of the

world, heated by the fire of inordinate lusts, is wont to evaporate and interpose betwixt the sight of men's souls and the bliss of Heaven.

VI. Be very watchful over thy most predominant and troublesome passion; whether it be fear, sorrow, love, anger, &c. All of them are unruly and raging enough, but yet commonly one over-rules all the rest, and plays Rex (as they say) in the unregenerate man; nay, too often offers to rise in rebellion even against the most sanctified soul.

Whatsoever it be, 1. In thy private morning sacrifice, be sure to lay on load of deepest groans and strongest cries for mortifying grace against it, and comfortable conquest over it. Let that period and passage of thy prayers be enforced and enlarged with an extraordinary pang of fervency, and feelingly sealed, as it were, with the most Seraphical Selah. 2. Cut off all occasions, whatsoever it cost thee, which may any ways stir, awaken and kindle it. Withdraw the fuel that ministers food unto that passionate flame, though it should be as painful unto thee, as the plucking out of thy right eye, or the cutting off of thy right hand. Assuredly, the pleasures of inward quiet, and sweet spiritual calmness of thy so understanding Soul, will infinitely recompense any pains in oppositions and resistances in that nature. 3. Consider seriously beforehand, what a deal of disturbance and unsettledness the visible exorbitancy and breaking of it out, will breed and bring upon thy inward man. It will be like a dead Fly in a box of precious ointment, disgrace all thy graces, and full foully darken the glory of thy profession. It will be like fire in the Thatch, and for the while cast into combustion, as it were, the whole frame of thy spiritual building, and turn the heavenly peace of thy appeased conscience, into a bitter tempest. Tell me whether after a lawless transgression of those bonds of moderation, to which thy Christian resolution hath confined it; and that it hath prevailed against thee with any

notorious excess; I say, whether at night thou find not thy spirit quite down and much deadened to the exercise of prayer, or any other evening duty? And if upon thy waking in the night, there should be any terrible wind, dreadful thunder, or other affrighting accident, whether thy heart would not smite thee upon that occasion, with much more fear and apprehensions of horror?

I will suppose, thy reigning, or rather rebelling passion (for I speak to the Christian) to be choler and anger: and then first listen to the counsel which the very moral Sages minister against this spiritual malady, and to the rules and remedies which the light of reason leads us unto.

1. Cut off (say they) the causes, and the effect will vanish. Quench the firebrands which enrage this fury, and thou shalt be at quiet: They are such as these:

1. Weakness of spirit, unmanliness of mind. Hence it is that old men, infants, and sick folks are commonly more choleric than others. Impotency and excess of passion ever argues the disgrace and inferiority of the understanding part, the noblest power of the soul. And therefore if we would be armed against the sallies and assaults of this domineering raging distemper, we must suffer the highest and heavenliest part of our soul to know and exercise its place and strength. We must not make our understandings under-lings, but give reason his right and regiment.

2. Self-love, a foolish doting upon and adoring ourselves, which springs from the cursed root of Self-ignorance, and quite puts out that light of Natures law in our consciences; Do as thou wouldest be done by. If before thou lose the reins to that short frenzy, thou wouldest suppose and set thyself in the place of the party, with whom thou art angry; and then say and do no more than if thine own person were the patient, it would be a notable means

to curb thy choler, and keep the credit of dispassionateness and moderation, and make thee patiently suffer that which perhaps thou hast often confidently offered to others.

3. An overtenderness and delicate niceness in bearing wrongs: an impetuous impatency for being abused: (Whereas insensibility and contempt would better become a great spirit:) an effeminate facility to be moved and touched with every trifle. A spot or wrinkle upon their garment, a dish misplaced upon their table, some error in their dressing; a Bird, a Dog, a Glass, &c. or some lesser toy will turn some kind of people quite out of tune, and put them out of their humor, into a pelting chafe, as they say. Great minds and victorious over this furious Arch-Rebell, are not moved but with great matters. It is a special point of manly wisdom, to pass by many petty provocations to wrath, without notice or acknowledgement, without wound or passion; and to digest many times the brawling's and indiscretions of hasty men, with the same patience that Surgeons do the injuries and blows of mad men, when they let them blood.

4. Credulity, lightness in believing whatsoever comes first to the ear: That is the high way to hold choler still in combustion. For so the tongues of slanderers, Talebearers, Whisperers, Pick-thanks, will prove as so many Bellows blown by the Devil himself, to keep this fire in height and fullness of flame.

5. Curiosity, an itching humor, and needless inquisitiveness to know everything that is done or said. If a man will needs be so meddling; he shall find matter enough to fill his gall. Some men, out of this humor, are eager to know what is said against them, in such and such company, listen to hear what their servants talk concerning them, and if a letter fall into their hands wherein they think themselves to be mentioned, they will make no bones,

against the laws of humanity, to break it open. Busie-bodies in this kind never want wrath and woe. Antigonus, as it is said of him, was wise to abandon this vanity. For when he heard two of his subjects speaking ill of him in the night near his Tent, willed them to go further off, lest the King should hear them.

6. Covetousness, the Cut-throat of Grace, and canker of the soul, like an eating insatiable Wolf, will either still feed upon gain, or else gnaw upon the heart with fretting: and therefore the very loss of a penny, sometimes the omission of a good bargain, the miscarriage of some domestical trifle, the death of a beast, &c. will presently put a covetous man into choler: for his eyes are so earthly, that they look only upon the secondary, not upon the supreme cause.

7. A conceit of being contemned by others in word, deed, countenance. Many are so weak this way, that if they spy but any secret smiling, two whispering together in the company, or any talking, especially with their eyes now and then cast towards them; they presently think, that themselves certainly are their aim, and object of their scornful observation; and so grow sour, out of tune, and unfit for company all the while after. Such as these are extremely troubled, and take on to themselves, if they have not the chief place, and upper hand at meetings, respect and resalutation from those that they salute, exact observance, and obeisance from their inferiors, the wall from all comers, if they be not begun unto in matters of complement and services of humanity, &c.

A riddance and restraint of these and the like maladies of the mind, will be a notable means to prevent and hinder the assaults and surprise all of this furious and foul fiend.

2. But if at any time thou feel this Viper to receive heat in thy bosom, and that occasions of choler are offered, then say they:

1. Contain thy body in quiet, and tongue in silence. The stirring and agitation of thy body, by stamping or flinging about, inflames the blood and humors, and the walking of thy tongue keeps both the passionate heat in thine own heart, and many times sets on fire those that thou art angry with. The barking of one Dog sets all the curs in a town a bawling. Thy breaking forth into raging terms, may raise the spirit of raving in others: And therefore silence is a singular cooler to this choleric distemper. If the swelling and boisterous waves rebound from the soft and even sands, there is no great ado; but if they encounter a Rock, they return with great turbulency, and turn into foam. Silence or a soft answer stops the overflowing of the gall on both sides; but if fury be set upon with rage, they grow both almost stark mad for the time.

2. Give reason leave to interpose and resolve. It was good counsel which was given to Augustus; That when the object and occasions of choler were in his eye, he should not be moved, before he had pronounced over the letters of the Alphabet. It is as absurd for a passion to usurp and domineer over judgment, as for an intemperate Scold to justle a reverend Judge out of his place; and there to take on in her talkative and scurrile manner. If thou give the swinge and reins unto it at the first rising, it will presently quite banish reason and judgment, and be like a man that puts the Master out of the house, and sets it on fire, and burns himself alive within: or like a Ship that hath neither Sterne nor Pilot, nor Sails, nor Oars, exposed to the mercy of the waves, winds and tempest in the midst of a furious Sea. 3. Divert to some other business, company, place, pleasant employment, thoughts of

content, &c. These are notable coolers, and very convenient to flake this passionate fire, when it first begins to burn in thy bosom.

3. Habituate thy heart, and keep it exercised and seasoned with considerations: 1. Not only of melancholy, a feral passion, and other bodily distempers, which it naturally breeds, by stirring choler, heating the blood, and the vital spirits; but also, even of the brutish deformities and ugly distortions with which this rage disfigures those which are transported with it; as the fieriness of the eyes, inflammation of the face, furiousness of the looks, extraordinary panting of the heart, beating of the pulse, swelling of the veins, stammering of the tongue, gnashing of the teeth, a very harsh and hateful intention of the voice, and many other extremely impotent and unmanly behaviors. Hence it was, that angry men were anciently counseled in the heat of their fit to look themselves in a Glass. The monstrous representations of that deformed Fury, were able forever to fright them out of their choleric humor. 2. Of the sweet loveliness, and amiable acceptance of a mild unpassionate spirit. It is the sinew, as it were, and cement of all delightful society, the flower of humanity, the very sweetness of civil conversation. As it is a singular preservative to keep a man's own heart in much calmness and quiet; so its also an attractive Load-stone to draw unto him the hearts and loves of others. 3. Of the aim and aspirations of moral wisdom which labors to draw a man's heart to that unshaken, constant and comfortable temper; that beautiful and noble disposition, which resembles the highest Region of the air, where there is no over-shadowing clouds, nor tempestuous thunders, but perpetual fairness, serenity, and peace.

I have the longer insisted upon these moral instructions, purposely to make Christians ashamed, who besides the honest extractions of purer reason, have also rules of Religion, and heavenly remedies; and yet are too

often overtaken with this mental drunkenness, as some call it. For you must know, that all this while I mean hasty, unjust, and exorbitant Anger, which misses in measure, Object, end, season ableness, or other circumstances. For there is a sinless and holy Anger, and therefore saith Paul, Ephes. 4:26. Be ye angry, and sin not. Upon the describing and limiting of which, it is neither incident nor seasonable for me at this time to insist.

Now then in a second place, for religious directions, and more immediately drawn from divine learning, consider:

1. That all thy wrongs and unworthy usages, all thy injuries and indignities, crosses and uncomfortable accidents, that shall ever any way befall thee, are fore-appointed, ordered, and disposed by God's wise and merciful providence, and that to thy spiritual and everlasting good. This very one thought, that God is ever the principal Agent, kept fresh and on foot in thy mind, will be of sovereign power to cool and beat back any intemperate heat, which might either rise in thine heart, or rage in thy tongue against his instruments; and cause thee many times when thou art chafing ripe, and ready to rave, to lay thy hand upon thy mouth, and say unto God sweetly with David, Psal. 39:9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. And not like a child, to beat the place that hurt it; but rather to walk more heedfully: or a foolish Curr, to snarl and snatch at the stone, never looking after the thrower: or a mad man, to bite the sword that sticks in his flesh; but rather to pull it out softly, and get to the Surgeon. There was matter and malice enough in the mouth of Shimei, to have made David's royal heart naturally to rise with implacable indignation against that dead dog: unkindness and cruelty enough in the hearts of Joseph's brethren, to have made him forever irreconcilable: wrong and villainy enough in the carriage of the Chaldeans, to have set Job on fire with

rage and revenge against them: But these holy men by practice of the present point, and from the strength of this consideration which I now commend, for the restraint of choler, procured a great deal of sweet peace and patience to their own hearts, pleasedness and acceptation with God, admiration and example to posterity: For they glanced by the means and the men, and fastened their eyes upon their Maker, and the first Mover. Joseph looked beyond his Brethren's barbarous dealing with him, and said, The Lord sent me before you: Job beyond the Chaldeans lawless outrages, and said, The Lord hath taken away: David beyond Shemeis dogged rancor, and said, The Lord hath bidden him: Jesus Christ Himself, blessed forever, looked beyond the Pharisees, Priests, Jews, Judas and the Soldiers, to his Fathers Cup, John. 18:11. This Cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink? When he commanded Peter to sheathe his sword. This Christian counsel passeth that which was given to Augustus: when the objects and occasions of choler are in thine eye, or ear; when thou art any ways wronged, belied, railed upon, spurned at, or trampled upon by the feet of honored insolency, or dunghill malice, before thou inwardly fret, or break out into any impatient behavior, say first seriously and feelingly in thine own heart, This is from God, for my good: or with old Eli; It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3:18. And let it forever snaffle, nay, sweetly compose the hastiness and sourness of thy corrupt nature in case of choler.

2. Let the wonderful patience of that mighty Lord of Heaven and Earth, who is able with one word to cast all the creatures in the World into Hell; nay even with the breath of his mouth to turn Hell, and Heaven, and Earth, and all things, into nothing; I say, let his patience against the infinite intolerable, and endless provocations of his own most obliged creatures,

who like so many desperate traitors, live and lie continually in open rebellion against so great a Majesty, be a Pattern and Precedent unto thee a silly worm, dust and ashes, earth, or anything that is naught; of proportionable forbearance (if there could be any proportion between infinite and finite) towards thy fellow-creatures. How many black and blasphemous mouths are incessantly open against his blessed Majesty? With what damned oaths do they tear, and re-crucify the precious Body of his glorious Son, which sits at his own right hand? With what lies and slanders do they revile his Ambassadors, and vilify his Chosen? How many graceless wretches do willfully and obstinately profane his Sabbaths, pollute his Sacraments, and turn their backs upon his Word? How many do daily turn themselves into beasts, by their swinish drunkenness, to the great reproach of mankind, and dishonor of their reasonable nature? How many inclosing Nimrods, and cruel Landlords, do grind the faces of the poor; Nay, pluck off their skins, tear their flesh, break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and eat the flesh of God's people? In a word; How many incarnate Devils do march up and down the earth, with hearts and hands as full as Hell, with all manner of mischief, lewdness and rebellion? So many, and with such extreme insufferable audaciousness and impudency, that, as a learned Divine speaks, If but any tender-hearted man should sit but one hour in the Throne of God Almighty (if it be fit so to suppose) and look down upon the earth, as God doth continually, and see what abominations are done in that hour, he would undoubtedly in the next set all the World on fire, and not suffer his wrath to be pacified, or the fire to be quenched. And yet for all this, our gracious God in the meantime, though he be armed with his own irresistible omnipotency, and a thousand Charets in the Whirlwind; though he have ever in a readiness all the Angels

in Heaven, all the Devils in Hell, all the Creatures in the World; nay, the very hands and consciences of profane wretches, and all that provoke the eyes of his Glory with their pollutions, to be the instruments and executioners of his just wrath upon their sin; yet, I say, our gracious God opposes his infinite patience against all these restless outrageous provocations. He sweetly and fairly tempers and moderates in the meantime his most just and causeful indignation, to see if the bountifulness of his forbearance and longsuffering will lead them to repentance. Be thou then forever ashamed to take on for every trifle; to break patience upon every trivial provocation; to turn Lyon in thine own house, and which is common in carnal worldlings, to rage with extreme folly and baseness against thy wife, children, servants, cattle, or anything that comes in thy way, for every cross accident, worldly loss, domestical miscarriage: nay, many times to torture thine own heart, and trouble others in this kind upon meet mistakings, groundless surmises, and misconstructions: but rather take this gracious lesson from the Lord Jesus his own mouth, Matth. 11:29. Learn of me, for I am lowly of heart; and an example of patience from his first Martyr, Act. 7:60. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

3. Let the sweet experience of God's patient and merciful dealing with thee, soften thine heart with a compassionate sense of other men's weaknesses, and a melting forwardness to forgive. If he out of the riches of his mercy hath remitted unto thee ten thousand Talents, what a base wretchedness were it to fly in the face of thy fellow-servant, and to take him by the throat for a hundred pence? If he entreated thee of all loves, and with all longsuffering, to come into his stretched out arms of mercy, when thou layest wallowing abominably in the gore-blood of thy many scarlet and crimson sins; foughtest on the Devils side, to the loss of the very life-blood

of thy soul; and every time thou camest to the Lord's Supper, shedst the precious blood of his blessed Son: what a shame is it unto thee to fall a raging, and swell with anger, for the mere over-sight, many times, unwilling miscarriage, and unpurposed error of those, perhaps, which otherwise observe thee with obsequiousness and love?

4. If a man will not be moved with more fair and ingenuous motives, to master and mortify this Bedlam rage (I speak in this passage to him that hates to be reformed:) let him be amazed, and amend for shame; since the holy Ghost hath charged every man, not to meddle, or make any league of friendship with him, while he nourisheth, and gives the reins to this bosom-Rebell. Make no friendship with an angry man: and with a furious man thou shalt not go, Prov. 22:24. What a monster is a man of anger, that Solomon should set such a brand upon him; whereby everyone is warned to beware of him, and fly from him, as from a nettling, dangerous, unsociable creature?

A word or two of another passion, before I pass out of the point, and that is Fear, which I had not touched at this time, had it been only a Rack, whereon the hearts of covetous, ambitious, and carnal men are woefully rent, and torn, and tortured all their life long; and not also a cruel engrosser of too much golden time even from God's children, not without impressions of much fruitless sadness, and unnecessary discontent.

The vanity and tyranny of this passion is specially seen and exercised: 1. In putting all real stings into imaginary evils, and drawing true and bitter sorrows, from supposed sufferings. 2. In an over-greedy apprehension and anticipation of sorrows to come, so that a man by too much forethoughtfulness, and painful preconceit, doth suffer them many times, before they seize upon him.

1. For the first, who feels not the phantasticalness of opinion to forge, and fasten upon him many dreadful objects; which of themselves have no vigor to vex, because no real being and existence, yet truly torture and afflict, by the only strength of imagination?

Thus one eats his own heart with grief for loss of those riches, and that superfluous wealth, which if he had ever still possessed, he would never have used. Another lies under the continual slavery of restless fear, lest fire or robbery, some alteration in the State, or desolation of war, should disperse his hoard, or hazard his temporal happiness. One is haunted with much thoughtfulness and carking, what shall become of his children after his death; what men will say of him when he is gone; lest his wife should marry after his departure. (For naturally our minds are so vain, that besides the abundance and burden of present cares, they will transport our desires and affections beyond our selves and being.) Another frettingly fears, that he shall be undone in a dear year, or the next Rot of sheep, and tires himself with variety of plots for comings in, for many years to come, when many times he dies in the meantime. Some take up too much precious time, from present and more profitable meditations, by troubling their hearts, lest, if the times turn, they should not be able to endure the fiery trial; whereas afterward, perhaps, they end their life in the peaceful noon-tide of the glorious Gospel. Others upon thought, or talk of death, are ready to entertain fearful apprehensions, lest they should disgrace their Christian life with an uncomfortable end, and by some extraordinary temptation, raving, furious carriage, lie open to the worlds interpretation, sinister censures, and misconstructions of their former courses; when as after, it may be, they conclude their days calmly, in good memory to the last gasp, without any storm, or cloud of feared horror and discomfort; (except former distrustful

fears justly bring upon them that which they feared.) For since everyone, whose life hath been consecrated to God's glory with truth of heart, doth certainly pass thorough those dreadful pangs and last pain, into pleasures endless and unspeakable; he ought also to submit with all patience and quiet, to glorify him, and to be serviceable to his secret ends, with what kind of death he please; whether it be, 1. Glorious, and untempted: 2. Discomfortable, by reason of bodily distemper, and by consequent, interpretable by undiscerning spirits: 3. Mingled of temptations, and triumphs: 4. Or ordinary, and without any great show, or remarkable speeches, after extraordinary singularities of an holy life, which promised an end of special note and observation.

2. For the second, besides these utterly unnecessary and merely imaginary miseries; many fearful spirits especially haunted with the humor of melancholy, will not suffer also certain and inevitable evils, which at length must needs befall them, to sleep, and keep in their stings, until the time appointed: but many times awake them by the cry of Fear, like so many sleeping Lions, and cowardly provoke them with timorous expectation to rent their hearts, and sting terribly before the time. Thus our vain minds torment us more with the fear of evils, then with the evils which we fear; spur us on with much unmanly folly, to meet in the mid-way; nay, to overtake, out-run sorrows to come, and make us a thousand times miserable with one individual misery.

For instance: Thou hast a child, and, perhaps, but one which thou lovest most dearly; for that affection which would be severely strong towards ten, or how many soever, is united in it alone. Thou enjoyest a wife, whose death would be unto thee, as the loss of half thy heart; and so proportionably of any worldly comfort. Now certain it is, thou must at

length part from all these, or what else soever most dear and desirable things in this life, they must be taken from thee, or thou from them. In this case then, if thou give way and forth unto this faint-hearted tyrant, and malicious passion, it will wound thine heart many and many a time with sense of their loss, before thou lose them: and mingle amidst thy dearest and most doting apprehensions of their sweetness and worth, many bitter thoughts of the day of divorce, and stings of much worldly grief (for such only I mean) from a torturing preconceit of painful heartbreak at parting. But the most tormenting rack in this kind, upon which this tyrannical passion doth much terrify and tear the hearts of carnal men specially, is death: It is called, the Prince of terror, by reason of its own extreme inevitable pangs; and to them also it is a certain passage to torments without end, and past imagination: and therefore if their consciences be not desperately seared, and sealed up securely with the spirit of slumber against the Day of vengeance; they are wont to die almost every day, by a slavish fear of death: see Heb. 2:15. O death, saith the wise man, how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things! Oh how the heart of such a man doth shrug together for horror, quake like an Aspen leaf, and die all the while, when this fear doth represent unto it in the glass of his imagination, the grisly forms and ugly face of death, with those other dreadful circumstances, as the wailings and out-cries of wife, children and friends about his last bed, parting from all worldly pleasures forever, rotting in the grave, dragging to the Tribunal and terror of the last Day, &c.!

Besides these imaginary sufferings, and untimely sorrows, take notice of three other base pestilent effects and mischiefs, which this natural, slavish, distrustful fear (for that I only mean in the whole point) puts upon a man. 1.

It may bring upon him the thing which he fears: by fearing to become miserable, he may become that he fears, and so turn his vain fear into certain miseries; according to that of Solomon, Prov. 10:24. That which the wicked feareth, shall come upon him. And that of Isa. 66:4. I will bring their fears upon them. Thou hast a wife, a child, an outward state, an hie place, which thou art immoderately afraid to lose; now this very distrustful fear derogating from the glory of God's merciful providence, which sweetly and wisely disposeth all things, may justly provoke him to deprive thee of them, whereas otherwise, thou mightest have enjoyed them still. 2. It robs and bereaves thee of the kindly relish, and comfortable enjoyment even of good things. A man can take no delight in the fruition of that good, which he feareth to lose. Life itself is loathsome, if a man slavishly fear to die. That good breeds the truest present contentment, against the loss whereof we are always prepared. And therefore those who live in continual fear to lose their child, goods, liberty, life, or any other thing that is dear unto them, loose a great deal of that honest joy and allowed pleasure they might have, even in these outward things. 3. It dejects and debases his noble nature, below the miseries and baseness of beasts in this point: for they are fenced from this folly and vanity, by the benefit of their weakness, and want of reason; never re-afflicting themselves with evils past, or fearing any to come; but thorough their whole life enjoy entirely and with full security, all contentment's and pleasures incident to their natures, save only when they are pinched with sense of present pain. What a shame then is it to man, who being honored with the excellency of an understanding, reasonable, and provident spirit, whereby he out-shines all other creatures, like an Angel upon earth, should by the abuse and mis-employment thereof, make it a

means unto himself, to become more miserable in this respect than a brute beast?

Now many and sweet are the places and promises in God's Book, which may serve as precious counter-poisons, and cordials, against this carking venom, which haunts with too often insinuations, even the most heavenly mind; but eats continually like a Canker into the carnal heart: They are such as these; I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13:5. Shouldest thou fall into the fiery trial, assuredly thy merciful God would either supply thee with a supernatural and extraordinary power and patience over that most exquisite pain; or else, abate and lessen the rage of the flames for thy sake. All things work together for good, to them that love God, Rom. 8:28. Sin, in it own nature, is the deadliest and rankest poison to the soul; and in itself, the greatest evil that is or can be; yet God's infinite Power and Wisdom, which at first drew light out of darkness, as a skillful Apothecary deals with poison, so orders and tempers it to his, that by accident it proves medicinal: much more doth He turn to their good, crosses, disgraces, losses of earthly things; poverty, want, life, death, anything, everything. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. 10:13. It is God's Childs peculiar, in the case of afflictions and all future troubles, to expect supportation in them, benefit by them, deliverance out of them. He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, Rom. 8:32? If Jesus Christ be ours, it is infinitely absurd to fear slavishly, either hurt by ill, or want of good. He is incomparably more worth then ten thousand worlds, were they all extant. If thou enjoyest then such a Jewel, what a cursed vanity is it to torture and tear thy heart with fear of any earthly loss, or of ever being prevailed against by any

created power? Take yet more spiritual armor and Heroical resolution, against the assaults of this cowardly Tyrant, which doth so unworthily afflict the spirits of men, not only with imminent ills, but also with those which are not, and perhaps shall never be, nay sometimes, which cannot possibly be, out of those two sweetest Psalms, for promises of future protection, 91, and 121. Isa. 43:2. But the special preservative, which at this time I would commend unto you, against this distrustful hearts-poison, may be extracted from Christ's own words, Matth. 6:34. After many strong and precious Arguments against thoughtfulness and carking, our heavenly Doctor concludes, Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day, is the evil thereof. Whence I collect and counsel, that the Christian ought, in respect of any torturing care, or carking forecast, to unite and confine his thoughts, the workings and agitations of his spirit, to the managing of the affairs, and mastering the miseries of the present day. The strongest mind and best composed, is weak enough to sustain the brunt and encounter of every days crosses. Temporal troubles, or spiritual temptations, fighting's, without, or terrors within, are the certain portion of the Saints in this vale of tears. And what day so fair comes over the Christians head, wherein he escapes Scot-free, as they say, herein? Since therefore every day brings forth sorrow sufficient for the exercise of the retiredst presence of the most recollected spirit, and the heartiest man shall have his handful, in passing patiently and profitably thorough present troubles, which many times fall as thick upon him, as one wave in the neck of another; what a base and unworthy weakness is it, to unfit and disable our already too weak minds, for a comfortable dispatch, and digesting of daily uncomfortable occurrence, by such needless, senseless, fruitless distractions, vagaries of

vanity, and Utopian peregrinations? As either 1. To lose them in the endless maze of imaginary afflictions: 2. Or to waste them by untimely wrestling with certain evils to come: 3. Or wound them with a painful remembrance of sorrows already past. For some there are so over-greedy of grieving themselves, and transported with the tyrannical vanity of their own minds, that besides their trouble with present, feigned, and future miseries, collect also matter of mournfulness from time past. For instance: Thou hast lost thy dearest child, which is one of the extremist earthly crosses, and goes nearest the heart, but long since, so that if reasons from reason and Religion asswaged not the immoderation and excess of thy sorrow; yet time hath worn out, and wiped away thy tears, and made thee weary of weeping: but notwithstanding, thy vain mind will not suffer that grief, which even length of time hath buried long ago, to lie quietly in the grave, but draws into consideration, and remembers for the nonce, its speeches, favor, pretty behavior, and other lovely circumstances, to make thy heart bleed afresh, and wring from thine eyes new torrents of tears, &c. Sovereign therefore against these Harpies and devourers of the heart, is that counsel of Christ, which I have commended unto you from his own mouth; seconded also by the Apostle, Philip. 4:6. Be careful for nothing: That is, with tearing and torturing the heart, with carking, thoughtfulness, anxiety, fretting, impatiency. Do not waste and weaken thy mind, immoderately, unseasonably, imaginarily, untimely, with distrustful anguish, pensiveness, and base prostitution of the flower and sinew of thine immortal spirit, to fruitless and endless impertinencies and mis-employments. For by the way, we must take notice and acknowledge, notwithstanding what hath been said against carking, and other needless distractions and exorbitancies of vain minds; that a moderate, Christian, provident care and fore-cast, is both

convenient, and commanded; both for provision of things necessary, and prevention of dangers. But this is not distressful, but delightful, because enjoined by God: See 1 Tim. 5:8. (For performance of God's Commandment, and the very act of Obedience with sincerity, should beget much spiritual sweetness, delight, and joy in the heart.) And a fair, easy, unangry providence for things needful and time to come, sweetened with the life of Faith, and a patient reliance upon God's wise and merciful disposing all our affairs, and their success, is one thing: and a restless carking, and pursuit after things unnecessary, imaginary, and sometimes impossible, embittered with many slavish fears of feigned or future evils, is another. It is profitable also to gather matter from time past, by contemplation of youthful pollutions, crosses, and corrections for sinful courses, companions in iniquity, or any other aggravating circumstance, for the increase of godly sorrow, and hatred of sin. But this is joyful, and easeth the heart: for howsoever carnal joy and sorrow can never consist together at the same time; yet that which is Christian, sweetly ought, and may, of what sort soever the sorrow be. For first, causes of it, from without, as reproaches, persecutions, shame, crown the Christians head with abundance of glory, his heart with joy, his soul with blessedness, 1 Pet. 4:14, Acts 5:41, Matth. 5:10.

Secondly, if it be inward, for sin and corruption, there is great matter of much joy; for it sweetly signifies the softening and melting of the heart, and by consequent, the presence of God's sanctifying Spirit. Such tears as burst out of a heart oppressed with grief for sin, are like an April shower, which though it wet a little, yet it begets a great deal of sweetness in the herbs, flowers, and fruits of the earth. A great man guilty of high Treason, comes to the Block to lose his head: In the very nick, when he is ready to lay down

his neck, a gracious Pardon is shown from the King, whereupon he bursts out abundantly into tears, springing partly from an angry indignation against himself, for his traitorous carriage towards so tender-hearted a Prince, partly from an inexplicable joyful sense of his own safety. It is proportionably so, when we mourn for Him whom we have pierced, and in Evangelical repentance. (God hath so mercifully ordered all things for his, that if they be not wanting to themselves, they may be ever merry, and find continual matter of rejoicing: See 1 Thes. 5:10. For he well knows what great need their poor hearts have of this joyful affection; both to sweeten their outward sufferings and bitterness from the world, and also to season their spiritual sacrifices and services unto himself:) And besides, it is one thing, to rake with our remembrance into the grave of buried griefs, for sharpening the teeth of worldly sorrow, to eat our hearts: Another thing, to make our memories minister matter from former times, of more humiliation under God's mighty hand, deeper detestation of our abominable vileness, and to make our hearts many and many a time melt again, and bleed afresh with comfortable softness, and godly sorrow for youthful sins.

VII. Prize and ply, as a most sweet excellency, and comfortable perfection in Christianity, a right and religious ordering of thy tongue. It is very material, and of special importance, for preservation both of outward and inward peace. Original corruption hath naturally put upon every man's tongue an empoisoned fiery edge, whereby like a sword in a Bedlams hand, it kills and slays on all sides, woefully wounds his own conscience, infects and envenoms mortally the souls of the present, mangles the good names of the absent with deadly malice, and so bathes itself remorselessly in continual bloodshed; (for there is heart-murder, and tongue-murder, as well as hand-murder) until the attainment of this grace, and mortifying

circumcision of such an unruly evil. That it may therefore neither be unseasonably idle, nor sinfully exercised, besides many other caveats, and constant watchfulness, take notice of, and to heart and practice:

I. That much and generally neglected duty of Christian reproof.

By reason of that general and common fellowship, whereof I gave a taste and touch before, (of his arbitrary and intimate company, every Christian makes conscience of better choice) which thou must sometimes entertain and exercise with the men of this world, except thou wilt go out of the world; thou shalt meet now and then upon unavoidable necessity, and by the exigency of thy calling, with men of intolerable conversation, and very scandalous discourse; and at unawares, and unwillingly fall amongst such companions, as will swear, blaspheme God's Name, talk filthily, slander the Ministry, rail against good men; besides many other scurrile, base, and profane speeches; much froth and folly in this kind. Now in this case ordinarily, profane men meddle not. They hold it a point of preciseness to mar the mirth, and cast the company into dumps of melancholy, by calling sin into question. They love not (as they say in their hearts) to be displeasing and unplausible, where themselves gain nothing, and perhaps do no good to the party. They are commonly old-excellent in railing upon, and slandering a good man in his absence; but they are stark-naught, and nobody in reproofing a notorious wretch unto his face. If they open their mouth this way, it is commonly in jest, in bravery, in form, in derision, for some Ones sake in the company, who, they know, cannot endure it; or at best, out of a civil detestation of outrageous villainy, and furious blasphemies of God's glorious Name. But in such cases, the Christian is truly solicitous and zealous; very much troubled, and careful how to frame and hold a serious, wise, and seasonable contradiction to the language of hell, which consisteth

in oaths, lying, slandering; in obscenities, railings, contemptuous insolencies against the Ministry and ways of God, defense of Popery, and in such rotten and Bedlam talk. He dares not many times in such company, for his heart hold his peace, lest thereby he be guilty in some degree. 1. Of the parties going on in sin. 2. Of betraying God's glory, by a cowardly and unchristian silence: and 3. For fear of wounding his own conscience. The omission of the discharge of this duty, will sometimes very much vex the conscience, and grieve the heart of the true-hearted Professor; when he is departed the place, and considers that by his baseness and frailty he hath failed in so holy a duty, and been faint-hearted in the cause of God.

For this kind of reproof then, and such censuring of the words and works of darkness, the Christian is not to be censured too censorious and precise. Conscience, charity, and God's Commandment calls and cries upon him for the performance of this needful duty; whensoever unavoidable necessity, or the exigency of a warrantable calling shall have cast him upon profane wretches, and imprisoned him for the while amongst fellows of lewd discourse and graceless carriage. Except they be Dogs, or Swine: Christ himself hath commanded, that Pearls and holy things shall not be cast away upon such. Give ye not, saith he, that which is holy unto Dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before Swine, Matth. 7:6. See also, Prov. 9:8, and 23:9.

The ground of this Commandment of Christ, I take to be twofold:

1. A dear, compassionate, and tender-hearted care of God, even over the temporal lives of his children. Besides the glorious Ministry, and continual guard of the blessed Angels for their preservation, that they hurt not their foot against a stone; his own also All-seeing and All-pitying Eye, doth ever graciously watch over them, to keep them as dearly as the Apple of his own

Eye; and therefore he forbids them to cast themselves desperately into the mouth of a barking Dog, or upon the paw of a revengeful and blood-thirsty Lyon: that is, he would not have his child to vouchsafe so much as a reproof to any blasphemous wretch, or desperate Swaggerer, that would furiously fly in his face for offering him a Pearl.

2. A holy jealousy over the glory and Majesty of his own blessed Word. It is that holy Wisdom, which issued immediately out of his own infinite understanding. It is far more pure and unspotted then silver tried in a furnace of earth, fined seven-fold. It is a sacred Pearl, framed and fashioned by His own Almighty hand in the Palaces of heaven, which only by an invisible and inspired power can raise those which are dead in sins and trespasses, to spiritual life; stop the bloody issue of original corruption, and preserve the souls of men in everlasting health. In a word, it is the Word of God, and therefore most unworthy to be trodden under foot, or trampled in the mire by any sensual Swine: that is, no ways to be vouchsafed to those hateful and Swinish wretches, who out of a malicious sottishness entertain so glorious a message from the mighty God of heaven with contempt and scorn.

These two reasons of the Commandment lie the Text: Give ye not, &c. lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you. Whence we have also some light to discern who are Dogs, who are Swine.

1. By Dogs, we see, are meant obstinate enemies, that maliciously revile the Ministry of the Word, the Doctrine of God, and the Messengers thereof; who do not only tread the words of instruction and reproof under foot, but also turn again, and all to rend the Teachers, and furiously fly in the face of those who fairly tell them of their faults. Consider this and tremble, all ye that are become scornful and furious opposites to the power and purity of

the Word, and bloody goads in the sides of the faithfulest Ministers. Alas, poor wretches, forlorn Caitiffs, you cast yourselves desperately into that accursed and horrible condition, that every good man is bound in conscience not to afford you so much as an admonition, or reproof, or a caveat to prevent those curses which are coming upon you. And you willfully draw upon your own heads that most fearful doom from God's Spirit, and from the Church of God; He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is a Swine, let him be Swinish still. He that rails against the power of Grace, let him continue still a mad Dog. He that sets himself maliciously against the Ministry of the Word; let that man receive no comfort or benefit by the Word of Life. If he will needs, let him roar still, swagger, be drunk, despair, die, and be damned.

2. By Swine, are meant those sottish scurrile wretches, who do scornfully and contemptuously trample under foot all holy instructions, reproofs, admonitions, tendered unto them out of the Word of Truth.

1. Some of these are Swine, as it were, only in practice: they do not say much, or keep any great grunting against good men; but they feed insatiably, though silently, upon the dross and filth of sensual pleasures and carnal contentment's: and if at any time a Pearl be cast in their way; I mean, a seasonable reproof ministered unto them, they trample it in the mire, and with a brutish baseness tread it under foot; because indeed they hate to be reformed, and are sottishly and stubbornly resolved, not to exchange these worldly pleasures which they have in present possession and pursuit, for the glory of an hundred heavens, which Preachers so much talk of, but they cannot taste of, or tell when to come thither.

2. Other Swine there are, as it were both in practice and profession; who besides their hating to be reformed, and obstinate resolution not to forgo

their present pleasures, or forsake their former ways, are also possessed with a spirit of scoffing. These are rather wild Boars: for with a furious and Giant-like insolency and outrage, they provoke, and challenge the mighty Lord of heaven, about the truth of his Judgments and Promises, making a mock of them.

Let all sensual and Swinish wretches consider this, and tremble; who with sinful greediness feed upon earthliness, and Epicureanism, and hate to be reformed; who willfully wallow in the mud and filth of vanishing pleasures, and will not be washed; who many and many times come unto, continue at, and depart from the house of God, with a settled purpose and resolution, not to suffer their hearts to be mastered by the power of the Ministry, or to change their old fashions, say the Preacher what he will: but to live, and end their days, in their ordinary former courses of profaneness and good-fellowship. They may read their doom and vengeance that dogs them at the heels, Psal. 50:21,22.

Cursed also is the condition of all you that are scoffers at godliness and good men. You have wearied yourselves so long in walking and standing in wicked ways, that you are not set down at rest in the chair of scorners. And therefore all those that stand on the Lord's side, are commanded by Christ, there to leave you in your damned case, and to disquiet you no further. And what an horrible depth of spiritual misery is this; That you run furiously towards the pit of hell, and must have nobody to stay you; not a man to call and cry unto you, to tell you, that the fiery Lake is a little before you?

Though we have thus much light from the natural properties of Dogs and Swine, to descry and delineate those fellows, to whom, by Christ's commandment, Pearls and holy things, admonitions and reproofs are not to be vouchsafed; yet Christians are sore troubled many times how to behave

themselves, when to speak, when to hold their peace, whom to repute Dogs and Swine, whom not; when upon some unavoidable necessity, or by the exigency of their Calling, they are unwillingly, and unawares plunged into the company of profane wretches, whose ordinary talk is the language of Hell; oaths, scurrile jests, jesting upon the holy conversation of the Saints, slandering good men, disgracing the ways of sincerity, and such other base, and Bedlam-discourse.

But I do not see, how any constant rules, or immutable direction can be given for Christian carriage in this case; it is so variable, and clothed with such variety of circumstances, and constancy of alterations. The advice which I would give in this point to the Christian, is this: when he is perplexed, what to do in this regard amongst profane company; let him consult with these bosom counselors, look unto his spiritual wisdom; to his heart; and to his conscience. These must be his guides, and informers in these cases: and they are counsellors ever at hand, he carries then in his bosom.

1. His spiritual wisdom is to guide him in a right apprehension and discretion of circumstances, and to define the opportunity and seasonableness, when he is to interpose, and in what manner to oppose against their furious and rotten speeches. It must tell him secretly, and suggest unto him, when the cause of God, or the innocence of a good man calls specially upon him for an apology, and at what time he hath a calling thereunto. It must inform him how he must reprove: whether directly and down-right, or by intimation, and indirectly; whether personally, or in the general; whether in a fair and milder manner, or with a more bold and resolute spirit; whether presently upon it, and in hot blood, as it were, or afterward to take occasion to censure the same sin, with aggravation of the

odiousness and damnation of it; whether only by discountenance, or discourse; by a silent disapproval, which I think, may be sufficient for some men, at sometimes, in some companies, or with solemn protestation, and a professed opposition and dislike, &c.

2. Let him also look to his heart: That his reproof spring not from any imperious humor of censuring, and meddling with his brethren; from a proud vein of contradicting, and controlling others; out of a Stoical sourness, and commanding surliness; from any purpose to disgrace, and grieve the party; from a formal affectation of Pharisaical severity from a secret ambitious desire of purchasing an opinion and reputation of forwardness, by being forward in finding faults; or from any other by-respect: but from an heart truly humbled with sight and sense of its own infirmities, zealously thankful unto God for preserving him from the like outrage, and excess in sin; graciously resolved into compassion and commiseration of the offender; lifted up in a secret supplication for the pardon of its own sin, success of the reproof, and salvation of the party all at once unto the Throne of Grace, &c.

3. His conscience must guide, and hold him in the right path, and golden mean between two extremes, which ordinarily in these cases men are very apt to incur: I mean, faint-hearted silence, and furious zeal.

1. Men many times, by reason of a sinful irresolution, and unchristian cowardliness, would gladly make all such offenders, Dogs and Swine; that thereby they might challenge the privilege of exemption from the discharge of that Christian duty of reproof. Though their ears be filled with the oaths and blasphemies of those that are about them, and grated upon with graceless railings against good men, and foul disgracements of the ways of God; yet they never open their mouth; as though there could be any nobler

object, or exercise of their best eloquence, and greatest courage, then the just defense of God's glory, and Christians innocence. Oh! These are vile cowards in good causes, and a kind of traitors to the state of Christianity. By such sinful silence, they labor to purchase a name of No-meddlers in other men's matters; of merciful men to their Brethren's infirmities; of plausible companions; of wiser and more moderate Christians. But let them know, that such No-meddling is a kind of soul-murdering; such mercifulness is cruelty; such plausibleness is pernicious; such wisdom is not that of the Serpent, commended by Christ; but the wiliness of that great red Dragon, suggested by Hell.

Nay, some men are so strangely lewd and graceless, that they can hear, and digest with patience and silence, the oaths and rotten speeches of their servants, and, perhaps, their sons, without any contradiction, or correction. In their own families, some, perhaps, swear, others talk filthily, some rail against the Ministry, others jest upon the sincerity of the Saints, &c. and yet the wicked Governor says never a word. But in this point my purpose is principally to counsel Christians; I meddle not at this time with such Synagogues of Satan, and dens of Atheists.

2. Some others, it may be, but they are not near so many, may run into the other extreme, and out of a spiritual fool-hardiness, as it were, and furious zeal, with an imperious, and unwarrantable boisterousness fly in the face of some desperate Swaggerer, with an undigested and unseasonable reproof: whereby they both incur the guilt of giving a holy thing unto a Dog, and unnecessary danger from the graceless fury of the party. Or else for want of spiritual wisdom, and a holy discretion of circumstances; they may tender an admonition to some such contemptuous swinish wretch, which will pass over, and put by the precious severity of the Word of Truth with a scurrile

jest; or with a dull, and scornful sottishness trample underfoot that sacred Pearl.

Though it be no constant character of Dogs and Swine, yet commonly those desperate wretches, to whom by Christ's commandment we must give no holy things, are fellows of dogged, sour and contracted countenances, especially towards true Christians; and have a kind of desperate furiousness impressed upon their foreheads, which is then most visible, when they are crossed in their villainies, and hear of any contradiction, or condemnation of their graceless courses and contemptuous carriages. And those Swinish Gadarenes, before whom we must cast no Pearls, are fellows of a fleering, gibing and scornful carriage, especially towards good men, and godly exercises: they are so drowned in sensuality, and glued to the earth; that they do not only despise, but also deride the precious things of Heaven. As I take it, sensuality, and earthly mindedness, mingled with a great deal of Atheism, begetteth in men this sottish swinishness, and brutish contempt of the blessings of Grace, and directions to everlasting bliss.

These premonitions and cautions premised, and observed, every Christian ought to address himself with resolution, and conscience to discharge this Christian duty of reproof, when a just occasion, and a calling thereunto do require and exact it at his hands. For these reasons:

First, in respect of the party offending,

1. A seasonable reproof, mingled and sanctified with the spirit of invocation and compassion, may, by the blessing of God, be an occasion of conversion to the offender. And let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. And it is the most glorious work in the World, and the noblest employment under the Sun, to have a hand in the holy business of

saving a soul. Let hope then of doing spiritual good to thy brothers soul, be the special aim, and a principal motive of performing this duty. There is a Law, Exod. 23:4,5, that if a man meet his enemies Ox, or Ass, going astray, he must bring him again. If he see his enemies Ass lying under his burden, he must help him up again: How much more dear and precious in our eyes should the immortal soul of our Brother be, then the Ass of our enemy? If we must turn back the straying Ox of our enemy, and lift up his Ass, when he is crushed under his burden; with what eagerness and zeal ought we to labor, to stop the furious course of a reasonable creature towards the pit of Hell; and to put our helping hand to raise up that silly foul, which by reason of the heavy weight of its sin, is full sorely bruised and bleeding, ready even to breathe out its last, and sink into the misery of endless horror? Speak then boldly in the cause of God, when thou hearest thy brother blaspheme his Name, jest with his Word, talk filthily, rail against holiness, slander good men, plead for profane pastimes, &c. for they are so many mortal stabs into his own poor soul; besides the natural infectiousness of rotten speeches, which may do much mischief to the standers by. Though thy reproof prevail not at the present; yet thou knowest not what impression and working it may have afterward upon his hard heart, whereby perhaps he may happily think upon a new course, and of conversion to God; and so thou be a blessed instrument of saving a soul.

2. But if it have not so happy a success upon his soul, yet it may be, thou mayest thereby tame and take down his insolency; so cut his comb by a seasonable contradiction, that he do not carry it away bravely; so cool and confound his swaggering humor, that he do not glory in his villainy, that he do not pride himself in his blasphemies, and bloody oaths, in his contempt of Grace, and other outrageous carriages. Answer a fool, saith Solomon,

according to his foolishness, lest he be wise in his own conceit: lest he be too proud. If a desperate and profane wretch will needs swear, and swagger, and rail against the servants and services of God; yet let him know, that all the while, he fights against God, damns his own soul, and pleases none but Devils, Drunkards, and devilish men. If he will needs labor to be famous, by a serious opposition to the Ministry, and ways of God; let him know, that his name shall rot after him as vilely, as his carcass in the grave, and himself burn in Hell everlastingly; if he hold on in that humor without timely repentance and reformation.

3. Thirdly, at the least, thou shouldst thereby increase, and aggravate his inexcusableness, and so glorify the Tribunal of God's Justice; when it shall there appear, that besides many other means afforded, and offered unto him by God's mercies; thou also diddest lend him thine hand, to have pulled him out of the fire, and gavest him one call to have stayed him in the furious and willful pursuit of his own damnation. But because he still hated to be reformed; because variety of means for his amendment, made him more malicious, and obstinate in his own ways; and that contradiction, and counsel to the contrary inflamed, and set on fire the lustful viciousness of his corrupt nature, to hunt more greedily after forbidden pleasures; therefore I say, he will be more and more fearfully ashamed, and confounded at that great and fearful Day: and the more occasions he hath had of his conversion, the juster cause then will he see of his deserved confusion; and by consequent more glory will accrue unto the glorious Tribunal of God's Justice.

Secondly, in such cases the Christian must speak in respect of himself.

1. When the air is empoisoned with any infectious vapor, men use to fill their sense with some Pomander, or other sweet perfume, and so they may

declaim noisomeness of the smell, and repel the contagious insinuation: so when any profane wretch hath let fall any rotten speech, the Christian with a present counter-poison as it were, of a seasonable reproof, should stop his own apprehension, lest any baser infection insinuate, and stain the soul; and to preserve in heat and life, a fresh and strong opposition of the heart and affections to all such lewdness and scurrility.

2. Silence at such a time will seem to bewray either thy cowardliness in the cause of God; or hypocrisy in thy profession. For it will seem strange, that thou which makest show of standing on the Lord's side, and professest thyself to be a party in that glorious Communion of Saints, shouldst hear the name of God profaned in a base and blasphemous manner, and the innocence sometimes of a good man carried in triumph by the slanderous tongues of wretches, and trampled upon, as it were, even unto dust, by the feet of pride and malice; and yet never open thy mouth. As thou therefore desirest to preserve the glory of thy Christian reputation entire and shining, and hold it thy crown and honor to be Champion unto the mighty Lord of heaven, a Proctor in his Spiritual Causes, and the protector of the good names of good men; be ever ready to open thy mouth, when a just apology in any of these respects is needful and required at thy hands.

3. If thy conscience be enlightened, awake, tender, and rightly informed, it will smite, and check thee after the omission of such a duty; when afterwards thou considerest with thyself, that by thy cowardly and unseasonable silence, thy soul is entangled in the guiltiness, and hath incurred an accountableness for that sin. As thou then wouldest keep all in quiet at home in thine own bosom, and still possess the paradise of a peaceful heart, suffer not blasphemies, obscenities, railings, and other such ribald, and rotten talk pass uncensured, and unsorrowed for. Nay, and in so

doing, besides the invaluable comfort of a peaceful conscience, thou shalt also purchase unto thine heart a sound testimony of that gracious tender-heartedness, which is wont to melt, and resolve the hearts of God's children into compassion and commiseration in such cases; and which they use to express, and exercise even towards the lowdest wretches, and such as have no pity upon the spiritual miseries of their own poor and woeful souls. See 1 Sam. 15:35, and 16:1, Jer. 9:1, Phil. 3:18,19, 2 Cor. 12:21, Luk. 19:41,42, &c. It was the dogged, and damned voice of cruel and cursed Cain, to say, Am I my brothers keeper? But every true and tender-hearted Christian doth grieve to see so many of his brethren stick fast in the clutches of that roaring Lyon, and between the teeth of that Red Dragon; and therefore labors by all means he can, to rescue them; to see so many about him run as fast and furious as they can, to drown themselves in the pit of endless perdition, and therefore as occasion serves, calls and cries unto them to stay their course, before the hellish Gulf of confusion and horror hath shut her mouth upon them.

Thirdly, in respect of those which be present.

1. By thy speaking in such a case, thou mayest lay, as it were, the spirit of profaneness for that time; so that it do not rage, and over-rule in the rest, as otherwise it would. For we may sometimes observe, that a seasonable reproof passing from a man of understanding, with resolution and authority, upon a fellow that so behaves himself as though swearing were his profession, and traducing the Saints, his Trade, doth so quell and confound the swaggering humor of the rest of the same crew in the company, that they are quite put out of their humor, as they say, perhaps hang down their heads all the while, and think in their hearts, if once they get out, they will come no more amongst such precise fellows which cannot abide an oath; or

where they cannot have their fling and forth in their profane villainies and cursed reveling.

2. Thou mayest hereby hold in the weak, that they be not scandalized.

3. Thou mayest hold up the hearts of stronger Christians, that they be not grieved and cast down with the domineering of profaneness, and out-swaggering rage of Satan's Revelers.

Fourthly, in respect of God Himself:

1. That, though the days wherein we live, be strangely profane, and desperately naught; for this old age of the world is pestered with all the pollutions, and abominations, which the course and current of all former ages have conveyed and carried into it; though iniquity mightily abound with much tyranny and triumph, and fearfully prevail in all places; yet I say, that it may appear, that God hath some to speak for Him. That though Satan, more is the pity, hath innumerable swarms of knights of the Post, as they say, that are ready at a beck to do him any desperate service; yet, notwithstanding here and there God hath a Champion, who fearless of the face of man, dare with an undaunted and holy resolution, defend His ways, and stand on His side.

2. But above all, let that strict charge from God's own mouth, (Lev. 19:17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him:) fright and fire everyone of us out of our sinful silence and cowardliness this way, and keen us with resolution and forwardness, to a seasonable discharge of this holy duty.

Take notice of a three-fold duty, which lies upon every Christian in his carriage towards men in their presence, and before their faces: 1. Christian admonition: 2. Christian reproof: 3. Christian silence, and forbearance in such cases.

1. If a brother be overtaken with a fault, or some less offense, we are to admonish him in the spirit of meekness, Gal. 6:1.

2. If he offend more grievously, we are freely to reprove him; and not to suffer sin to rest upon him, Lev. 19:17.

3. If he be a son of Belial, a scoffing Ishmael, a dog, or a swine; we are commanded by Christ to say nothing; Matth. 7:6. Neither private admonition, nor brotherly reproof is to be vouchsafed to desperate sinners or profane Ruffians, who would entertain it with cruelty or scurrility.

II. Observe a sanctified silence; from,

1. Rash censuring, which is severely censured by Christ Himself, and set as a visible Brand upon the face of the Hypocrite. Let it ever be only the peevish property of those who are naught, and most obnoxious themselves; of Pharisees and false-hearts, to be the greatest find-faults; uncharitably to entertain causeless disconceits, and to pass rash censures against those, who are far better than themselves. Which they will ordinarily do: because,

1. They were never truly humbled with sight and sense of their own sinful and accursed state. They never trembled, nor were thoroughly frightened with the wrathful countenance of God, for their infinite pollutions and provocations of the eyes of his glory. Their consciences were never awaked out of their dead sensual sleep, by the Trumpet of the Law, nor received any special and particular illumination from the sanctifying Spirit. In a word, they have no terror, no trouble, no work or business at home about their own sins, in their own consciences, and therefore they have leisure enough to look about them, and are full enough of sinful curiosity, and unnecessary meddling, to pry and inquire into other men's courses and carriages; of malice and spitefulness, to mistake and misinterpret; of pride and peremptoriousness, to proclaim many times with great noise, and self-

applause, their own idle malignant forgeries and fancies, for faults of those, who are much more righteous than they. When they look forward, or any ways about them, they are very sharp-sighted into the fashions and failings of others; most exact in observing their neighbors ways; Eagle-eyed, to pierce beyond the Moon; to spy the least mote in the Sun, I mean, the smallest infirmity in the most glorious Saint: Nay, they are of such a refined and sublimated eye-sight, that they can discern some errors and exorbitancies, especially in Professors of Religion, which never had any existence. But when they should reflect upon themselves, and turn their eyes to contemplate and consider their own corruptions, there lies a great beam of hypocrisy between them and themselves; so that they cannot possibly see so much, as those huge mountains of many crying sins, which full heavily press down their own souls towards hell; those unnumbered swarms of beastly lusts, which rage remorselessly within their own bosoms.

2. It is a point of their hypocritical policy, cunningly, and confidently to impute those sins unto others, which are grossly predominant in themselves; that thereby they might purchase an opinion of a supposed innocence, and freedom from the like faults. For when they cry out with great noise and clamor upon other men, they think they still the cry, and stop the mouth of their own sins; and labor to fasten a persuasion upon their own hearts, that since they, with such confidence, and bold faces reprove and censure others, others will not, out of the congruity of a charitable ingenuousness think them so shameless, as to be justly liable to the same imputations; except some few wiser, and more judicious Christians, who are able by spiritual experience, to discover the depths and mysteries of their hypocrisy; and for such they care not much: for in point of reputation, they rely most upon the common sort, and greater part.

3. It is the natural humor of a hypocrite, to be supercilious and censorious. Pride is nowhere more naturally bred, so proudly seated, and highly enthroned, as in his heart. And therefore it is his common practice to hunt after estimation, by disgracing and disabling others. Since he wants worth in himself, he labors to shine by darkening others, misconceiving that every detraction from other men's reputations, is an addition to his own.

4. They hold it a point and proof of forwardness, to be forward in finding faults. As though the flame of a holy zeal were enkindled in any man's heart, only to give him light, for the discovery of other men's sins, and not as a sacred fire, to burn up the noisome lusts which boil in his own breast.

Thus, and upon such grounds as these, it is the hateful property of Hypocrites and self-guilty ones; and a common mark of their cruel severity, to wade deeply into the search and censure of other men's ways, and to gore very bloodily into the consciences of others, whereas they never purged their own. But true zeal ever casts the first stone at a man's self, and plucks the beam out of his own eye, that he may better discern and draw the mote out of another's eye: I mean, a sincere heart is ever most censorious and severe against itself; most searching into, and sensible of its own sins; prying with special curiosity and inquisitiveness, into the endless maze of its own wicked windings and depths of guile. Though it heartily and unfeignedly detest all sin in whomsoever; yet its own iniquities and pollutions stick closest, and go nearest, and beget in it a more particular and extraordinary impression of remorse and loathing. The reason is, it hath truly tasted the terrors of a wounded conscience, been scorched with the secret sense of God's angry face, and formerly full sorely crushed under the most grievous burden of innumerable sins. It knows right well, by woeful experience, what bitterness of spirit, and anguish of soul springs naturally

from the retired survey of scandalous transgressions in cold blood. It feels from time to time, deadness of heart, lessening of graces, loss of comfort to ensue upon every gross relapse, or willing fall. It finds too often, to its much grief, that if it foster and nuzzle in itself any sensual corruption or secret lust, the Lord will not hear its prayers. It is full well acquainted with the invaluable preciousness of a peaceful conscience and God's favorable countenance, which it cannot possibly enjoy, if it lie delightfully in any one sin against its knowledge, &c. This being the experience, exercise, and constitution of an upright heart; it is most angry and displeased with, most Eagle-eyed and watchful over, most strict and severe against its own sins. Which home-employment happily hinders and moderates a man from too much meddling abroad. This world of work within, about his own soul, in discovering, opposing, and mortifying his own unruly lusts and rebellions, ties his tongue from being so busy in censuring other men's faults. As therefore thou wouldest have a true testimony of taking thine own sins to heart, and of having been sincerely humbled under God's mighty hand thyself, keep a constant and narrow watch over thy tongue: be very sparing in speaking the evil which thou knowest by others: judge no man rashly, out of spleen, humor, passion, pride, prejudice, Pharisaism, &c. or of his final state. For all sound Converts and truly mortified men desire, and labor to be very charitable, merciful and seasonable in their censures. Consciousness of their own corruptions, makes them compassionate towards others in this kind.

Object. Yea, but will some say, howsoever you put it upon profane men and hypocrites; yet it is well known, your Professors are the only shrewd censurers, very sightful, and severe about other men's faults, and are still ready upon all occasion, by their peremptory judging, to send all others

unto hell save themselves, and those of their own sect, as they speak: (And so was the way to heaven styled many a year ago.)

Answer. This I grant, is many times the profane man's censure of the true Christian, and therein he discovers himself to be a true hypocrite: for with much bitterness and malice he censures sincere-hearted men, to be censorious, when himself is the only unconscionable Critic and censurer. He reproveth God's faithful Ones for reproveth, when himself full often amongst his companions, out of a pang of imperious choler, and implacable hatred to holiness, condemns for Counterfeits, without all ground, or truth, those whom the Lord himself justifies for true-hearted Nathanael's, and passes sentence of guiltiness and gross hypocrisy, after they be cast by a jury of Ale-knights, upon those, whom the Highest Tribunal doth mercifully acquit.

To enlighten a little, and rectify thy judgment in this point of private judging; conceive with me;

1. First, that all judging and censuring is not censurable and condemned: But that, when a man with an evil mind judgeth amiss and uncharitably of others for some evil end. We may judge the tree by his fruit. If we see a fellow constant and incorrigible in his lewd rebellious courses, evidently infamous for rotten fruits, hanging out in the open sight of the Sun; as drunkenness, swearing, usury, whoredom, persecuting the power of godliness, scoffing Religion, unrighteous dealing, &c. We may, leaving his final doom to the Searcher of all hearts, judge and censure him for the present to be God's enemy, and in a most wretched estate. But in such cases, besides just cause, be sure of a warrantable calling, conscionable end, and no beam in thine own eye.

2. Secondly, let us take notice of some differences between the true Professors, and profane man's censuring. It differs, in respect,

1. Of the Object. The principal aim and object of carnal men's cruel disconceits, and bitterest censures, is the zealous Professor. Dogged they are enough many times amongst themselves, about worldly affairs, and maliciously tear one another like wild beasts; mutual brawling's about earthly things, wrongs, encroachments, undermining's, cozening, over-reaching, ambitious contentions, &c. fill their hearts with much gall and greediness of revenge, their mouths with mutual barking at and biting one another. But to the people of God, in their Bedlam fits, they are not only Dogs, but even enraged Devils, and swell with the very venom of Hell, the overflowing whereof doth drown all private discords. Herod and Pilate behaved themselves before, like two angry Mastiffs one against another; but when opportunity was offered, they pursued Christ with reconciled malice, and united forces. Put up a hare before two Greyhounds, snarling about a bone, and they will both doggedly concur in the pursuit of that harmless beast. It is just so with graceless men against God's Child: and ever the more forward he is in the narrow way, the more furiously is he persecuted by the spite of tongues. The most resolute for God's glory, and in good causes, is ordinarily most railed against, and reviled. The foul spirit of good-fellowship, as they call it, is still foaming out against God's chiefest Favorites, the foulest censures: That they are hypocrites, humorists, factionists, traitors, pestilent fellows, and all that naught is. David was so charged by Saul and his Courtiers: Jeremiah by the profane Nobles: the godly Jews by Haman: Nay, Christ himself by the Scribes and Pharisees: Paul by Tertullus: the Primitive Christians by the Heathens: and all that will live godlily in Christ Jesus, must look for the same portion, the same

persecution amongst the men of this world; even to be most vile, and contemptible in their conceits and construction. There is no creature that ever God made, not Satan himself excepted, which is more maliciously set against and censured, than good men. Neither should any have so bad a name as they, could the hellish mists of virulent tongues obscure and stain the glory of their reputation. If sentence should pass upon the godly at that last and great Day, according to the verdict of them that are not friends or parties, we should certainly all be cast and condemned, not a man freed and acquitted. But blessed be God, the Searcher of all hearts, the Almighty Protector of all innocence, who to the shame and confusion of all spiteful opposites, will witness for us at that highest Tribunal; and then at the furthest before men and Angels, will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgments as the Noon-day. Oh that I had some to hear me! Saith Job: Behold my sign that the Almighty will witness for me: though mine adversaries should write a book against me, &c. And in this itching humor of mis-censuring the servants of God, the wicked are so willful and eager, that rather than they will want matter, they will most basely, and unworthily snatch it from the envenomed tongue of a Tale-bearer; from the slanderous folly of some scurrile Jester, the frothy raving of a greasy drunken Ale-house-haunter, nay rather than fail, forge it out of a suspicious self-guiltiness in their own profane fancies, and suck it, as they say, out of their own fingers. But let them know, that when a son of Belial censures a sincere Professor, it is as if the darkest nook in Hell should find fault with the Moon, that great Light of Heaven, for those little spots in her face, whereas otherwise she is a fair and goodly creature: as if the most loathsome dunghill should challenge the fairest garden for unsavoriness, because there is here and there a weed amidst variety of other: fragrant

flowers: as if a worthless lump of dross should censure an angel of gold, for want of a grain or two in weight: as if a fellow almost eaten up with the filthy French disease, should cry out of the danger of a growing Ague in another. For in this case, he who as yet is nothing but an accursed lump of sin and lust, damnation and hell, loads with censorious lies that happy soul, which in the fountain of Christ's meritorious blood, is made far whiter than the Snow in Salmon, and fairer than the wool of the sheep coming up from washing, though some spots and stains of infirmities and frailties cleave unto it, while it yet dwells in a house of flesh, and tabernacle of clay.

But now on the other side, the ordinary object of the Christians Censure, is according to Christ's rule: those trees which discover themselves to be stark naught, by the rotten fruits, which hang upon them in the sight of the Sun. And yet that also must be seasoned with charity, discretion, seasonableness, freedom from spleen, humor, passion, personal hatred, insolency, or any other exorbitant distemper. Those professors prove too often, either utterly unsound, or not so thoroughly humbled, who unmercifully insult either over the damnable estate of those which are without, or uncharitably blaze abroad the infirmities and failings of the brethren, which they ought to conceal; and as the hand fasteneth a salve upon any sore part of the body, and then covers it; so to apply a plaster of a gentle and mild reproof, that it may secretly heal, and the World be never the wiser. Ordinarily, so far as some men are fierce, boisterous, and master-like in searching out, censuring, and secret insulting over the falls, frailties, difference from them in some indifferent things, of their fellow-Christians; so much many times come they short in mortification, holy wisdom, humility, self-denial, faithfulness in their Callings, &c. and that of those, perhaps, whom they so imperiously disable and under-value. Commonly,

too busy-bodies this way, are either dangerously proud, or sinfully politic: proud, and therefore endeavor to raise their own, upon the ruins of other Christians reputation, better then themselves: or politic; for, themselves being censurable for some grosser infirmities, or scandalous walking, they labor cunningly to find answerable errors in more noted Professors, that themselves may go more unnoted.

2. In respect of the order. The true Christian ever casts the first stone at himself, and first, the beam out of his own eye; that is, begins with himself, searcheth his own heart, rips up and ransacks his own conscience, censures his own ways, condemns and crucifies his own corruptions, and abandons all his known sins; and then he may with a more comfortable calling, Matth. 7:5, with more sincerity and success censure others. But hypocrites, and those who hate to be reformed, first begin with others, are most prying into other men's carriages, perusing other men's lives, thirstily hunting after, perhaps, by the help of many dogged spies, and fawning Spaniels, the falls and faults especially of Professors; (for there is the kindly triumph:) ever tampering and meddling with their motes; but have never any leisure or pleasure to look into their own rotten hearts, and rebellious courses. The reason of this difference may be this: Every godly man, together with the power of grace, puts on a holy bashfulness, an ingenuous modesty; that he would be foully ashamed, and could not with any face charge others with those crimes, which he should allow in himself. But hypocrites wear masks, vizors and whorish foreheads; they will hardly blush, or be ashamed at any beastly carriage, especially bringing in pleasure or profit; much less for seeming holy by their strictness and severity against other men's faults, though as full of lewdness and lust themselves, as the skin will hold. How often may we hear imperious Pharisees mangle and martyr a good man's

good name, for some lesser infirmity, who never learned to mourn for, or mortify any one of those many gross corruptions, and secret villainies, which reign in themselves?

3. In respect of the manner. Self-guilty Pharisees are wont peremptorily to pass their rash censures upon the more righteous than themselves, with much malice, pride, scornfulness, and profane insultation: but the reasonable censures of truly humbled Christians, ought ever to be mingled with much mercifulness, commiseration, sensibleness of their own infirmities, and love.

4. In respect of evidence and truth. Profane men's censures of God's servants are many times not only groundless, causeless and false; but also prodigiously absurd, and utterly impossible, without any shadow or show at all of likelihood. The enemies to Christ's ministry confidently censured him to have a Devil, in whom notwithstanding the fullness of the God-head dwelt bodily. Tertullus judged Paul to be a pestilent fellow, when he was the most precious man upon earth. Elijah was accounted a troubler of Israel; who was in truth the very Chariots and Horsemen of the same. The Princes suggested to the King, that Jeremiah was a traitor to the State; from which he was so far, that he desired his head to be turned into waters, and his eyes into springs of tears, that he might weep day and night for the desolations of it. Proportionable for monstrousness of falsehood, are many and many censures passed upon Professors at this day. Opposites to the power of godliness are so impudently perverse, that they commonly cut conditions unto others, out of the cursed corruptions of their own rotten hearts.

But now on the other side, God's people must be very careful and tender, what conceits they entertain, and what censures they pass upon others. They are bound by the Laws of divine love, to conceive and speak the best of

everyone, until his words, ordinary carriage, open profaneness, and fruits of the flesh, clearly convince the contrary; to construe and interpret all things in the better part, so far, as they may with a good conscience, without prejudice to the truth, or impeachment of God's glory. They ought to be so far from greedy apprehension of imaginary matter, or violent wresting of men's words, actions and behavior to the worst sense; that if matters be but probable, poised with equal circumstances, and with even weight of reasons interpretable both ways, they are ever to suffer their conceits and censures to be carried the more charitable way. They ought to be so far from censuring others without ground, truth and proof; (which is the ordinary practice of most men) that they should never speak the ill they too certainly know by their brethren, but with fearfulness, as it were, and some kind of enforcement.

5. In respect of the end. The ends why Pharisees and Good-fellows, as they call them, entertain many groundless disconceits, and thereupon exercise such censoriousness against holy men, are such as these:

1. To bind up their bleeding souls in the meantime with a palliate cure, as they call it; to procure some temporary ease to their hearts, against the checks and biting's of their guilty consciences, For when consideration in cold blood of their impenitent courses, and of their certain walking in the broad way, by reason of their own sensual liberty, and much company, doth sting them with remorse, they have recourse to the ill opinions they have conceived of the best men; and thereupon think within themselves, and take occasion to say unto others; What need we take these things so much to heart, or trouble our thoughts with necessity of more strictness? Are not those, who go for the godliest, and are accounted the prime Professors, such and such men? Have not they also their infirmities and follies, though they

guild them over with goodly shows, and pretense of zeal? Hereupon they somewhat assuage the secret slavish smart of their now and then wounded consciences, and walk more merrily towards their eternal perdition. For a settled disconceit of a Christian harbored and applauded, is a strong nail to fasten an unregenerate man to his own ways, and a mighty bar to keep him out of a gracious state. Sensualists are so strangely bewitched by Satan, that he first causeth them to forge in their own brains, or take up from a spiteful tongue, some lying tale of a good man, and then after makes it his means to keep them with security and contentment in the kingdom of darkness, and to stand in everlasting opposition to the ways of sincerity, and salvation of their souls.

2. To make, by an affected liberty and severity in censuring others, the masks of their own hypocrisy, less markable. For by their feigned triumphs, and imperious insultations in this kind, especially upon fresh news of some Professors scandalous fall, they would have the by-standers to conceive, that howsoever they be not so precise and forward, or make so great a show as others; yet they are fully as honest men as they, and may, perhaps, step into heaven before them.

3. To wreak their spite upon the children of Light; who are ever eye-sores and heart-sores to all sorts of sinners, He, meaning the righteous man, (saith the Author of the Book of Wisdom, though Apocryphal, yet ancient) is grievous unto us, even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. And it angers them at the very heart-root to consider, that whereas, they hope, and hold themselves sufficiently qualified for Heaven; yet the righteous man's forwardness, zeal and living of another fashion, if ingenuousness dispel the mist of prejudice, clearly remonstrates to their own consciences, and proclaims aloud to all spiritually

understanding men, that in truth, and upon trial, they are in the state of wretchedness, and of the family of Hell. Hereupon it is, that they labor might and main, with many disgraceful censures, to dim the glory of his goodness; and, if it were possible, by publishing their own malicious surmises, others slanderous tales, or spitefully aggravated frailties, to pull him back, at least, in opinion of their favorites and dependents, to the same measure of infirmities, and pitch of impiety with themselves.

But now the ends, which humble Christians propose unto themselves of just dislikes, and seasonable censures of unsanctified men, are briefly such as these:

1. To preserve their thoughts innocent from accessoriness to sin, by a secret invisible allowance of it in other men; and their tongues from cowardly silence, when they have a calling to disgrace it.

2. Left a Knave go for an honest man, and hypocrites deceive true-hearted Nathanael's.

3. Left the power of Christianity, wherein God's glory is highly interested, suffer, and be undervalued. For instance: Thou hearest sometimes a fellow notoriously branded with some infamous sin, yet so spoken of by some daubers with intemperate mortar, or at least by ignorant worldlings, as though his present condition were tolerable towards God, and hopeful in respect of salvation, by reason of some other good parts, for which they praise him: In this case, if the understanding Christian hold his peace, the by-standers may be so far scandalized and mistake; as to conceive and collect, that a man may lie in a sweet sin, and yet live in God's favor; that the pleasures of the World, and peace of conscience may consist together, which are as incompatible as Heaven and Hell. And why should not that silence be sinful, which suffers an open known profane man, to carry away

the reputation of one in the right way; (if there be time and place for a reasonable, wise and charitable contradiction,) as well as that, which suffers one which is true of heart, to be charged with hypocrisy?

2. Secondly, be silent from slandering, backbiting, false-accusing: Here I will say nothing of down-right forging, and fastening a false crime upon an innocent, which is the most pestilent and palpable, and other gross kinds of this very foul sin: (for so it is indeed, howsoever to a carnal eye looking upon it, painted with the colors of commonness and self-love, thorough the false glass of these corrupt times, it appears not so ugly. The very Casuists and Schoolmen, none of the precisest Divines, I am sure, do deservedly vilify it with a brand of heinousness, far above theft; as they may well, both for a greater breach of love, preciousness of object, unrecompensableness of loss, difficulty of restitution, concurrence of many sins, consequence of much ill, &c) I say, I will be here silent of the grosser sorts of slander, because of them, God's children are for the most part more easily sensible, and ordinarily watchful: but let me a little advise and awake thee to further inspection of the present point, lest sometimes even in telling the truth, thou be entangled in the briars of this base sin, and justly incur the fault of a false accuser, which thou mayest many ways: (For detraction, to speak Logically, doth not formally consist in the diminution of the truth, but in the denigration of a man's good name.) 1. By discovering secret infirmities, which love, that covereth a multitude of sins, would have concealed. It is a base ambition, and most unworthy the noble magnanimity of a Christian heart, to hunt after, and purchase an opinion of precedency in graces, and zeal, by the disgrace of another, perhaps every way, save only in the censurers own over-weening conceit, better and more worthy than himself. When thou hearest a man worthily magnified, for eminency of parts and

spiritual worth, be it far from thee, or any that ever took sin truly to heart, to come in with a But; only because out of a pang, or rather predominancy of privy pride, thou wouldest gladly be noted for a None-such, and pass for the matchless Professor. Let it ever be the property and vein of vain-glorious Pharisees, to raise their reputations, and sometimes themselves, but with execrable villainy, upon the imaginary ruins of good men's innocencies; and to hold every insolent detraction from other men's sufficiency's, and addition to their own. 2. By drawing out of other men's words, actions, and behaviors, upon the suspicious rack of a busy wit, aims, insinuations, and intentions, which the Author never dreamed on: and by fathering upon them such enforced sinister senses, and wrested crooked constructions, which an ingenuous impartial Expositor could never possibly extract. It is the easiest thing of a thousand, for a malicious mind, to soil the glory of the bravest and most beautiful actions, with ill and wrong interpretations and surmises of By-ends. (For the pride of a man's own disdainful nature, and the devil himself, are ready mid-wives at such monstrous conceptions and bastard births.) There is some truth in that hyperbolical speech of him, who said; Let any man present me with the most excellent and blameless action, and I will oppose it with filthy visions and bad intentions, all which shall carry a face of likelihood. Upon this very point, Tribunals of Justice, which hold more upon policy than piety, especially of private spleen embitter their Judiciary power against the party, too often strangely blind the common people's eyes, and do a great deal of wrong. A wicked wit, and wide conscience, mounted on horseback amongst a number of Princes, walking like servants upon the ground (the Epidemical disease of these worst and most ulcerous times) upon this advantage, many times work a world of revengeful villainy. But how soever it be easy, and too ordinary, for black

tongues to blast and stain by wresting and wire-drawing the beauty of the best actions, with malicious misconstructions; yet it is villainous and base. To let laws of divine love alone; even the light of Reason led wise men to this resolution, as appears by their rules of Law; That in doubtful things, we must ever pitch upon the more favorable construction. We are to be so far from a greedy hunting after a spiteful misinterpretation of men's speeches, and violent wresting of their actions and carriage to the worst sense; that if matters be but probable, poised with equal circumstances, and with even weight of reasons interpretable both ways, we are ever to suffer our conceits and censures to be carried the more charitable way. 3. By adding unto the truth, or detracting from it, or intermixing false adulterate Glosses, or some impertinent Parenthesis of a man's own. Christ's false accusers were deeply and damnably faulty this way. And in this kind, many, who are their Craftsmasters, as they say, in malice, will first of all give good men in their absence their due and deserved attributions, with many magnificent and plausible speeches; but afterward at the close, premising some formal counterfeit protestation and Pharisaical Preface, as, I am very sorry to hear it: I would it were otherwise, come in with a But, steeped in very gall and vinegar, which bites most bitterly, and cuts like the sharpest razor. As thus: A man of very good parts, great worth, extraordinary endowments; But something proud. He is one, that is very well reformed of late, of much knowledge, and grown marvelously forward in Religion; But a little covetous. And thus they speak, not out of any love unto the party, impartiality of censure, or that the imputation is true: but out of a cunning trick, to bring their own credit to their own door; a perverse humor of measuring another by their own foot; an envious impatency of being surpassed in any sufficiency's; or rather than all this, from a base, an

irregular and dung-hill desire of having the best men, especially every forward Professor, branded with one notorious But or another. For hypocrites, and enemies to God's grace, would, rather than their lives, have the lives of all God's people stained with some gross sin. Rather than fail, they will fasten upon them many a lewd slander that way, hammered only upon the forge of falsehood, and by the midwifery of malice in their own crafty pates; or broached upon an Ale-bench, or snatched from the distempered tongue of some peddling Tell-Tale, whence they may supply themselves with imaginary matter, both of insolency, and triumph against forwardness and zeal, and also nourish a Pharisaical persuasion, that howsoever there may be a profession, and shows to the contrary, yet others are as corrupt and censurable as themselves. 4. By relating all the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth: but either with a malicious and spiteful heart towards the party; or in a contemptuous, scornful, and insulting manner; or to a lewd end, and upon purpose to bring into hatred and disestimation; or some way or other, without any warrantable and comfortable calling thereunto.

Here therefore it will be seasonable, for help and direction against this more plausible, but also pestilent kind of slandering, to tell you, that telling the evil that is true of another, in his absence, doth brand you with the guilt and stain of Back-biters, save in such cases as these:

1. First, of profit, and good to the party absent. For instance; Thou informest thy friend of a third man; telling him, that he begins to break out into bad courses, ill company, infamous haunts and houses; and so proceedest to a more particular and punctual discovery of his lewd pranks and exorbitant carriage: but all this purposely for the benefit of the party. And therefore thou entrest thy present friend, that he would interpose,

engage, and improve the utmost of that power and interest which he hath in his affections, dependence, or some nearer relation, for his reclaiming and amendment.

2. Of expediency for him that heareth: when he is any way in danger of injury or infection, from the cunning, or corruption of the party spoken of. For instance: Thou discernest and observest some sly, smooth companion, under a cloak of Profession, and formal color of conformity to the best things, to insinuate into liking and acceptance with thine unsuspecting Christian friend: whereupon thou foreseest, that if he go on without notice and discovery, and get once within him; a thousand to one, at length he will either cunningly prey upon him, or cursedly betray him. Now in this case, thou mayest lawfully lay out such a counterfeit in his colors, and for prevention of the mischief which might ensue upon such a dangerous insinuation, disclose unto thy friend his hollowness and halting, and that lewdness and knavery which he guilds over in the meantime, with a veil of seeming, and varnish of hypocrisy; but is wont, when once he hath attained his end, or acted his villainy, to throw away his vizard. For such fellows there are abroad in the world, who purposely mix and join themselves with God's children, hang upon, and adhere unto true Christians, as men from whom by reason of the singleness of their hearts, and charitable unsuspectingness, they may either directly or by accident suck out the greatest advantage.

3. Of necessity for him which speaketh: That he may be preserved from guiltiness and accessoriness to the sin, which by silence and saying nothing, he should incur and bring upon himself. For instance: There comes to thy notice some notorious villainies, which concealment and impunity would mightily animate, and easily transport to further excess and outrage; but seasonable advertisement given to authority, as to a Magistrate, Minister,

Tutor, Father, Master, Governor of Family, might be a means to cut the knot and heart of such cursed good-fellowship, and stay the torrent of that scandalous insolency: In this case, thou hast a calling to reveal, inform, and implore superior assistance for suppression of sin. And therefore those of the house of Chloe did well to certify Paul, of the disorders and dissensions amongst the Corinthians: And Paul's sisters son, to acquaint the chief Captain, with that devilish plot of desperate conspirators against Paul. Otherwise, both thou and they, by cowardly and cruel silence in such cases, might in some sort, justly incur the guilt and accountableness even for other men's sins so unhappily concealed.

4. Fourthly, when a seasonable, warrantable occasion is given thereby, of performing some Christian duty, as,

1. Of instruction, and forewarning to others; thus, or in the like manner: Thou hast a friend, whom thou seest, and fearest is entering a licentious course, which at length is like to breed his confusion: Whereupon thou tellest him, that such or such a man, just as he begins; from contempt of the Word, profanation of the Sabbath, disobedience to Parents, fell fearfully into a desperate knot of lewd companions, then to Alehouse hunting, after, to gaming, at last, to the gallows: and therefore thou advisest him to take heed in time: to let such woeful precedents of sin and shame stand still in his eye, to stay him from breaking his neck at the bottom of the same stairs: for if he continue the reins but a while longer upon the neck of his rebellious nature, and still hold on so desperately with such wild colts, the devils Dromedaries to the same excess of riot, he shall find no more power in himself to stay, until from the height of sin, he fall into the bottom of hell, then a man having begun to run down the steepest hill, can stop before he comes at the bottom. He that lays his foundation with fire-work, must

look in the end to be blown up: he that premises profaneness and rebellion, shall be sure to conclude in cursedness and confusion.

2. Of praising God for the ruin, and rooting out of some implacable impenitent persecutor; thus, or in the like manner: A remarkable vengeance hath seized upon such a scornful caitiff, who hath been a perpetual bloody Goad in the sides of the Saints all his life long. Upon which occasion thou discoverest unto thy friend many passages and plots of his cruelty and hate against the Kingdom of Christ and his precious people, and that purposely to minister matter also unto others, of more heartily magnifying the glory of God's justice; which at length hath happily struck down Antiochus with an incurable, and invisible plague; eaten up Herod with vermin; made Pashur a terror to his friends; Zedekiah to run from chamber to chamber to hide himself. For you must know, that the hearts and tongues of all good men, and friends to the Gospel, are wont to be filled with much glorious joy, and heartiest songs of praise, at the downfall of every dogged opposite; when the revenging hand of God, not without special terror, hath tumbled from the top of malice and pride, any Antichristian and enraged enemy. So the Jews feasted, after Haman was hanged. But in such cases look unto thy heart with extraordinary watchfulness and search: That he be an enemy indeed, I mean, to Christianity: that thou do it not out of spleen, humor, faction, personal enmity, for the destruction of the creature or the like: but simply and sincerely out of zeal to the glory of God's Justice, prosperity of the Gospel, and peace of the Church. Otherwise, instead of a Christian duty, it will prove to thee a cursed cruelty.

3. Of Prayer, Thus, or in the like manner: Thou art acquainted with the secret plots of some plausible Tyrant against the people of God, whose words perhaps may be as soft as Butter, or Oil, and outward deportment

promise fair; but his thoughts and invisible intendments against the better side, composed all of blood and bitterness, of Gall and Gunpowder; whereupon, as occasion is offered, thou unmaskest his malice amongst thy Christian friends, to the end that they may communicate, and contribute their prayers for the confusion and infatuation of all his devilish depths and devices of hell. Tears, patience, and prayers, were ever the defensive weapons of God's people. Let Powder plots, Parisian Massacres, invincible Armadoes, slaughtering of Kings, and such like horrible and hellish combustions, brand with an everlasting stain of cruelty and blood, the Popish religion and persecutors of Heavenly truth: But let the sons of the Gospel be ever content to confront and beat back the implacable rage of all God's enemies, and haters of sincerity and grace, only with the cutting edge, and sharpened point of fervent prayer. Which weapon they may discharge: three ways: 1. Indefinitely, against all desperate enemies to God, his Church, and Gospel, without intimation, so much as by thought, of any particular persons. So David, Psalm. 129:5. Let them all be confounded and turned back, that hate Zion. Deborah, Judges 5:31. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him, be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. 2. Conditionally, when they perceive some insulting Shebnaes, and insolent Haman's to persist and hold on in persecuting the Saints, and opposing the power of Godliness; they may entreat the Lord, if they belong unto him, to humble them in their places, and give them repentance: but if he purpose to give them over finally to a Reprobate mind, and to the impetuous rage of their own cruel dispositions, to cut them off, and utterly confound them, that they be no longer a burden to the Church, and vexation to his people. 3. Abstractively; against their extreme oppressions, and malicious plots, without any relation at all to their persons.

So David, 2 Sam. 15:31. O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness.

Or thus: Thou observest someone to have continued long a worthy and noted Professor, but now unhappily begins to fall off from his former forwardness, to grow slack and negligent in Family duties, cold and cowardly in good causes, heartless, and hanging down the head in godly company; to dis-regard, and underprize the powerful means; to entertain but ordinary affections, if not some kind of strangeness towards other Professors, especially of greater eminency and acceptation for their grace; to suffer immoderate employment and entanglement in the world to waste his heavenly-mindedness; so that in all likelihood God will shortly give him over unto some scandalous fall, as a punishment of his backsliding: whereupon thou discoverest unto thy Christian friends his declining state, only that they may join with thee in prayer, that the Lord would be pleased to stay him in time, and re-establish him in his first love; lest by his further falling, the credit of the Gospel also receive a bruise and blemish, profession be ill spoken of, and the enemies of sincerity blaspheme.

4. Of vindicating the power and truth of Religion from the mistaking's of Ignorants, and Under-prizers. Thus, or in the like manner; Thou art in company where thou hearest a mere civil man, or a formal Professor at the best, whom the Church never discovered, or acknowledged to be any of Hers, and thyself canst aver out of thy certain particular knowledge, that he never set himself to seek God with any conscience or constancy; but is utterly unacquainted with the mystery of godliness, family-exercises, sanctification of the Sabbaths, contributions to the Saints, exercises of mortification, self-denial: I say, Thou hearest such a man commended for his Religion, forwardness, and the fear of God; which commendation, if he

carry away without contradiction, the rest of the company may be very greedy to apprehend such a precedent, and resolve not to pass his Pitch of profession, as unaccompanied with such pain and preciseness; and yet approved by wise and understanding men, as hopeful and comfortable. Now in this case, it may concern thee, but with as much wisdom, discretion, and charity as thou canst possibly, to disrobe such a fellow of his undeserved attributions, and the reputation of that holiness which he never had; lest both the By-standers be heartened to come short of Heaven, and the power of Christianity be disparaged by an ignorant and hurtful under-valuation.

3. Thirdly, be silent from all unsavory communication; as lying, swearing, profane, foolish, filthy jesting; jesting out of Scripture, mocking and making God's people as Music at Feasts, merry meetings, and cursed conventicles of Good-fellowship; and such other rotten, ribald and Bedlam talk: which, because they are the known and proper language of the sons of Belial, the dung, froth, and damned evaporations of drunken wits; Christians, whom alone I labor to direct in this point, are not in such danger of, and therefore I have nothing to do with them at this time.

III. Pray for, and practice a holy and discreet dexterity, to divert and draw from profane and wicked, or too much worldly and ordinary talk, to more savory conference, and heavenly discourse. Me thinks, it is great pity, that Professors should ever meet without some talk of their meeting in heaven, or of the blessed means and ways that lead thereunto, before they part. Yet many times, (such a deadness and damp of zeal, and heavenly-mindedness, haunts even the holiest hearts in these unhappy days of security and form) worldly matters, Talke of others, or some more remarkable accidents and affairs abroad, speculative curiosities, some ceremonial unseasonable controversies, or other such like impertinencies in one kind or other, take up

and engross, even from God's children, too much of many golden seasons, which might preciously serve, by their mutual diving with more Christian edifying discourse into the great mystery of godliness, and walks of Christianity, to nourish and increase amongst them much spiritual warmth, comfort, and resolution against all ungodly oppositions, and to build up one another in their most holy Faith, acquaintance with temptations, experimental knowledge, more comfortable walking with God, &c. To confront this common mischief and Mar-conference at Christian meetings, come unto them prepared, as I advised before. But if the company be contrary-minded, and un-inured to the language of Canaan, exercise and interpose all thy wit, courage, authority, and eloquence, to draw them from the dunghill of rotten talk; and by a wise plausible diversion, and modestly over-ruling transition, carry the current of their present discourse, all thou canst, towards some Heavenly good, and spiritual end. 1. To which end, observe, and apprehend all opportunities and occurrences, which may minister matter of digression into divine talk; and acquaint thyself with the Art of abstracting sacred instructions from the book of the Creatures and businesses in hand. It was the practice of our blessed Savior: Upon mention of bread, Matth. 16, he pressed upon his Disciples, a dissuasion from the Leaven of the Pharisees: when he observed, John 6, a number of people to throng about him for more miraculous bread, he digressed into a most heavenly discourse of the food of life. Upon occasion of drink being denied him by the Samaritan woman, John 4, he forgetting his weariness, hunger and thirst, labors to allure her to the well head of everlasting happiness. 2. Have ever in a readiness some common heads, of more stirring and quickening motives to mind heavenly things: as the cursed condition of our natural state, the incomparable sweetness of Christian ways, the vanity and

vexations of all earthly things, the uncertainty and miseries of this short life, the everlastingness of our second state in another world, the sudden executions of God's fierce wrath upon some notorious ones even in this life, especially those, which are freshest in memory, and lateliest done; the terrors of death, the dreadfulness of that last and great Day drawing on apace, the horrors of a damned soul, &c. Mention of these things, many times will strike full cold to the heart of the most swaggering and sensual Belshazzar, the most raging and roaring companions, and drive the most confident and domineering worldling into his dumps. Talke then of these terrible things, may by God's blessing prepare and soften sometimes the hardest hearts for some thoughts of remorse, and more heavenly impressions. 3. But above all, get into thine own heart an habit of heavenly-mindedness by much exercise, intercourse, and acquaintance with God, in pouring out of thy soul ever and anon before him, in renewing and recovering thy peace, and comfortable access unto him upon every fall and check of conscience, in often contemplation and foretaste of the inexplicable sweetness, glory, and eternity of those Mansions above; in diving into the secrets of his Kingdom by the help of humbleness and godly fear; upon the most sweet and soul-fattening days of humiliation, mortifying visitations of troubled and afflicted consciences, often conferences with humblest and best experienced Christians, &c. By private employment of thy soul in solemn reflections upon itself; fruitfully recounting with what variety of trains it was long detained in the state of darkness; with what delays and tergiversations, lets and assaults it met in its way to light; what bitterness and terrors it passed thorough in the pangs of its new birth; the temptations incident to its infancy in grace, progress and growth in several graces, and the whole body of Christianity; relapses, desertions, their

discoveries, recoveries, with all the means and circumstances: In a word, by a punctual observing how God deals with it every day. Be, I say, thus blessedly busied at home in thine own heart, and thou shalt find thyself much more pregnant and plentiful in holy talk when thou comest abroad. We are most apt and readiest to pour out ourselves in public, according to our private provisions, and the most predominant discourses and contemplations of the mind. The conferences of free and unreserved spirits are ordinarily nothing else, but the clothing of their ordinary mental conceptions, and heart-secrets with familiar forms of speech. Men for the most part, speak most and most willingly of those things they mind most. I advise thus in this point, that thou mayst be habituated and heartened with resolution and delight, in the art and exercise of putting forward good talk; or of diverting and drawing towards better in case of the contrary. Otherwise, thou shalt never be able to hold out with constancy and courage, to cross many times the general mirth of the company, to put worldly-wisemen out of their element of all earthly talk, to draw worldlings, which goes most against the hair, to hear of heavenly things.

VIII. Survey thoroughly before hand with the glorious Lamp of the Word of Life and Truth; watch over, narrowly with the enlightened eye of a tender conscience, and ever punctually manage, and conduct with the particular light of spiritual prudence, every action thou undertakest, or that shall at any time pass thorough thy hand; of what kind soever it be, whether natural, recreative, civil, of mercy, Religion, &c.

To which particulars, before I descend, let me commend unto thee, and premise this Principle concerning actions in general.

Every truly commendable and comfortable action, consists of an absolute integrity of all concurrents and requisites. Or thus: That which is good and

lawful, must be entire. I mean it in that sense, as our Divines speak of sanctification, which if saving, say they, must be perfect and entire, though not in respect of degrees, yet in respect of parts. Every part and power of body and soul must have its part of sanctification, though no part his full perfection and all degrees, before the dissolution of our earthly tabernacles. Proportionably in the present point; though some mixture of infirmities and imperfections will cleave unto the face of the fairest action (an absolute and unstained purity is incompatible with this unglorified state of mortality;) yet notwithstanding, every several ingredient must be attended, and tempered with its own particular goodness and honesty, and seasonable conformity to the whole; or else the whole action, howsoever right in other respects, is utterly robbed and disrobed of all true splendor, acceptation and grace. A little heaven sours the whole lump: one noxious herb brings death into the pot: The goodliest deed or duty is quite perverted and empoisoned, by the enormity of any one particular requisite. We say truly in the Schools; The conclusion ever follows the worst part: Semblably in morality, the iniquity, defect, and exorbitancy of any one ingredient, denominates the whole action naught.

In everyone of thine actions and undertakings, look ever, if thou look for comfort, that every concurrent be justifiable, that every ingredient be gracious, and bring his *probatum est*. For instance:

1. It must be good in its own nature, and warrantable out of the Word; by which all things must be sanctified unto thee, 1 Tim. 4:5, as a good servant will venture upon nothing, but what he knows will please his Master. Otherwise, let the person be never so pleasing unto God, his intention never so good, his heart never so zealous, the means, circumstances and end never so excellent, yet all is naught. Worshipping Christ in a Crucifix is naught in

its own nature, abominable, idolatrous, condemned in God's Law, Exod. 20:4, &c. And therefore, be it done with never so great devotion and good meaning, with never so much Popish daubing, or goodly pretense whatsoever, it is still cursed and damnable.

2. The object, whereabout the action is exercised, must be qualified according to the rules of Religion. Alms-deeds, and Doles of charity, are sweet and acceptable sacrifices unto God. But amongst other cautions and considerations to season them, the parties, that are to be made partakers thereof, are to be singled out with all godly discretion. 1. The true wants of a religious Professor, should in the first place be the principal and most moving object, to draw bounty from a truly charitable heart: according to that, Gal. 5:10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. 2. In the next place, the lame, the blind, the sick, the aged, the trembling hand, or any that God hath made poor. 3. Any whosoever in a case of true necessity and extremity, whatsoever the party hath been before: for there not the man, as it were, but the common state of humanity is relieved. But now, if for such a purpose, thou makest choice of a sturdy beggar, idle rogue, canting companion, the shame and plague of this noble Kingdom; thou doest not only deprive thyself of the comfort and honor of a truly charitable deed; but thereby incurrst a great deal of guilt, by encouraging and nourishing idleness, filching, many strange unknown villainies, nay, even an execrable irreligious Paganism in such lewd, lazy drones, unprofitable burdens of the earth, and intolerable caterpillars of the Common-wealth. For such (saith a worthy Divine) as turn begging into an Art and occupation, they are by order to be compelled to work for their maintenance, which is the best and greatest alms.

The object of thy special, intimate, and dearest love, must be the Christian, even the poorest professor of Religion, not the complete Carnalist, or most magnificent Worldling.

3. Thou must also look unto the matter, else all may be marred. For instance: The matter of thy bounty and beneficence, must be thine own goods got lawfully, not formerly hoarded by Usury and wrong; otherwise it will but prove, in respect of divine allowance, but an abominable sacrifice: for many times, that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God, Luke 16:15.

3. The person must be pleasing; the actor acceptable unto God: Otherwise, his best and most bountiful deeds, are at the best but beautiful abominations; Services most sacred in their own nature, as Prayer, hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, &c. are from him, and the altar of his unsanctified heart, but as the offering of Swine's blood. If thou be not justified by faith, and accepted through Christ, all thy actions, natural, civil, recreative, religious; whatsoever is within thee, or without thee, the use of the creatures; all thy courses, ways, and passages, are turned into sins and pollutions unto thee, enlarge and aggravate thy woe and damnation: Even the sacrifice and whole way of the wicked, is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15:8,9. The Pharisee, Luk. 18, was not a button better for all his prayers, fasting's, &c. nay, by accident more accursed; I mean, in respect of any gracious entertainment with God, who was not pleased with Him, in Him, in whom He is well pleased.

4. The heart must be sincere, else even the noblest duties of Religion are nothing. Judas gave his name to Christ, preached, and wrought miracles; and yet all the while was a desperate hypocrite, a very incarnate devil; because his heart was rotten, drenched in the gall of bitterness, and snared

in the bond of iniquity. The Israelites humiliation seeking God, returning, and inquiring early after him: bespeaking him with all terms of dearness and dependence; our Rock, our high God, our Redeemer; was all but temporary and unsound, because their heart was not upright. When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired dearly after God. And they remembered, that God was their Rock: and the high God, their Redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth: and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, Psal. 78:34-37.

5. The means must be good. Otherwise, be the end never so excellent; let there be never so exact and absolute concurrence of all other causes; yet the glory and comfort of the action is quite darkened, and desperately empoisoned to the man, that willingly, and against the cry of an enlightened conscience, employs and puts his hand to any wicked means for the achievement. Suppose that by a lie, thou couldest save a man's life, his soul, the souls of all the men upon earth; nay, win thereby unto God as much glory, as accrues unto him by all his creatures; yet for all this, on thy part all were naught. For it is a sacred Principle, sealed unto by Truth itself; We must do no ill, that good may come, Rom. 3:8.

6. The circumstances must be seasonable. For instance: Personal and private prayer, is a right precious sacrifice and service: but let it be seasonable for the circumstance of place, or else it may lose its sweet-smelling savor in the nostrils of God, and be tainted with Pharisaism. The closet, or some retired place, is fit for this exercise, which the more secret, the more sincere; not the Synagogues, and corners of the streets, which was the Pharisees vain-glorious wont, who sought more for praise of men, then pleasing of God. Meditation upon divine mysteries, and quickening spiritual

points, is an excellent, and acceptable exercise, so it keep its own turn, and be confined to a fit time: but in the heat of the Preachers pouring out his soul for us in prayer at the Throne of Grace, it is sinful, because unseasonable. Calling to mind seriously some special passages formerly heard, or read, to press them with more life and power upon the conscience, is a right needful, and religious duty: but so to do at a Sermon, in singing a Psalm, or when we ought to bend all the powers of our souls, and best attention to the present, is but one of Satan's tricks in the glory of an Angel, to make us guilty of the contempt, and rob us of the comfort of the ordinance in hand.

7. The end also must be answerable in goodness; and by its excellency and attractiveness, inspire amiableness and allurements into all the means leading thereunto, though they should be in their own nature painful and displeasing. In all thy enterprises and undertakings, thou must have in thine eye principally, that universal aim of all our actions, God's glory; otherwise, let the whole affair be carried never so fairly in the eyes of men; be clothed with never so goodly a show, and glorious outside; yet in respect of acceptance with God, or true comfort to the party, it is no better than the cutting off a Dogs neck. Jehu did right noble and worthy service, by his resolute rooting out, and courageous cutting off that bloody and idolatrous House of Ahab: and sweet in the nostrils of GOD, was that great sacrifice of Baals Priests: he marched furiously in this holy business, and was very zealous to execute God's charge in that regard exactly. And yet for all this, all these outward glorious visible conformities to God's commandment, were to him, but as the killing of a man; because his eye was not upon the right end, God's glory. He principally aimed at the secure settling of the Crown upon his own head, by an utter extinguishment of the Kings family.

Had his aim been right, his heart had been as well set against the golden Calves in Dan and Bethel, as his hand and sword against the idolatrous house of Baal; but it was not so, 2 King. 10:29.

Now I come to some particulars; and,

1. First, concerning recreations; which howsoever, they ought to be very moderate and sparing; and in that respect, me thinks, I should rather spare my labor, and not spend many words; yet because they are not only insatiably pursued and plunged into by men of this world; but also too much looked after, and lain in, even by some who look towards Religion, I shall be somewhat the longer; and advise, that they be not,

1. Costly. To curb and confine thine affections to a seasonable and sanctified moderation herein, consider 1. how the backs and bowels of many poor members of Jesus Christ, and distressed Saints call, nay, cry even with tears of blood for relief and compassion from thine abundant and overflowing abilities. 2. That thou must be called upon, and accountable with severity, and exactness at that last and dreadful Tribunal for every farthing; how thou gotst it; and with what warrant thou keptst it; upon what thou spentst it. 3. The judgment of Austin, that great and renowned Father of the Church, who, as Divines report (for I must confess, I take it at other men's word, not knowing where it is in his works; but it is a saying worthy so excellent a man) would have all things gotten by play, taken from the winner, and never restored to the looser, but given to the poor; that both the winner might want, what so greedily he gaped for, and the looser not to recover, what so foolishly he parted with. 4. The resolution of that grave and profound Divine of these latter times: But some say, saith he, they can take no pleasure in play, except they play for money, But we are to know of them; how they would have the money bestowed? Perhaps they will say,

Upon a common Feast. And why not rather upon the poor? But I say, It is much better, and more safe, that no money be laid to the stake: for although it may be, that thou art not touched with greediness of winning, yet he with whom thou playest, may be tainted that way. Let occasions of ill be taken away, which are too many at all turns.

II. Cruel. Bathe not thy recreations in blood: Refresh not thy tired mind with spectacles of cruelty: Consider, 1. How God himself out of tenderness and pity, would not have his people feed upon the flesh of Beasts with the blood, lest thereby they should be fleshed to cruelty, and inured to behold rueful objects without horror. And doest thou think then, he will allow thee to feed thine eye and fancy, with their bloody torturing and tearing one another in pieces? 2. With what brutish savageness thou dejectest and debasest humanity, below the immanity of beasts. No beast, they say, takes contentment in the hurting of any other, except in the case of hunger or anger. They satisfy their appetites and rage sometimes with cruelty and blood; but their eyes and fancies never. 3. That men bloodily minded towards harmless beasts, discover our natural propension to cruelty, which is further manifested, 1. by the multitudes many times, thirsting and thrusting after the curiosity of woeful spectacles, and their impatency to tarry the beholding of the lamentable executions of guilty persons. 2. And in that they take no delight to see wild beasts play, and sportingly to make much one of another; but are well pleased to see them bloodily encounter, mangle and enter-tear each other. These seeds then, or rather weeds of cruelty, originally implanted in our hearts by the curse of nature, are too rank and luxuriant of themselves; they need no manuring with barbarous inhumanities, and sports of blood. 4. That Rule which Divines give about recreations, we must not make God's Judgments and punishments of sin,

either upon man or beast, the matter and object of them. Now, best Divines hold, that enmity amongst themselves, was a fruit of our rebellion against God, and more general judgment inflicted upon the creature after the fall. Which misery coming upon them by our means, should rather break our hearts and make them bleed; then minister matter of glorying in our shame, and vexing those very vexations, which our impiety hath put upon them. Alas, sinful man, what a heart hast thou, that canst take delight in the cruel tormenting of a dumb creature! Is it not too much for thee to behold with dry eyes that fearful brand, which only thy sin hath impressed upon it; but thou must barbarously also press its oppressions, and make thyself merry with the bleeding miseries of that poor harmless thing, which in its kind is much more and far better serviceable to the Creator than thyself? Yet I deny not, but that there may be another lawful use of this Antipathy, for the destroying of hurtful, and enjoying of useful creatures; so that it be without any taint, or aspersion of cruelty on our parts, or needless tormenting of the silly beasts.

3. Engrossers of time. Thousands there are, who plunge themselves over head and ears in courses of pleasure; which they call recreations, wherein they very unworthily and woefully waste the fat and marrow, as it were, of dear and precious time, the flower of their age, the strength of their bodies; emasculate and melt the vigor of their spirits, into effeminateness, sensuality, and lust; drown the fair and goodly hopes of their education, the honor of their Families, the expectation of the Country, the improvement of their parts, in froth and folly: As though they were placed upon earth, as Leviathan in the Sea, only to take their sport and pastime therein. Lovers they are of pleasures, Mirth-mongers, men of this world, sworn Vassals to carnal looseness and riotous excess. They have their fools Paradise here,

and therefore in the equity of a just and holy proportion, must with the Rich man look for their payment and torment hereafter. But God's children must make conscience of meddling at any time with recreations, without true cause and a just calling thereunto, and hold them of the same account and consequence, with sleep and other temperate refreshing's, which serve only to quicken the mind, revive the body, enlarge the breath, that we may return with more lightsomeness and alacrity to our work and Callings. The season then of comfortable recourse unto these repairs and restoratives is, when we have truly wearied our bodies with some honest employment, or tired our minds in worthy and noble exercises, or both. And as we must not press upon them at our pleasure, and prevent true need, out of a hankering humor after sportful vanities, old haunts, good-fellow meetings, conformity to the times, or some such sensual and inordinate attractive: so in the entertainment of them, we must receive them, as men do honey, with the tip of the finger, not with a full hand. By no means ought we to engage, and as it were, to engulf our affections into their excesses and immoderation; not suffer them so to insinuate, as to steal away our hearts into a pleasing insensible thralldom; so creating necessities of recreations; which is an extreme misery, and intolerable slavery; wherein, notwithstanding many truly unworthy and unnoble Gallants miserably languish, and come to nothing; prove only unprofitable burdens of the earth; and instead of a blessing, the very bane of the Country that bred them.

Let such considerations as these serve as so many curbs, to restrain us from an unseasonable intrusion upon them: and so many keen spurs to post us out of them, before we be limed and entangled by them.

1. Time is short. Our life is but a span long, a bubble, a thought, a smoke, a shadow, a dream, the very dream of a shadow; or if you can name

anything more fading and frail: and yet upon this moment depends eternity. As we behave ourselves here upon earth, either in conformity to the ways of God, walking with him, self-denial, &c. or in fashionableness to the world, serving the times, and our own turns, &c. so shall we fare everlastingly in another life: And either become most glorious and happy creatures, crowned with an exquisite confluence and quintessence, as it were, of sweetest unmixed eternal pleasures; a very shadow whereof, not the largest natural hearts of deepest understanding men, from the Creation, to the last day, were they all united into one exactest height and excellency of conceit, could possibly comprehend; nay, in this one circumstance, at the least, the Saints shall surpass even Angelical felicity; they shall behold, with incredible joy, their own nature, in that respect, honored and advanced above the brightest Cherub, shining forever with infinite beauty and glorified splendor, in the sacred Person of the Son of God: or else fall irrecoverably into the mouth of inexplicable and remediless horror, and so become the forlorn and woeful Objects, upon which shall be exercised and executed the unquenchable wrath of God, and fiercest torments in hell, with extremity and everlastingness; nay, and in this point, more unhappy than the very Devils: For since their Apostasy, there was no means or possibility vouchsafed unto them of recovery and return to those everlasting Mansions of glory; But the sons and daughters of Adam, since their fall, have had the very Son of God himself, with the dear and invaluable cry of his own hearts blood, to meditate unto, and solicit the Father of all compassions and mercy, for restitution into favor and plantation into the Angels room. And therefore as this thought, Oh what unhappy and accursed creatures were we, who being crowned with the matchless transcendency of all felicities and glory, would not hold our station and have shined still! I say, as this thought will

endlessly haunt the damned angels with inconceivable biting and anguish; so, not only an answerable self-fretting torture from this conceit; Alas, that we kept not Paradise! Will rent and tear the woeful hearts of the wicked in hell: but also a further sting of that never-dying Worm, not incident to the Apostate angels, will extremely enrage them with restless gnawing's of conscience and gnashing of teeth; when out of the horror of their hideous woeful yelling's, they shall cry out against themselves; What wretches? What beasts? What madded Devils were we! Who when the glorious Blood of Christ Jesus was so mercifully tendered unto us in the Ministry of the Word, all our life long, we turned our backs against such blessed and bleeding embracement's; and cruelly cut the throats of our own poor souls, by impenitent continuance in sin: so loosing for a few bitter-sweet pleasures in this vale of tears, for an inch of time, fullness of joy at God's right hand, thorough all eternity.

2. Time is precious. If all this great massy body of the whole earth, whereupon we tread, were turned into a lump of gold, it were not able to purchase one minute of time. And were there no other circumstance to set an impression of high valuation upon it, yet this very one doth much ennoble it; That all these fair and shining bodies above our heads, and principally the Prince of all the lights of heaven, that glorious and mighty Giant, the prime and crown of all corporal creatures, do tire and waste, as it were, their celestial vigor's, with the incredible swiftness of endless revolutions, to beget and give us time; I say, us, who for the sin of every moment in it, deserve eternity of punishment. But that our hearts may be more sensibly wrought upon, and more effectually affected with the dearness and preciousness of it; let us suppose that the Lord, by divine and extraordinary dispensation, should give leave to a damned soul to come into

this life again, and would vouchsafe him but one hour of a new trial, as it were, and a second time of gracious visitation: Oh how highly would he prize, how eagerly would he apprehend, with what infinite watchfulness, endeavor, and diligence, would he improve that little short golden season? And if therein he might have but the happiness to hear a Sermon; Oh with what affectionate inflamed attention would he listen unto the Word of Life! How would his heart break and bleed within him, and fall asunder in his breast, like drops of water, to hear God's just wrath and holy indignation thundered out and threatened against sin! With what insatiable grasping and dear embracement would he labor to lay hold upon Christ Jesus and his gracious promises? In a word, he would think, that in demonstration of thankfulness for God's favor, might he be so happy as to have it, the spending of every moment of all that great body of time, which lies between the Creation and the worlds end, if he might live so long, in as holy, pure, strict, precise, heavenly manner, as ever did the most mortified Martyr upon earth, were far too little. Shall we then triflingly pass and play away the time that is so precious? And in my supposition, the damned soul should be sure of an hour: But none of us can possibly purchase security for very one moment, after I have spoken this word. The time present is our only time; we have no more power and command over the time to come, then over the time past. Even the next minute thou mayest be cut off by the stroke of death from all further time of repentance, acceptation, and grace forever. Nay, yet further, were it possible that any uncomfortable passion were incident to a glorified Saint in heaven, he would be sorry and transported with extreme anger and indignation against himself; That he was not a more greedy engrosser, as it were, and improver of time, for doing excellently upon earth; and that every hour after his conversion was

not crowned with some rarer and more remarkable exploit; with some more special and noble service, for the glorifying of that most bountiful, and ever-blessed God, who hath now honored him with such unspeakable glory, and that Crown of joys, so infinitely transcendent to the utmost expectation of the most enlarged heart. Howsoever therefore men of this world, for the most part, except they be continually exercised in variety of pleasing employments, and still entertained with fresh successions of new pleasures, are sore troubled with time, and tediously perplexed how to pass it; which is the reason that they devise so many pass-times; with much solicitous and sensual forecast, plot and project to themselves aforehand, many and many a merry meeting, idle visitations, feastings, mutual entertainments of mere complement and vanity, jovial revelings, as they call them, &c. that they chain together, as it were, by the Art of Epicureanism and with links of liberty, continued occasions of company keeping, and good-fellow meetings, from the one end of the week to the other: (For solitariness and self-conversing, is a very torturing rack, and the tide-time of melancholy, to the waking consciences of graceless and guilty men.) Though, I say, this be the custom and carriage of Satan's Revelers; yet all Christians ought to have time in dear and high esteem, in every moment whereof should they lay down ten thousand lives for His sake that pardons their sins; and also do him all the glorious service of all, both the militant and Triumphant Saints, it were infinitely too little for his love. Wherefore no marvel though well-advised and watchful, they feel themselves rather pinched with want, then pressed with plenty of her golden offers and opportunities to do good, and be ever addressed to entertain and welcome every hour with special attendance, as a gracious Indulgence of his patient love, and longsuffering, and suffering them to do him yet more honor, (for which cause alone they

long to live) before they go down into the pit and be seen no more. And they should be so far from being afraid of solitariness, as to hold their time alone, the only time for sweetest contemplations, heavenly commerce, nearer conversing and communion with God.

3. We that are earthly Angels by the nobleness of Creation, though by voluntary degeneration incarnate devils, were put into, and planted within the compass and comforts of this great and curious Frame round about us, the goodly Workmanship of God's own Almighty hand, wherein we have the Sun to serve us; and we of this Kingdom by matchless and incomparable favor, the heavenly and healing beams of the Sun of righteousness, to shine upon us through his glorious Gospel, I say, we were placed in this world, not to serve our own turns, to please our own hearts, to follow our own ways, to eat, drink, and sleep; to temporize, revel, or root in the earth; to play the Epicures, Libertines, Machiavellians; to climb into high rooms, by all means lawful and unlawful; by bribery, simony, flattery, base insinuations, following the times; or some fouler means, and thereto domineer and tyrannize: In a word, to serve the devil for a few and evil days, to die, and so to be damned. No, no, a nobler task and more excellent end is appointed and apportioned for the Prince and principallest of all earthly creatures. Our being upon earth this little inch of time, is for business of another nature, and for a far more important affaire, and of dearest consequence; even with humbleness and truth to know and obey our God, to serve our brethren in love, and to save our own poor souls in the Day of Christ. This is that One necessary thing, in respect of which, all other things, though otherwise honest and excellent, are but respectively necessary, and so far as they further, and are warrantably and comfortably subordinate and contributory to this end: Nay, to this the exquisite

Quintessence and concurrence of all other, the dearest and most desirable things under the Sun, are to be accounted but dross and dung. And yet for all this, many of us, while we yet abode in the darkness and damnation of our natural state, spent many years, some twenty, some thirty, some perhaps forty, wholly upon hell, in base and unblessed courses, quite cross to the end of our Creation. All that time (a misery to be lamented even with tears of blood) was utterly cast away upon the kingdom of darkness, fearfully lost upon our own lusts, sinful fashions, and pride of life; slavishly and woefully wasted in the devils service. Nay, all that while, abominable and beastly wretches that we were, we set ourselves with sensual rage, against the very face of heaven, lay in actual high Treason, and bore Arms in open Rebellion against that dreadful Majesty, which might most justly every moment of that woeful time have arrested us with death, arraigned us at the Barre of his Justice, and thrown us down into hell. What manner of persons then I pray you ought we to be, in the short remainder of those few and evil days which are behind? Even to employ and improve the utmost possibility of all our natural acquired and gracious parts, our credit, calling, outward state, all our power, means, occasions, advantages, to win and work out glory unto God, enlargement of Christ's Kingdom, confusion to the devils dominion, conversion of others, comfort unto our own poor souls against our ending hour. A fellow that hath loitered a great part of the day in his journey, or business, and yet must needs reach home and finish his task, will toile and sweat at it towards night, double his pains, and put all his strength unto it: so we having not only been slack in our business about God's service, and slow in the way to heaven, but even for many years, perhaps, run in a quite contrary course, and done the devils work, must now towards the night of our natural life, and the conclusion of the short span thereof, spare no pains,

double our diligence, press hard to the Price of the high calling, quit ourselves like men, and be strong, with an holy violence lay hold upon the Kingdom of heaven, with all zeal, courage, and resolution, labor to redeem the time past, for the days are evil; and our particular doom for eternity of joys, or woes; pleasures or pains, draws on apace, and is even at the door.

And as consideration of former time cursedly misspent; so a fore-conceit also of dreadful times to come, may justly cause us to make much of, and husband well every moment we have presently in our hands; for treasuring up an heavenly hoard of grace, comfort, patience, and courage, against the evil day. Though the times, as yet, be fair and calm, happy and Halcyonian; and the Candle of God shines still upon this Kingdom, with extraordinary prosperity and peace; there is no carrying into captivity, or crying in our streets, but every man is quietly reposed under his own Vine; and there refresheth himself with the riches and comforts of a good and pleasant land; yet as sure as the night follows the day, a change will come. If the glorious and Triumphant times of the daughter of Jerusalem, that men called, The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth, The glory of all lands, were turned into a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of hosts, in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and crying to the mountains: what may we of this Land look for, if we still turn the grace of God into wantonness; but at length to be turned out of our houses of peace, as the unthankfullest and unworthiest people that ever the Sun of Heaven saw, or the Sun of Christ's glorious Gospel did shine upon so fair and so long? But howsoever the Kingdom fare, and God deal with us in public: (Only let me tell you by the way, that in the mean time we stand by a miracle of God's mercy, and a prop of his extraordinary patience) yet everyone of our particular day and doom cannot be far off. As yet, perhaps,

the Almighty is with us, his providence protects our habitations, no remarkable affliction hath taken hold upon us; so that there is no mourning, or spectacles of miseries in our families; no crying, O my father Abraham, and O my son Isaac; O my son Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom; O Absalom, my son, my son! And these houses of flesh, it may be, wherein we dwell for a few and evil days, are as yet in reasonable good repair; and it is every way with us, as it was with Job in the days of his youth, when he washed his steps with butter, and the rocks poured him out rivers of oil; yet we may build upon it, as a Principle which never failed sinful mortality, that days of danger and distress will have their turn and time also. Sorrow and sickness, perplexity and fear, temptation, desertion, trouble of conscience, the destroying Sword, a fiery trial, striving unto blood; Marian times of most abhorred memory, or some dreadful visitation in one kind or other, may seize upon us, we know not how soon. But howsoever we escape in the meantime, sure I am, these frail bodies of ours, after a short while, will fall in funder, and molder away into rottenness and dust; and our naked souls must stand at the just Tribunal of the ever-living God, countable with exactness and truth, for all things done in the body. Far be it from us then, and everyone, that at that last and great Day would not cry to this Rock and that Mountain to cover him, like sons and daughters of confusion, to trifle away time in this heat of our spiritual harvest; but rather with doubled and extraordinary resolution, let us gird up the loins of our minds, and with all fruitfulness and power, improve every hour of this fair Day of our gracious visitation; to treasure up peace to our poor souls against the stormy winter night of death, towards which every wind drives us, and both sleeping and waking we are posting apace, though we perceive it not.

CHAP. IV. – Combating Natural Actions.

4. WE MUST BE countable for time. At the dreadful Barre of that last Tribunal, as we must be exactly answerable even for wandering vain imaginations, idle words, and every the very least error of our whole life; nay, for not improving all our gifts, goods, and graces, to the best advantage for God's glory; for misemployment of our wit, understanding, memory, affections, health, strength, courage, learning, liberty, authority, policy, or any other power or possibility which God hath put into our hands: so must we also give up a strict account for the expense of every moment of time. Now tell me at that great and general Audit, whether of these two sums will sound more sweetly in our ears? Item, so many days in Recreation, or so many days in Humiliation; so many hours in Prayer, or so many hours in playing at Cards; so many weeks in Jovial revelings and merry meetings, or so many weeks in watching over our ways, and walking with God, &c. A serious fore-conceit of the inconceivable comfort of the one; and how cold the other will strike unto our hearts, might make us easily grow into blessed Bradfords care and practice this way, of whom it is reported, That he

counted that hour not well spent, wherein he did not some good; either with his pen, study, or in exhorting others, &c. and not to rush upon recreations unseasonably, without necessity and warrantable calling.

5. The holiest hearts of the most worthy Saints are woefully haunted with too many distractions and violent intrusion of idle, vain, and impertinent thoughts, even in holy duties, religious exercises, and solemn use of the ordinances: which without extraordinary watchfulness, and wrestling on their parts, would utterly bereave and rob them of all the sweetness, power and profit of those blessed means, and by little and little quite transform them into form and perfunctoriness. If in the best then and heavenliest businesses, the vanity of our own minds, and malice of the Devil press upon us with such importunity and restless assaults; with what furious and impetuous incursions and vastations of conscience are they like to oppress us in our idle hours, ill spent time, and pursuit of pleasures? Consideration whereof, me thinks, should cause Christians, who alone are truly sensible of the interruption and discontinuance of their sweet communion and society with Christ, and smart many times for the estrangement of their thoughts and affections from God: only to have recourse to recreations in case of true need; for necessity, I say, and seasonably, even as they use physic; so may they expect God's gracious protection from the hurtful prevailing of those sensual distempers and licentious ranging of their thoughts, which are wont to enrage and empoison the minds and affections of carnal men, all the while: and to make account so often as they are hailed by the cunning ensnarement of old companions, the tyranny of former custom, or unmortified yieldingness of their own deceitful hearts, to immoderation and excess in this kind; so often to expose their hearts by God's just permission, as a prey to temptation and vanity. Whereby they may be in continual

danger, either by little and little to be drawn back and drowned again in the froth and fooleries of their disavowed pleasures, which were an horrible thing; or else at least, to bring upon themselves, from time to time, as they transgress in this kind, much unnecessary discomfort and dissettledness in their Christian course, dis-relish in Religious exercises, deadness of heart, disacquaintance with heavenly comforts, loss of that dearest Thing, and earthly Paradise, peace of Conscience, which perhaps they shall hardly with much ado recover a long time after.

6. Sixthly, consider Chrysostom's preciseness against wasting time this way. The present time, saith he, is not for melting into mirth; but for lamentation and mourning. And yet doest thou vainly mis-spend it in merry conceits? The Devil gnasheth the teeth, roars, and foams, and flashes out fire against thy salvation; and doest thou sit still and jovially jest it out? Do we play and sport ourselves, Beloved? Wilt thou learn the conversation of the Saints? Hear what Paul says, Act. 20:31. By the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears. 2 Cor. 2:4. Out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears. 2 Cor. 11:29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? 2 Cor. 5:4. For we that are in this Tabernacle, do groan being burdened. And the Apostle desiring, that I may so speak, every day to depart this life; Doest thou laugh and play? Our time here is a time of war, of fight, of watch and ward, of harnessing, of standing in the face and fury of the enemy; and doest thou demean thyself like a dancer? Doest thou not see the faces of Soldiers in the fight; how sad they are, how contracted, how terrible with frowns, how full of horror? Doest thou not behold the austere piercing intention of their eyes, an extraordinary excitation of heart, leaping and panting in their breasts? &c. His meaning imports thus much: Doth an

ordinary Soldier in the field against a mortal man and earthly enemy, recollect and unite all the spirits and powers of body and soul with all efficacy, and earnestness, for the encounter: And shall a Christian Soldier that wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness's in high places; who is every moment furiously assaulted and hunted even like a Partridge in the Mountains, by the devils open rage, the ambushment of the World, and the endless treacheries of his own false heart, trifle away his time, and turn aside to toys?

4. No encroachers upon heavenly comforts; no diminishers of our delight in God; no devourers of spiritual joy. For this is a very dear and divine thing, to be prized and preserved as a sweet and celestial Jewel, far more worth than heaven and earth; which the world can neither give, nor take from us; neither must any stranger meddle with it. We may take an estimate of its excellency, by casting our eyes upon,

1. The intolerable bitterness of the contrary; I mean, spiritual horror, which, we see, sometimes by woeful experience, doth enrage the guilty consciences of some forlorn wretches, with such restless furies, and unutterable anguish, that at length, (extremist, I know not whether madness or cruelty!) they lay violent and villainous hands upon themselves, In which case, such an hell upon earth is horror of conscience, they care not a button for the sweetness of life, the rueful cries of their own dear children, the heavy looks of their yoke-fellows, the abhorred infamy they bring upon their own names, families, kindred, burial, posterity. Oh how they spurn at with a vile, disdainful contempt, Pleasures, Riches, Honors, Crowns, Kingdoms, Worlds of gold, anything, everything, as miserable comforters! Nay it is so stinging, that they will rather venture upon that other Hell, to

which they are posting in a Coffin of blood, a thousand thousand times more horrible, then endure it any longer. If sense then of divine indignation, taking secret vengeance upon the guilty conscience of an impenitent Rebell, puts him as it were into hellish flames above ground; what a heaven upon earth is a sweet feeling of God's reconciled face, and his everlasting mercies through Christ, sealed and set on by the holy Ghost, and testimony of a good conscience? And how deliciously doth an humble soul, so honored with a foretaste and first-fruits as it were of eternal joys, grasp the Lord Jesus in his ordinances, and blissfully sun itself in the love and light of His countenance?

2. The practice of the profane in their insatiable restless pursuit of false joys, and painful pleasures, which at best are but as crackling of thorns under a pot, and flashes of lightning before everlasting fire. They hunt after them even into hell, and light a candle at the Devil for lightsomeness of heart; by haunting Ale-houses, Taverns, Brothel-houses, Play-houses, Conventicles of good-fellowship, sinful and unseasonable sports, a thousand kinds of vanities and fooleries, which are nothing but the Devils Wakes, and revelings of Hell. And all this little poor carnal mirth, is purchased many times with much shame, loss, misery, beggary, rottenness of body, discredit, damnation. At what a high rate then, and with what eagerness and thirst is that true, sweet, unmixed, glorious joy springing out of the Fountain of comfort in an honest and holy heart, to be set and sought after?

3. The differences between spiritual and carnal joy: in respect,

1. Of Lastingness. A spiritually merry heart is a continual feast, saith Solomon; whereas the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. Job, chap. 20:5. Carnal joy is like lightning, spiritual like the light of the Sun. While

the Play lasts, the sensualist laughs; but he falls into his dumps when all is done. The Drunkard is merry, whilst he revels it amongst his pot-companions in the Ale-house; but when he comes home, there is many times woeful work. Whilest the Gamester is at play, he is well enough pleased; but when he hath made away all, he is ready to make away himself also. A cunning and prosperous Worldling, I confess, by God's permission may patch together his pleasures all his life long: but at furthest, at death comes the deadly and everlasting damp: whereas he that walks with God, is contented and comfortable all the day; and death is the daybreak to him of everlasting brightness. Carnal joy, I say, is like lightning, a flash and away; leaves the mind in more extreme and deeper darkness; blasts the heart and affections with all spiritual deadness and desolations, with many boiling distempers, much raging wild-fire, and unquenchable thirst after sensuality, earthliness and Epicureanism; and first or last, it is ever certainly followed with renting and roaring of the spirit, spiritual terrors, thunders, darkness and damnation. But godly joy is like the light of the Sun, which though it may for a time be overcast with clouds of temptations, mists of troubles, and persecutions, darkness of melancholy; yet it ordinarily breaks out again with more sweetness and splendor, when the storm is over: but howsoever, it hath ever the Sun of righteousness, and Fountain of all comfort, so resident and rooted in the heart, that not all the darkness and gates of Hell shall ever be able to displant or distain it, no more than a mortal man can pull the Sun out of his Sphere, or put out his glorious eye.

2. Of purity. The edge and relish of carnal joy, is ever much rebated and imbittered with many sour sauces, and envenomed mixtures; impatency of delay, difficulty and danger in attainment, unanswerableness to fore-conceits and expectation, many secret terrors, fretting jealousies,

discontented indignations against their discontinuance and vanishing, &c. And besides, those three ensuing individual stings, which to an enlightened conscience as inseparably and sensibly dog them at the heels, as a shadow the body in the Sun-shine; cut the very throat, and burst the heart of all worldly pleasures. 1. One of them is, as it were, natural, immediately attending all earthly mirth; more melancholy and heavy-heartedness afterward. For as the Rivers of sweet water run their course to die in the salt sea; so the honey of all earthly pleasure, ever endeth in the gall of grief. Voluptuousness even in her dearest minions, ordinarily expires with anguish and anger that it is gone. The transitory flashes of sensual delight, are like the light of a candle, which leave at the close a noisome vexing snuff behind. And that sweetness which sensualists swallow down so greedily, turns to gravel in their guts, and at farewell fills their spirit with the return of a more heavy melancholic humor, then before the receipt. 2. The other I call a temporary sting: for all the ways of worldly pleasure are strowed also with needles and nettles, that I may so speak, which ever and anon prick and sting her darlings, as they pluck her fading flowers. So that at best they are but like Bears robbing a Wasps nest, who ravenously rifle the combs, and with much ado suck out a little honey, but in the meantime, are soundly stung and swollen about head for their painful pleasure. In their several walks of a fools paradise, they hunt both unreasonably and unseasonably after transitory delights; but they are even pained, and paid home with a witness in the very pursuit. For instance: The covetous man accounts worldly wealth, and a hoard of gold, his heaven upon earth; but in heaping it together, his heart is woefully rent and torn asunder with carking, thoughtfulness, restless rooting in the earth, anxious and endless casting about and forecasting: In a word; with much care in gathering, more fear in

keeping, and most grief in parting from it. So that for feeding his greedy eye upon a little vanishing heap of yellow earth, his heart is continually haunted with such vexing Harpies, I mean, wasting cares and false fears, that dry up even his vital moisture, and cut his very heart-strings in pieces. Good-fellow meetings and Ale-house revelings are the drunkards delight: but all the while he sits at it, he is, perhaps, in a bodily fear of the Puritan-Constable: when towards night he goes grunting homewards, he becomes a gazing and laughing-stock to children in the streets; no sooner comes he reeling into his own house, but he wrings fresh cries, and tears of shame and grief from his wife and family; for the reproach, beggary and misery he brings upon them. And as he goes on in this drunken good-fellowship, and takes a pride and pleasure in pouring in of strong drink; there many times insensibly grow upon him many loathsome diseases and deformities of body, Rheum's, Dropsies, Palsies, a fearful face, spuing, falling, and never rising again; sometimes not even out of a little gutter, that would scarce choke a child. The lascivious wanton that wanders in the twilight, in the evening in the black and dark night, after the strange woman; besides the dart which sticks fast, and rankles in his Liver; meets in the meantime with rottenness in his bones, a consumption of his marrow, a wound, and dishonor, and reproach, that shall not be wiped away. The boisterous aspiring Nimrod, out of a gluttonous desire of grasping offices and honors, screws himself *viis & modis*, into some high place as his only Paradise; and when he is gotten up, dances full merrily in golden fetters upon his slippery standing: but couldest thou see into his inside, thou shouldest behold his heart miserably fretting and vexing itself; raging with many passionate distempers, for the indignation of good men; contempt of inferiors; thwarting of competitors; envy of compeers; undermining's of counter-

factionists; jealousies of Princes, &c. How many great men's hearts have burst with the blasting frowns of a Kings forehead? Nay, and which is a Bedlam misery upon the ambitious man; he is many times more grieved for an affront of some grand opposite; because he cannot have his will of this or that man, that stands in his way; or for the neglect of some expected complemental respect and observance, then pleased with all the other bravery and jollity of his high room. This is clear in Haman, though he was encompassed and crowned with much undeserved and extraordinary precedency and pomp; yet this one little thing, to wit, because Mordecai would not bow the knee, and do reverence unto him at the Kings gate, did utterly mar and dissweeten all the other excellencies and extraordinariness of the Kings favor: See Esther, Chap. 5. ver. 10-13. And Haman told his friends and wife of the glory of his riches, &c. But all this, saith he, doth nothing avail me, as long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the Kings gate. 3. The third is an eternal sting, which to a waking and working conscience ariseth out of a serious consideration, and sense of God's causeful, just and holy indignation revealed in his Book against impenitents in such kinds. Whereupon it is no marvel, though many times their hearts hating to be reformed, and hearing their several dooms denounced against them from God's own mouth, in that Word, by which they shall be judged at the last Day, be full sorely smitten with inward bitter griping's, and secret guilty stings, the very hellish flashings and foretastes of that never-dying worm, which hereafter without timely repentance, will gnaw upon their consciences with full rage and unquenchable horror world without end. The worldling therefore may justly tremble and roar when he reads that cutting Commination, Jam. 5:1,2. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your

garments moth-eaten: your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. The wanton, when he well weighs that flaming place, Heb. 13:4, so full of vengeance against him: But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. The drunkard, when he finds himself in the cursed Catalogue of that damned crew, 1 Cor. 6:9. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor Idolaters, —nor drunkards, &c. shall inherit the Kingdom of God. The Ambitionist, when he casts his eye from the top of his usurped honors, upon that dreadful downfall, Obadiah 4. Though thou exalt thyself as an Eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence I will bring thee down, saith the Lord.

But now on the other side, spiritual Joy, which springs out of the wells of salvation, and is a ray and representation, as it were, of the Sun of Righteousness, and that eternal Fountain of soundest and lasting comfort, is all sweet, pure, shining, calm, hearty, unspeakable, utterly free from those fore-grumblings and reluctations of conscience; envenomed mixtures and slavish apprehensions; after-repenting's, stings and melancholic dumps: though it may be assaulted, and something dimmed with some doubts, distrusts and weakness of degree, by reason of our unglorified state of mortality; yet in respect of its creation, substance, truth, and blissful issue, it is a very glimpse of heavenly glory, a pure taste of the rivers of Life, and first fruits of everlasting joys. Thus the blessing of the Lord maketh the heart spiritually merry with incomparable sweetness, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

3. Of dignity and divine temper. Carnal joys have for their foundation the fading arm of flesh, and the fashion of this world, frail and fleeting as themselves: earthly power and policy for their prop and support: For their

Object, the Garbage of the earth, Gold and Silver, food for swinish worldlings; noble captivities, gilded fetters, I mean, undeserved dignities, honors, offices, greatness, and high rooms, the only aim of ambitious Shebnaes; the filth and froth of brutish pleasures, fuel for Sodomitical flames, and such like trash, pelf, and vanity: For their companions, fears, jealousies, guilty griping's: The senses for their seat: Time for their limit: for their end, endless grief and horror of heart: For all earthly pleasure determines in heaviness, as the Sun sets in darkness.

But now on the other side; spiritual Joy is the blessed Spirits sweet and lovely Babe, grounded upon the sure Covenant of everlasting Love, Mercy, and Peace in Jesus Christ: The matter of it, is the light of God's countenance, the Garments of salvation, the precious Robe of Christ's righteousness, interest in his dearest Blood, and all the rich purchases of his Passion; looking upon our names in heaven through the glass of sanctification, God's holy Image renewed upon our souls, and the illustrious beams of heavenly graces shed from the Throne of Grace and shining there; every sweet promise in his blessed Book: In a word, Jehovah, Isa. 61:10, Hab. 3:18, Phil. 4:4. And that glorious Name proclaimed, Exod. 34:6,7, a well-spring of unspeakable refreshing to every truly broken and bleeding heart; being well opened by a feeling and a fruitful meditation: For measure, it is immeasurable, without bound or stint, and passeth all understanding, no stranger doth intermeddle with it, neither can any man possibly conceive it but he that enjoys it. It is, as it were, the amiable splendor and sparkle of that white Stone in the Revelation, chap. 2:17, which only shines upon heavenly hearts, with delight unspeakable and glorious: For seat and certainty; It is engraven by the Finger of God with an heavenly Sun-beam, as it were, shining from the face of Christ in the very

center of the heart; which not all the powers of darkness or hellish mists can finally dim or dispel; the world neither give nor take from us, neither man, nor devil, nor shadow of death ever raze or root out. It is honored with that supernatural singularity and sacred temper, that utterly against nature and all natural possibility, it extracts sweetness and life out of ordinary causes of dejection and sinking. Troubles, persecutions, and reproaches, do fortify it, and serve as fuel to enlarge its lightsomeness. See Act. 5:41, and 16:25. *Acts and Monum. pg. 2003*, where the glorious Martyr Woodman speaks thus: When I have been in prison, wearing otherwhile bolts, otherwhiles shackles, otherwhile lying on the bare ground, sometime sitting in the stocks, sometimes bound with cords, that all my body hath been swollen; much like to be overcome for the pain that hath been in my flesh; sometime fain to lie without in the woods and fields, wandering to and fro; few, I say, that durst to keep my company, for fear of the Rulers; sometime brought before the Justices, Sheriffs, Lord's, Doctors, and Bishops; sometime called Dog, sometime Devil, Heretic, Whoremonger, Traitor, Thief, Deceiver, with diverse other such like: yea, and even they that did eat of my bread, that should have been most my friends by nature, have betrayed me: Yet for all this, I praise my Lord God, that hath separated me from my mothers womb; all this that hath happened to me, hath been easy, light, and most delectable and joyful of any treasure that ever I possessed. For duration, It is a very glimpse of heavenly glory, which springing up in a sanctified heart, out of the wells of salvation, and carried along with addition of the fresh comforts, from the Word and Sacraments, thorough a fruitful current and course of a Christian life, is at last entertained into the boundless and bottomless Ocean of the endless joys of heaven.

4. Of unconquerableness against all created oppositions and assaults of earthly discomforts. An once of sorrow mars a whole sea of worldly mirth. The boisterousness and bravery of all carnal joy vanisheth quite away, and expires even as a flower when the heat riseth that is sent upon it, upon the very first approach or presence of any either outward trouble, or inward terror. A prick of a needle, much more a pang of the Stone, or fit of the Gout, is able to deprive a man of the pleasure of the worlds Monarchy. One serious thought of death, or the sight of one sin armed with God's anger, will put the proudest Nimrod, the greediest engrosser of all earthly delights, into Belshazzar's shivering. But now let the Christian, whose heart is sweetly reposed upon the Rock of eternity, be utterly stripped of all outward comforts; let heavy accidents fall upon him as thick, as one wave in the neck of another; which befell blessed Job: yet he is still where he was; he hath made God his portion, his only Jewel and Joy which he hath in Heaven, or on Earth; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; and therefore when all earthly stays and staves of reed, shrink in the wetting, and are shattered to nothing, he cleaves with an unshaken and triumphant tranquility of mind to his Sun and shield, Psal. 84:11. To his light and life, John. 8:12. To his strong Tower of defense, and exceeding great reward, Gen. 15:1, hear his sweet and noble resolution in this case, Hab. 3:17,18. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines: the labor of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation. While Jehovah is in Heaven, his heart is in the Haven, though never so many storms or tempests of the troublesome sea of this World beat upon his house of clay. Rob him of all earthly refreshments and lightsomeness of this life,

and let but the light of God's countenance shine upon him, which no darkness, nor dungeon, nor Devil in Hell can intercept; and he is incomparably more merry, then the Worlds choicest Minion, Pleasures dearest favorite, or the bravest Belshazzar upon earth, in the very top and ruffe of his most jovial revelings, and swaggering sensuality. But it is not so with the earthly-minded man: For howsoever he may digest with reasonable patience, and carry well enough away, all crosses and contradictions to his other worldly comforts, while he doth yet wallow without interruption and disquiet in the sinful pleasures of that selected way of death, upon which the more headstrong current of his corrupt nature hath cast him; and the natural bent of his carnal affections hath singled out, and made special choice of, to follow and feed upon with greatest delight; which the Fathers call *peccatum in deliciis*, a man's bosom sin; yet cut him once short of the free and full enjoyment of this his sensual idol, and earthly god, and you kill his heart quite, and plunge him presently into desperate distractions. For instance: The covetous man, while his heart may nestle securely upon his golden heap, will pass by without any great wound or passion, the curses of the poor, the grumblings of his conscience, the commination's of the Ministry, the cry of the whole Country against his oppressions, usury, sacrilege, and sinful ways of hoarding. When he comes home, and finds his bags and bonds safe; he blesseth himself in his heart against all threatened judgments, horrors, curses, confusions. Though Jesus Christ himself should preach and press them upon him, Luke 16:14, with his golden wedge he easily cuts asunder all scruples, doubts, exceptions, reasons, arguments, objections, which any ways oppose his covetous and cruel courses. He pleases and applauds himself against all censures, and contradictions whatsoever to the contrary. But let God's angry hand in his just judgment,

by fire, robbery, or some secret consumption, snatch away his wealth; and he is likely enough to go out of his wits, and in great hazard of hanging himself. While the ambitious man is proudly mounted, fits fast upon the Seat of honor, and is Idolized, as it were, and adored above others; he can easily enough overlook with an imperious disdain, the indignation of good men, emulation of great Ones, the reproaches of the multitude, and all other petty and private crosses: but throw him down from his high place; turn him out of his offices and honors; and how weary is he of the World? How irksome to himself? How prodigal of his life? How impatient of the company of men? While the wanton wallows in the brutish pleasures of his abominable filth; he bears well enough away the weakening of his body, the wasting of his goods, the shame of his sin, loss of friends, stain of reputation: but beat him back, and bar him from the house of the strange woman, and you break his heart; banish him from his Minion, and he is ready to make away himself. Woe, sorrow, contentions, wounds without cause, redness of eyes, undoing of wife and children, shouting at in the streets, will well enough down with the drunkard; while he may domineer upon the Ale-bench: but cut off the new wine and strong drink from his mouth; cross him in his swaggering course; confine him from his good-fellow meetings, and you take away the very life of his life. Thus every unregenerate man secures himself in someone sensual Hold or other, wherein the crown of his carnal joy consists; of which bereave him, and you shall leave him joyless, heartless, hopeless, and helpless. But take from the true Christian, if it were possible, both Heaven and Earth, and all the creatures and comforts of both; yet you cannot take away his joy. God is the strength of his heart, and his portion forever. Surely he shall never be moved: his heart is fixed and believeth in the Lord.

Which since it is so, that spiritual joy is such an invaluable Jewel, and carnal so cursed a vanity; let every Christian be exceedingly careful, not to suffer the froth and filth of this, to stain or lessen the glory and sweetness of the other. But if he once perceive any company or kind of recreation begin to steal away his heart from communion and comfort in his God; let him abandon it as a canker and cut-throat of his spiritual happiness; and ever prize and prefer the joy of the soul, delights of Grace, refreshing's of the holy Ghost, infinitely before all worldly pleasures, carnal contentment's, ease, or any earthly thing.

Thus much of recreations.

II. Let me add a word or two of visitations. For complemental visitations of unsanctified great Ones, without just occasion and a warrantable Calling; besides, sinful expense of precious time, are many times unhappy occasions to embark, especially yielding natures, in some base and scandalous businesses; and to entangle them in those wicked services, or some uncomfortable inconvenience; which afterward in cold blood woefully wound their consciences, and perhaps much weaken their Christian reputations.

Jehosaphat may serve as a remarkable instance for this purpose. Upon a time, he came down to see Ahab King of Israel, by way of Courtly visitation. And though he was equal unto him in the crowned Majesty of a King, and a good man; yet trains and insinuations by Royal entertainments, and a Princely feast promised, as it appears in the story, he was cunningly caught and cast into the confederation and society of an unhappy war: whereby with a dishonorable precipitation, he plunged himself both into spiritual miseries, and temporal mischief, both hurt his conscience, and hazarded his life. For the first, 1. He suddenly and rashly promised aide

unto Ahab, whom the Lord hated, before he knew God's will in the point from the mouth of the Prophet. 2. When faithful Michaiah had delivered the truth, and acquainted them with the mind of God; he notwithstanding went on with the business. 3. He did not appear on the Prophets side, and in his defense, against the imperious insolency of that false flattering Zedekiah; or the merciless tyranny of Ahab; who sent him to prison for telling him the truth. Foule aspersions upon so famous a King! For the second, by the cruel cunning of hollow-hearted Ahab, he exposed himself both to the eneagered and concurrent fury of the whole Syrian Army; (only upon a penitent exclamation, his life was rescued miraculously from that extremist danger) and also to the wrath of God, for helping the ungodly, and loving them that hared the Lord as the Prophet told him, 2 Chron. 19:2.

Mistake me not: I purpose not in this passage to censure or disgrace any warrantable ceremony and solemnities of State; mutual intercourse of noble deportment amongst Compeers; civil exchange of fair and amiable behavior one towards another; any charitable offices of humanity, or Christian passages of courtesy and love: but the idle, formal, flattering vanities, Hypocrisies, disguisements of those many needless, fruitless and endless salutations, complements, visitations, entertainments, affected and acted by such vain people, who are extremely troubled how to be rid of time. A commodity of high account with all those, who are sensible and mindful of their last account: Every moment whereof ought in the meantime to be crowned with fruitful improvement, by all those that truly fear God. I could wish that a gracious concurrence of goodness and greatness, true Nobleness indeed, where God himself is top of the kin, and Religion the root; (in respect whereof those other: by birth, by riches, by mere moral virtue, by valor, by learning, by favor of Princes, are but shadows and shapes of

nobleness) were honored with all due attributions, highest respect, and best observance. In such a case it is not uncomely for Paul, to travail from Arabia to Jerusalem to visit Peter, Gal. 1:18. Or the Queen of the South, from the uttermost parts of the earth, to see Solomon, 1 Kings 10:1. But I would not have glistening folly, gilded rottenness, sacrificed unto with so much flattery and counterfeit crouching. For why should silken dung be so adored, and golden damnation deified? Now the reasons why such visitations, as well as recreations may many times prove snares to entangle us in sin, damps to dull our forwardness; or one way or other breed and bring upon us some spiritual miseries, are such as these:

1. Great men without grace, ordinarily make use of all others for their own advantage. With an imperious policy and a kind of Machiavellian Alchemy, they secretly and invisibly convert, dispose and manage the agency, abilities, and serviceableness of their followers, visitants, adherents and dependents, to serve their own turns, to feed their humors, further their private ends of profit, pleasure, rising, reputation, or some other choice carnal contentment and predominant worldly delight. They have their portion in this life, and their heaven here; therefore they labor to make their earthly Paradise as full of pleasures, as possibly they can. Their own sensual covetous and ambitious hearts are the centers, wherein the lines and level of all their plots, policies, and projects do concur, and meet; and to which they conduct and direct the officiousness, pliability, and several services of all those with whom they hold any kind of correspondence or intercourse.

2. Such exercises of Courtly vanities, sleeveless errands, idle business, are Satan's chiefest and choicest seasons for the suggestion of temptations, and too successful discharge of his fiery darts. He hath ordinarily more power over men, and is much likelier to prevail, when he finds them idle or ill

occupied; then when they are busied with humbleness and sincerity in religious duties, or the necessary works of a lawful Calling. In our best and holiest employments he is indeed most eager against us; but at times of idleness and exercises of vanity, he is commonly most successful. In God's businesses, the honest executions of our Calling, and seasonable Christian recreations, we may expect upon good ground, and with hopeful comfort, God's protection, the ordinary assistance of his blessed Spirit; harmlessness from the creatures; Satan's restraint; some good measure of mortifying help against the rebellious stirrings of our own corruptions, and such other blessings promised in such cases. But if men will needs be idle or employed in vanity, they justly bereave themselves of all these comfortable protections and privileges. For it is just with God, at such times that He should withdraw from them His own protecting hand, restrain the gracious influences of that holy Spirit, and let loose against them with indignation, Satan, the creatures, and their own corruptions, which is a very grievous cut to a tender and waking conscience.

3. The presence and protestations, the intimations and motions of men in high place, mingled with an affected familiar communication of themselves, and plausible neglect of all formal solemnities and austerities of state, upon purpose to insinuate sooner, and more subtlety; are many times very potent to prevail with, and persuade especially inferiors. For they are apt when they are so assaulted: 1. To conceive themselves highly honored, when those condescend and vouchsafe to entreat and be beholding, who might in other cases command, nay, and perhaps upon a point of advantage, and pang of displeasure, quite crush and cashier them. 2. To hold it a convenient policy in these days of the reign of iniquity and self-love, when Judgment is turned backward, and Justice stands a far off; when truth is fallen in the

street, and equity cannot go, as the Prophet speaks, to gratify and demerit such mighty Ones, as may shelter and protect them from all storms of violence, oppressions and wrong; nay and perhaps, by their countenance procure them a great deal of credit and esteem; if not observance and awfulness from those amongst whom they live. 3. To call to mind out of too many woeful experiences, that in the frowns and angry foreheads of great men, are enfolded many times many secret complots of cunning cruelty, and plausible malice: which when time serves, fall full heavy upon the hearts and heads of inferiors, which are not in all points pliable to their humors. And out of such carnal considerations as these, by a rash unadvised yieldingness, they too often plunge themselves hand over head into unworthy engagements, and become instruments of ill offices; the baseness and iniquity whereof doth afterward in cold blood strike full cold unto their hearts; and leaves a gash and grievous wound in their consciences, comforts and Christian reputations.

4. At such entertainments and tables of Great men, not friends to the truth; thou wilt be ready to vomit thy morsels, and shalt loose thy sweet words. Thy dainty fare may be sauced perhaps with many bitter girds, much rotten talk, enforced health's, if not empoisoned with blasphemies, obscenities and horrible oaths. Thy music will be merry lies, feigned jests, scoffs and scurrilities, against God's best servants, and the Kings best subjects; commonly calumniated as pestilent fellows. For so the Church complains, Lam. 3:63. I am their music. Few feasts, where the founder is not God's friend; but after his good-fellow guests be well heated with variety of dishes, and strong drink; as their faces are inflamed with fiery reflections one from another, so their hearts will be enraged with mutual infection of furious malice, to belch out most prodigious dunghill villainous lies

hammered by the very foulest Fiend in the darkest nook of hell, against those that are true of heart: Lord, thou knowest! The complemental forms and flourishes of thy welcome, may prove as a pitfall to plunge thee into some dishonorable employment, or one way or other to betray thee to an uncomfortable entanglement of thy conscience. So that if thy generous spirit will nobly rise against such froth and folly, ribaldry and railing, the unworthy degenerations of these worst times; if it be sensible of God's dishonor, the disgrace of the Saints, and thine own danger; thou canst not choose but be weary of such good cheer. Nay, besides the resolution of thy judgment, that in such a case thou wouldest far rather have stayed at home with a dinner of green herbs, then to have thine ears so grated, and heart grieved all the while at a great table; even in nature thou shalt fare worse. For thy just indignation, discontentment and sadness upon such ground, will naturally contract thine heart, thicken thy blood, chill thy spirits; that natural heat will faint and fail in the ordinary current and course of concoction. No marvel then though thou be readier to vomit thy morsels, then to rejoice in those high entertainments or variety of messes, which are dissweetened with such distasteful and bitter mixtures. And thou shalt loose thy sweet words: both of humanity, and Christianity. For the first; out of the ingenuous simplicity and honesty of thy heart, thou wilt return real, sincere, affectionate demonstrations of thankfulness, for mere dissembled formal ceremonies of entertainment and welcome. For the other; thou shalt be so far from finding a free and comfortable vent and entertainment to any good talk; that if thou meddle that way, thou marrest all the mirth. Mention of heavenly things, our last account, the life to come, judgments against sin, privileges of the Saints, happiness of the holy Ones, &c. which might sweetly season, and as it were, sanctify their meeting, and those good

creatures of God they so plentifully enjoy; would presently cast all the company into dumps of melancholy. The Word of God, writ upon the wall in the very height and ruffe of their greatest jollity and reveling, did make the heart, joints and knees of that mighty King Belshazzar to tremble, as the leaves of the forest when they are shaken with the wind. How often may we observe many goodly and gracious discourses buried in the bosoms of men of understanding and worth, placed below, by reason of the domineering talkativeness, and imperious ignorance of some silken Idol sitting at the head of the table? Horses, and Hounds and Hawks, devour full often and eat up not only spiritual and holy, but even all moral and manly talk.

For the more convenient declining and prevention of any ensnarement and inconvenience in this kind; let me commend to the Christian such cautions and considerations as these:

1. Ever before thou enter out of thy doors, upon any occasion, business, journey, visitation; weigh well with due deliberation, in the balance of an holy wisdom, all circumstances, concurrents, company, probability of all events, and consequents on both sides; of staying at home, or going abroad; visiting this or that friend; undertaking that or the other business; and ever constantly incline and resolve that way; which in all likelihood will bring most glory unto God, good unto others, and comfort unto thine own conscience. Let it only be the sinful liberty of hopeless worldlings, to waste their time and labor; (for the needless expense of every moment of the one, and motion of the other, they must very shortly be full dearly accountable at God's strict Tribunal) in those impertinent vagaries and idle visitations, which have no other motive, but a desire to be rid of time, and to feed a gadding and restless humor; no other end, but vanity or vain-glory; no issue, but temptation, and greater disability to good duties. But let every

wisely resolute and truly judicious Christian disdain, howsoever worldly wisdom deride it, to step over his threshold without a warrantable Calling, aim at some honest end, probable foresight of some good to come thereon, honor to God, furtherance of some good cause, good unto our brethren, discharge of some duty of our Calling, performance of Christian offices, of charity, humanity, natural affection, mutual comforting, confirming, refreshing, and building up one another in our most holy faith, and the like. Otherwise he shall be in great danger to return home far worse, then when he went out; laden both with more personal guiltiness, and accessoriness to others sin; bleeding with some fresh bruise of conscience, by falling scandalously, or failing in some Christian duty; grown into a further disacquaintance and estrangement from God; deeplier sunk, perhaps, into some sinful society, and sensual conformities with men of this World.

Some actions, I confess, and undertakings in their own nature, and in respect of the object, as the School-men speak, are indifferent: but clothed with circumstances, and individuated by the actual working of a particular Agent, are not so, but necessarily become morally good or evil, to the doer. And therefore the assertion of Catarinus in the Council of Trent, to this purpose, was consonant to the opinion of the greater part of the Schoolmen: Every particular action, said he, is good or evil, neither is there to be found any one indifferent: he means in the singular and actual existence; in the general there may. Recreation is of itself, and in its own nature indifferent; but drawn into existence and exercise, put in practice, and putting on circumstances, it will ever become unto thee either sinful, or sanctified. If rectified by such rules as I have formerly delivered for that purpose; it may prove comfortable, but stained with profane company, a sensual end, immoderate delight, no necessity in respect of weariness of body, or

tiredness of mind, vain expense of precious time due to holy duties, or discharge of our Calling, it may prove cursed. It is so also in the present point of visitations.

2. Although the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10:27, in these words; [And ye be disposed to go] seems to intimate, that it is not utterly and absolutely unlawful upon any occasion for a Christian, especially if invited, to visit an irreligious man; yet let none who desires to preserve peace at home in his own bosom, presume hereupon to plunge himself hand over-head into any unwarrantable engagements and correspondencies with worldly men; or build hence a licentious conceit of any allowance to communicate himself promiscuously with familiarity or content, either by way of invitation or visitation to all comers, all company. It is a foul sign of a false heart, and a fellow, that at length will certainly fall away; to expect, entertain, and enjoy with equal patience and delight the Worlds Favorites, and God's Friends: to be as openhearted, open-handed, and open-housed to a good-fellow, as to a gracious man. Every true-hearted Nathanael rightly informed, and well advised, cannot choose but apprehend, acknowledge and feel a vast and invaluable difference, between the sweet heavenly communion, and confident communication of heart-secrets with faithful fruitful Christians; and the irksome intrusions, vexing vain-glorious tediousness, and frothy conferences of carnal men. If any of God's children therefore, at any time be disposed to take any allowance and encouragement from this place, to invite, or visit known enemies to the purity of Religion, or power of godliness; let him cast his eye also upon those cases and cautions, which may make it comfortable. They are such as these: 1. Their salvation. 2. Thine own safety.

1. For the first, be sure to propose unto thyself their spiritual good, as thine only aim, or at least, principal end; and in the sincerity and singleness of thine heart, to seek indeed the salvation of their souls. We have Christ Jesus himself a precedent in this case, Matth. 9:10-12. He suffered with patience, Publicans and sinners to press into his company, and did eat and drink with them, upon purpose, to heal their souls, and help them out of Hell. But his pure and sacred soul was endowed with an infinite impossibility of receiving any touch, or tainture from those wicked Ones, with whom he conversed; whereas, worms and wretches that we are! If we watch not extraordinarily, and stand stoutly upon our guard, we are far likelier to be perverted by them, then they converted by us: And therefore at such times it concerns us much, to recollect and quicken up all the powers of our souls, and spiritual forces, with special address and resolution to preserve and vindicate, all we can, the honor, truth, and servants of God from all stain, disparagement and unworthy censure. Let us labor and look to bring as much wisdom and courage, to confront and countermine; as the Devils Proctors, cunning and malice, to undermine and affront the Kingdom of Christ Jesus, and glory of Christianity. It is lawful and laudable for the Physicians of the body, to visit sometimes such patients, as are infected with contagious diseases, to cure and recover them: so that according to the Rules of their Art, they arm themselves with preservatives and counterpoisons, to prevent and repel the noisomeness of the air, and noxious vapors: so it may not prove unseasonable for spiritual Physicians, to be drawn sometimes out of a desire of doing good, into the company of those, who are woefully overrun with the leprosy of sin, and have, as it were, the plague-sore of scandalous life running upon them; so that they be

fore-armed with prayer, premeditation, watchfulness, &c. to purify and preserve their own souls from spiritual infection.

2. Secondly, in case of thine own safety; but so, that in so doing, thy sincere heart be not conscious unto itself, of slavish distrust, false fears, prejudice of God's providence, reliance upon the arm of flesh, &c. but that it apprehend and approve upon good ground, and out of an holy wisdom, the present occasion, whether of invitation or visitation, as a comfortable means offered by God's good hand to mitigate the malice, and mollify the hearts of those which might do thee a mischief. It was the saying of a wise man, that he would rather have a Dog to fawn upon him, then bark at him; and bark at him only, then bite him. Whereby he intimated thus much, as I conceived; that God's children should not out of an austere, sour, unwarrantable retiredness, exasperate and enrage unnecessarily the too much already alienated affections of the contrary-minded; but so far as they may, without wound of conscience, stain of their innocence, or imputation of spiritual cowardliness, observe them with such common offices of humanity, which may dis-inferce and keep them, if not hearty friends, yet at least (which in these corruptest and angry times we hold a degree of happiness) moderate and ingenuous enemies. Isaac may be an instance in this second case, who for a more confident securing of himself, and comfortable settling of his peace, invited Abimelech and his followers to a Feast, Gen. 26:30. To the same purpose, Jacob sent a present to Esau, Gen. 32:20, and promised to visit him at Seir, Gen. 33:14. But now at such times, and in such company, thou hadst need put on a great deal of courage and patience, wisdom and watchfulness; and warily decline two obvious errors, and dangerous extremes; furious zeal, and saint-hearted silence; of which see before.

3. Do not so distain thy worth and worthy hopes; discover not such extreme weakness and true baseness of mind: resemble not so near the fearful folly of obnoxious and vain-glorious worldlings; as to suffer the eye and excellency of thine heavenly Spirit, to be any whit dazzled or dulled with formal affected glistering of outward glory; as to hunt with fawning terror, after the transitory favor of worldly greatness, to adore worthless Magnificoes, and the worlds Minions with undeserved flattering attributions; and with ambitious affectation, to contend for their countenance and uncomfortable correspondence with them. The greatest man without virtue and grace, though never so gloriously enriched with human felicities, is but as a dead carcass hung over with jewels; a very spectacle of commiseration, to every spiritual eye; even as that body is, which adorned with a goodly feature, and many other admirable beauties, yet wanteth eye-sight, the comfort of life; whereby it walks in perpetual darkness and desperate danger. Goodness, though attended with contempt and disgrace, is incomparably more amiable in the eye of an honest Cato; much more of a holy Christian, then all the vain-glorious boisterous representations of any greatness or pomp. Memorable and remarkable to this purpose, was the magnanimity and resolution of that holy Prophet, 2 Kings 3:14. As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, Surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. Miserable then is the vanity and vain-glorious slavery of such as with great eagerness and impotency hunt so ambitiously after high dependencies, and hold it a strange happiness to insinuate into the bosom of the worlds Favorites; though it be by baseness, bribery, a universal obsequiousness, and vile accommodations. They, many times with vaunting intimation also to others, proudly applaud and please

themselves for their access, countenance, and entertainment with Great men; as though it argued in them some rare extraordinary sufficiency and worth: when as perhaps it is their own flattering insinuations and intrusion; their instrumental agency and employment in some ill offices, lewd services, which brings them into such request and acceptation. But let such know, it is a thousand times more comfort and true credit to be received with Christian love and arms of grace, into the heart and affections of a good man; then to be entertained with greatest bravery and worldly applause, into grace and favor with the greatest graceless One upon earth. For alas, when a man hath done all he can to please the humors of ungodly great Ones, by an unconscionable satisfaction of their carnal desires; and to gratify them, hath unhappily grieved his own conscience; he can at last, when God's dreadful visitation and flaming vengeance shall seize upon him for that sin, look for no better reward and reply, than that cold comfort and cutting answer, which Judas in the extremity of his anguish and horror received from the High Priests and Elders, Matth. 27:4. That cursed man came unto them, ready, out of the rage of his vexed conscience, to tear his traitorous heart out of his body with his own bloody hands, and threw the thirty pieces of silver amongst them, and cried out, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. But what recompense do they return for his employment in villainy, to serve their turn? Their reply is, What is that to us? See thou to that. And such a man shall certainly in the day of distress, be enforced to take up some rueful complaint, proportionable to Wolseyes heavy groan; Had I been as careful to serve the God of heaven, as my great Master on earth, He had never left me in my gray hairs. And we see in the meantime, favor is deceitful and transitory even in private men; much more in great personages: The volubility of whose nature is soon glutted; and

very variable for kinds of satisfaction. A thousand experiences in all Stories and times teach us; how irregular, and many times retrograde the revolutions of highest favors run. They have their paroxysms and declinations, and ever at length their most certain expiration and everlasting period.

But on the other side, consciousness of having held an unfeigned fruitful correspondence and communion with God's people; the only excellent Ones, by all nearest and dearest engagements and Obligations of a profitable and comfortable fellowship in the Gospel, and mutual intercourse of godly conference, heavenly counsel, spiritual encouragements, consideration one of another, confirmation in grace, and well-grounded testification of meeting together in heaven, will incomparably more refresh the trembling heart of a dying man, than if he had been crowned all his life long, with the Imperial glory of all earthly kingdoms. And in the meantime there is nothing in this world to be admired, but the illustrious splendor of heavenly graces, shed and shining from God's merciful Throne, by his sanctifying Spirit, into the souls of the Saints. Neither anything so to be desired, no such prerogative and Paradise in this vale of tears; as a mutual communicating of their divine brightness, and the sweet joy issuing thence, a very glimpse and earnest of everlasting glory, to the humble hearts one of another.

4. When thou visitest others, or thyself invitest them; take notice ever beforehand, with as punctual and special survey, as thou canst possibly; of their humors, dispositions, carriages, opinions, and behaviors; and thereupon premeditate and prepare convenient and seasonable matter; whereby thou mayest more successfully address and apply thyself with all meekness of wisdom and patient discretion, to insinuate, interpose, argue,

answer, reprove, reply, and so demean thyself in thy whole discourse, that through thy default, neither the glory of God, the honor of his Truth, the reputation of Christianity, or thine own conscience, receive any indignity, disgrace, diminution or wound. Would Christians take this counsel, hold this course; they would at such times, not so often depart with spiritual discontent, and so smitten with consciousness afterward, of their silence, omissions, cowardliness, and unprofitableness in company. For want of care and conscience in this point, country people meet many times in their Conventicles of good-fellowship, at Ale-houses, Bake-houses, Gossiping's, as they call them, &c. as at a common Mart of Tale-telling, back-biting, disgracing their neighbors, raging against Professors, saucily and unseasonably meddling with, and mis-censuring other men's matters; yea, and would you think it, sometimes even highest Mysteries of State; reviling the Ministry, especially if managed with manifestation of the Spirit, and an holy impatency, to see the devil domineer and revel it in the blood, of the people's souls without contradiction. When they come together at such times, everyone opens his pack of tales; for I have told you heretofore, that a Tale-bearer is compared to a Peddler, as the word in the Original clearly intimates, who having furnished himself, and filled his pack with variety of peddling and petty stuffs, trots up and down for vent from house to house, where he finds best custom and special entertainment: I say, at such meetings, it is their manner to open everyone his pack of false and slanderous tales; which they have raked and scraped together by their own malicious surmises, listening's, whisperings, pragmatical inquisitiveness into other men's businesses, or some odd idle Intelligencers, whom they entertain for that purpose; and there, out of an itching humor of talkativeness and tattling, they lay abroad such rotten wares, to the

empoisoning of the ears of those that hear them, the defaming of their brethren far better than themselves, and certain remonstrations to their own consciences, that they are as yet the children of the devil the father of lies and slanders, and have of him already learned the very language of hell. Were such meetings mingled and seasoned with gracious talk, (and all our talk ought always to be with grace, Col. 4:6.) with holy conferences, and helping one another towards heaven; with planting and preserving Christian love, and kind affections one towards another, it were an happy thing: but while there is nothing but ribald and rotten communication, sowing many times much seed of bitterness and heartburning against their brethren, in the ear as of one another, and a cursed sacrifice, as it were, of spiteful and slanderous tongues, offered up unto Satan; such miserable meetings are fitter for Pagans, than Professors of Religion; for the consistory of hell, than for the communion of Saints. Neither are higher places and great Feasts free from such froth and transcendent villainies of the tongue: Because there the most hold it a point of preciseness, to make conscience of their conference, say to themselves, Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us? Psal. 12:4, labor more to furnish themselves before-hand with complementary phrases, forms of flattery, flourishes of wit, variety of jests, and other vain glorious ostentations of courtly ornaments, than with any one word of the Word of God, world to come, or the way to heaven. They, I say, therefore, too often unworthily dishonor such meetings with much un noble deportment in their discourse. Besides other deformities and indignities, how seldom shall we find great Tables and solemn Feasts, without that cursed Music, mentioned, Lam. 3:63? But oh, how infinitely unworthy is it a man of honor and worth, to suffer with patience, any roguish Fiddler, scurrile Jester, or stigmatical son of Belial, to fall foul upon those men, the truest Nobles upon earth,

Psal. 16:3! Of whom, and the time is at hand, even the proudest of them all, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, will say, nay with hideous yelling's roar out: These were they whom we had sometimes in derision, and a Proverb of reproach. We fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honor: but how are they now numbered amongst the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of Truth, &c. Where is now the bravery and pomp of our high places? The earthly Paradise of our dearest pleasures? The Rose buds, with which we crowned ourselves in the spring of our youth? They are all withered, vanished, and come to nothing; they are passed away like a shadow, as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day; nay, as a Poast that hasted by.

Thus much also of Visitations. Now,

III. Concerning natural actions, as meat, drink, sleep, &c. I shall not say much. For were it not, that through the course of nature, we woefully besot even common sense, and infatuate our reason with sensuality and willful blindness; every man might be a rule unto himself, for temperance, and moderation this way. Hence that proverb hath its portability, Every man is either a fool or a Physician. Either he hath learnt by manifold experience, and observation of the state, exigency and ability of his own body; what seasons and proportions of such natural helps may be fittest for his temperament and constitution; or else he is most unworthy of that noble thing, an understanding soul, which he bears in his bosom.

For the first, Gluttony, fullness of bread, one of Sodom's sins; which as the Schoolmen say out of Gregory, consists in these five points: 1. In an over-burning of nature with new matter, and more meat, before the perfection and period of concoction have raised a kindly appetite. 2. In a

curious hunting after costliness, variety and daintiness of fare. 3. In a luxurious affectation of too much Art, and exactness in dressing and preparing it. 4. In excess and immoderation in respect of the quantity. 5. In a sensual fury of the appetite after good cheer. I say, this unmanly monster and Tyrant of the belly, as Chrysostom calls it, doth at this day reign as generally, and cry as loud, as any sin I can upon the sudden remember so little contradicted. (And yet there are many foul and scarlet abominations, contempt of godliness, unworthy coming to the Sacrament, usury, idleness, many hateful baits and enticements to lust; as nakedness of breasts and wrists, abhorred filth! Painted faces, false hair, monstrous fashions, &c. which are not taken to heart in any proportion to their execrableness; against which, Pulpits are too silent, and the times digest without any great remorse and reclamation.)

We lift up our voices loud against drunkenness, and it is high time; for it grows towards a high tide, and threatens, without timely and resolute opposition, a lamentable inundation to the whole Kingdom. Whereas his fellow foul fiend, gluttonous reveling, eats up God's creatures with abominable excess, far more unobservedly and uncensured; and yet it is a work of darkness, and damns as well as drunkenness. Rom. 13:13, Gal. 5:21, nay, and that more dangerously, because more insensibly. To preserve thee fair and free, not only from wallowing in this beastly sin, which is proper to Belials, but even from any touch and all appearance of it, take notice; Nay, to fire the most ravenous sensualist out of this swinish filth, let him also consider;

1. First, That even that sinful superfluity, by which he slayeth his own body (For by surfeiting, saith the Wise man, have many perished) might very comfortably revive the hungry fainting's, and sustain the languishing

life of many made of the same mold, and far better than himself. So that, upon the matter, there is, as it were, a double murder. How then are such good creatures of God sanctified by Word and prayer, 1 Tim. 4:5, to such luxurious Fratricides, unmercifully mindless of Joseph's afflictions? Or how do they eat to the glory of God? 1 Cor. 10:31.

2. Whereas thou mightest enjoy an active, able, healthful, and lightsome body; which is a happiness to be prized above gold, riches, infinite wealth; By thine intemperancy this way, thou fillest it with crudities, rheum's, obstructions, distillations, and many woeful distempers. The pains of watching, and choler, and pangs of the belly, are with an insatiable man, saith the Wise man. Many a one complains of his head, for sending down so much rheum, the mother of all maladies. But the head might well answer as one says wittily, *Desine fundere & ego desinam fluere*: Be thou sober in pouring down, and I will be sparing in dropping down. Do not thou distemper with excess, and I will distill less. The stomach surcharged above the sphere of its activity, as they say, and power of natural heat, by immoderate cramming or heaping upon it more meat, before the former be concocted; like a fire beginning to burn, loaden with green wood, engenders many smoky clouds, as it were, of raw superfluous fumes; which ascending into the brain, and resolved by the coldness thereof, as vapors in the middle region of the air, rain down into the body abundance of rheum, the source of all sicknesses, distempers and diseases; gouts, dropsies, aches, consumptions, palsies, and other innumerable maladies. As therefore thou wouldest not with a dram of swinish pleasures purchase a pound of exquisite pain, rise still from the table with an appetite.

3. Continuance of life, is a dear indulgence from God, and to be highly prized; both of the unregenerate, that he may yet repent and make his peace

with God, before the pit of destruction hath shut her mouth irrecoverably upon him; and also of the Christian, that he may do more nobly yet, make his election yet sure, with fuller conquest trample upon his bosom lust, and body of death; grow into a nearer fellowship and communion with his God; and look back upon as much time as he can possibly get, spent sincerely in his service, before he look his Captain Christ Jesus in the face; who hath so dearly bought him, and will so gloriously crown him. Now this foul excess and fullness of feeding robs us of this Jewel before our time, and shorteneth yet more our already short span of living in the world. He that dieteth himself, prolongeth his life, saith the Wise man. Therefore it follows by a consequence of contrariety; he that is greedy upon meats, puts a knife unto his throat. Whereupon, saith one, many by overmuch eating, and continual feasts, stifle Nature, and choke up themselves; which had they fed coarsely, or like Gally slaves been tied to an oar, might have happily prolonged many fair years. And a noble learned Knight inquiring the cause of our short-livedness in these last times, in respect of former, renders such reasons as these:

1. The tender bringing up of children, first fed and nourished with the milk of a strange Dug; an unnatural curiosity having taught all women (but the Beggar) to find out Nurses, which necessity only ought to commend unto them.

2. The hasty marriages in tender years, wherein Nature being but yet green and growing, we rent from her and replant her branches, while herself hath not yet any root sufficient to maintain her own top: and such half ripe seeds (for the most part) in their growing up, wither in the bud, and wax old even in their infancy.

3. But above all things, the exceeding luxuriousness of this gluttonous age, wherein we press Nature with over weighty burdens, and finding her strength defective, we take the work out of her hands, and commit it to the artificial help of Sack, Tobacco, strong Waters, hot Spices, provoking Sauces, &c. As thou wouldest then, not abridge thy days, and be guilty of thine own untimely death, do not gormandize.

4. Never any man given to his belly, did nobly in any kind, or ever performed any great work; but ordinarily proves a swinish idle unprofitable burden of the earth; and hath his soul only, as they say, for salt to keep his body from putrefaction. The excellency and activity of the soul is quite damped; and utterly disabled from all deep and diviner contemplations, from all noble achievements and employments of weight, by the burthensome fullness and dullness of a gluttonous body. We can never look for great matters from that man, which better relisheth sweet sauces, then the sweetness of doing virtuously; and hath a better palate then brain. All the greatest personages of the world, and those that have excelled any way, either in managing affairs of Kingdoms, warlike exploits, heavenly, natural, moral, or manual skill, &c. have been sober. Even amongst the very Heathens, as Cyrus, Caesar, the Roman *Curii* and *Fabritii*, more ennobled and renowned for their frugality, then famous victories. But now on the contrary, the most execrable monsters for villainy, cruelty, luxury unnatural impurity, that ever lived, have been gluttons, as the Sodomites, Caligula, &c. As therefore thou wouldest not drown, and dull the powers of thy soul in the sottishness of such dung-hill excess: but have them at command for the ready exercise and improvement of their best abilities, at time of need, and for a comfortable discharge of both thy Callings; eat moderately. Sound sleep cometh of moderate eating, saith the Wiseman, he riseth early, and his

wits are with him; to wit, able, active and strong for any undertaking. For as the soul ought not with carking thoughtfulness, false fears, unnecessary dejection, to afflict and waste the body: so neither ought the body by any sensual indulgence and intemperancy, to weaken and emasculate the soul: but both body and soul should serve one another in sobriety and moderation; that the whole man may be more sufficiently and cheerfully serviceable to him that created both body and soul for that purpose.

5. The very Heathens by the light of reason, did abominate with much moral indignation, the superfluous vanity and curiosities of this swinish sin. A Bull, saith Seneca, will be filled with a pasture of a few Acres: one Forest will suffice many Elephants. But scarce the Air with all her Fowl, the Sea with all her Fish, the Earth with all her roots and riches, will satisfy the insatiable Gut of a gluttonous Epicure. And therefore, saith he, we may well rank and reckon men given to the belly, amongst brute beasts, not reasonable creatures; nay, some of them not so much as amongst living creatures, but rather loathsome dead carrions.

Now in a second place, concerning excess in drink: It is not possible, that any who hath given his name to the purity and power of godliness, would plunge himself into the hateful and abhorred dungeon of drunkenness, which Austin compares to the pit of Hell. In steed therefore of pursuing this foul Fiend, the proper familiar of the sons of Belial, I will spend a word or two about Healthing; to which, perhaps, at sometimes, in some company, thou art tempted with much scornful importunity; but after troubled in cold blood for having so conformed to the fashion of the World. And lest opposition to this exorbitant humor of the times, should be charged with too much preciseness and novelty; I will only at this time in this point, acquaint

you with the judgment, zeal and noble indignation of the ancient Doctors, both of the East and West Churches against it.

Many foul sins are there in these last and worst days, which elder times were exceedingly angry with, and all sacred learning abominates, and yet I know not how, are so transformed, and incorporated into the affections and approbation of the present times, that they rather go in the esteem of the most, for honest recreations, Gentlemen-like sports, tolerable trades, trifles not to be taken notice of; Prodigious impudency! Then for works of darkness, and Satan's services, as they are indeed. Such as Stage-plays, mixed dancing, dicing, officious lies, painting of faces, false hair, usury, healthing, &c. these and the like, are at this day so painted over with sensual daubing, and strains of wit; so prevalent in men's affections, so impatient of contradiction, so raging against any talk of reformation, and sheltered under the wings of good fellowship; that the Minister which meddles with them, shall twenty to one, be ipso-facto a rank Puritan. Against the rest I have upon other occasions discharged the Ordnance of Antiquity: Hear at this time what the Fathers say against Healthing.

Ambrose powers out himself in a mighty torrent of sacred eloquence, with much power and holy indignation against the Healthers of his time; as you may see in diverse Chapters of his book *de Helia, & jejunio*: his 13th chap. is entitled, *De Potu ad equales calices*; Of drinking Health's. In the 18th Chapter he brings them in thus, in their swaggering humor: Let us drink, say they, to the health of the Emperor, and whosoever pledgeth not his health, let him be obnoxious and guilty in point of devotion. Highest profaneness! Hateful impiety! Shall an honest sober man, and faithful subject, who loves the King dearlier then his own hearts blood, and would willingly both out of courage and conscience, pour it out if need required,

for the preservation of his person; besides Prayer for him in the House of God, and in his family makes conscience also of soliciting the Throne of Grace ordinarily twice or thrice a day in private, with heartiness and fervency for chiefest and choicest blessings upon his soul, body, government, posterity, &c. and if any convenient and discontented thought offer itself, repels it as a diabolical temptation? I say; Shall such a one, only because he dares not give his name by reveling, to that cursed catalogue of carnal condemned works, Gal. 5:21, 1 Pet. 4:3, nor conform to the exorbitant riotous humors of the time, lest he wound his conscience, and weaken his power to pray for him, be questioned about his good intentions, and well-wishing to the King? And shall a swaggering Gallant empty many times of all real worth, and truly noble parts; only audacious enough to expose the crowned Majesty of our earthly gods to cheapness and contempt, by an unhallowed tossing the venerable name of Sovereignty amongst his Cups; and instead of praying, to which he is of a mere stranger, and holds it Puritanical, provokes daily and hourly, and pulls down, all he can, God's fierce wrath both upon King and Kingdom, by his swearing, drinking, lying, whoring, &c. Hos. 4:1,2. I say; shall he be the Emperors only friend? Whereupon the good Father immediately after, ironically abominates such Bedlam folly; *Opiae devotionis obsequium!* Saith he; A sweet piece of pious devotion sure! Paul teacheth us another lesson, 1 Tim. 2:12. That we should pray for the health and salvation of Kings. And therefore it was a wise speech of a great man; By your leave, I will pray for the Kings health, and drink for mine own.

Great Basil also paints them out, and the fashion of his times, in his Sermon of Drunkenness to this sense: Then growing to the heat, and height of their boozing and banqueting, there comes me out a young man, not yet

drunk, and brings upon his shoulders a vessel of cooled Wine; and he, the drawer withdrawn, standing in the midst, doth derive and convey through several crooked pipes, to all the good fellow guests, equal measure of drink, and matter of drunkenness. This is a new kind of measure, saith he, where there is no measure of their measure; that by equality of their cups, there be no grumbling amongst them, nor one deceive or circumvent another in drinking.

Learned Austin in his Sermons of avoiding drunkenness, pursues this luxurious vanity and swaggering excess in many zealous passages: amongst the rest, he thinks these should move.

It is now come to this, That at their feasts and banquetings, they laugh at those which can drink less; and blush not to adjure men by unfriendly friendship, that they would take more drink than is meet.

They blush not to swill oftentimes even until they vomit, and to drink by measure without measure. Greater cups are provided. They contend by a certain law of drinking; and he that can overcome, gets praise by his horrible sin.

Do not adjure, do not urge thy friend to drink, but leave him to himself to drink as much as he please; and if he will needs be drunk, let him alone perish, and be not both damned.

Beloved brethren, while I tell you these things, I free mine own soul before God. Whosoever disdains to hear me, and continues still in his humor of drinking; or to adjure and urge others at their feasts, shall be full dearly answerable both for himself and them at the day of Judgment. And because, which is worse, even some men of the Church also, which ought to forbid it, even they urge others to drink more than is expedient; let them henceforward begin to amend themselves and reprove others, &c.

Above all, let me entreat this at your hands, nay, I adjure you by the dreadful Day of Judgment, that as often as you mutually invite one another, you would abominate and abandon from your banquets, as the very poison of the devil, that filthy custom by which men are wont either willingly or enforcedly to drink by great measure without measure, &c.

But those passages which are more punctual to my purpose, are to be found in the second Sermon: wherein he meets with those ordinary excuses, which they who are conquered, and conform to the company and times, are wont to pretend.

But they are wont to say, saith he, Some great personage pressed me unto it, and urged me to drink more, and it was at the Kings banquet, I could do no other.

Austin answers, Well, saith he, If it come to this, that there it be said unto thee; Either drink, or die; it were better thy sober body were slain, then thy soul be damned for drunkenness.

Secondly, saith he; This is but a frivolous and false pretense for Kings and great men, because by the mercies of God, they are Christians, and wise, and sober, and fear God with all their heart; if they see, that out of conscience thou stands out resolutely against that drunken custom; although they seem to be angry with thee for an hour, or so; yet after, they will have thee in great admiration, saying: What ado we had with him? And with what threats and terrors, did we fright him, and yet could not possibly separate him from sobriety. For that God which sees, that for thy love to him, thou wouldest not conform to their drunken fashion, will give thee favor even in their eyes, who seemed to persuade and press thee to drink more.

Take notice by the way, lest any causelessly please himself in any of the fore-cited passages; because he useth not to Health, until he be stark drunk:

that not only those are to be esteemed drunkards, say Divines, who deprive themselves of reason and become brutish; but also they who addict themselves to drinking, and pour in excessively, though their brain will bear it without any great alteration. And a dreadful woe dogs them at the heels, as well as the gross drunkard. Isa. 5:22. See also 1. Pet. 4:3.

Austin forbids both: Let no man be drunk, saith he, let no man at any feast press another to drink more then is fit.

Jerome also jumps with the former Fathers against this noble vanity. It is an occasion, saith he, of accusation; as if he should say, a means to ensnare a man in a suspicion of disloyalty, Not to drink again and again when the King is named.

But not only the Fathers by diviner illumination; but the very Heathens also by natural light condemned this custom. In that most magnificent Feast of that mighty Prince Ahasuerus, there was a Royal charge and command from the King himself, that none should be enforced to drink, but everyone left to his own liberty. And the drinking was, saith the Text, according to the Law, none did compel: for the King had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. Est. 1:8.

Nay, the very Popish Doctors, who in other cases allow some foul sins, which honest Heathens did abominate, even they despute against this sin.

Lessius de justitia & iure, in his Question, Utrum sit peccatum prouocare ad aequales calices, & an fas sit respondere? Whether it be a sin to begin a health, and whether it be lawful to pledge it? Besides other proofs and authorities; It is against reason, saith he: for neither reason, nor necessity of nature, nor good health, nor the vigor of the mind, nor the alacrity of the senses, is made the rule of drinking; but another man's belly, nay, the whole capacity of his belly, bowels, veins. Thou mayest fitlier term these, as great

Basil calls them, bottles, barrels, very pipes, or rather sinks, then men; fellows fit only for the office of Hog-heads, to receive a great deal of wine, or rather to convey it thorough their body, as thorough a sink; and so wickedly waste it. And it is a wonder, saith he, they do not in like manner make matches, and try masteries also in eating, sleeping, &c.

Lastly, It is contrary to distributive Justice, saith the Civilian: Even the Poet gibes at it: Cartwright, in the perusal of his conscience, and publication of his repentance to the whole world, cries out: It wounds me to think of my blasphemous oaths, uttered in passion and destemper: my disobedience to my Parents, my excess, my drinking of Health's, &c.

Now in a third place, concerning sleep, I have little to say: no constant rules of and certain measure can possibly be prescribed: Because it is much diversified, and necessarily receives great variation by health and sickness; by age; by time of the year; by emptiness, or fullness of the body; by variety of natural constitutions: only let me counsel Christians, who only make conscience of expense of time, and are sensible of its preciousness expressed before, to take notice, that they may surfeit and sin in sleeping; as well as in eating and drinking. That it ought only, as other of God's good creatures, to serve the strengthening and refreshing of our bodies; not to satisfy ease, sloth, and a sluggish humor: and therefore to beware, and diligently to watch, lest that great devourer and waster of time, rob and bereave them of the very marrow and fat of time; the flower, and first fruits, as it were, of the day, I mean, many precious and golden hours in the morning; freshest, and fittest to converse most fruitfully with God, to examine our spiritual state, to offer up an acceptable sacrifice of Prayers and Praises, to buckle fast unto us the Christian Armor, and to prepare with resolution and life, to hold a sweet and blessed communion with his holy

Majesty all the day after. And let them often remember when they see the Sun up before them, that saying of Austin: It is an uncomely thing for a Christian to have the Sun-beam find him in bed: and if the Sun could speak, saith he, it might say, I have labored more than thou, yesterday; and yet I am risen, and thou art still at rest.

For conclusion, let me advise and forewarn with as great earnestness and heartiness as I can possibly, all God's Children, that as they tender and prefer infinitely a pure heart, an heavenly mind, that invaluable Jewel of a peaceable conscience, and that sweetest life, walking with their God, before a world of gold; they would watch over themselves very extraordinarily, and with singular care and heedfulness, in the use and enjoyment of things lawful in their own nature; yet by our corruption, capable of inordinateness and excess, such as are meat, drink, sleep, apparel, marriage, visitations, recreations, &c. For more, saith a worthy Divine, perish with preposterous following of lawful things, then by unlawful courses. Soft sands swallow more ships, then hard rocks split asunder. How soever, sure I am, Christians are in more danger of being spiritually undone by a sly insinuation and ensnarement of licentiousness and immoderation in such lawful things; then by the gross assault of foul sins, and temptations to do notoriously. For,

1. A sanctified heart will generously rise, and resist with resolution against the invasion and griefliness of any work of darkness; which by its enormity wastes the conscience; as adultery, murder, swearing, profaning of the Lord's Day, usury, bribery, speculative wantonness, idleness, &c. which it may too often be insensibly seized upon, and surprised by an excessive sinful delight, in things un sinful in themselves; yet empoisoned unto us, by the venom of our own over-eager unmortified affections, and that without any great remorse or reclamation.

2. We find too often by woeful experience, that some who having given their names to Religion at first, with great forwardness and heat; yet afterward not so much foiled by gross relapse into notorious sins; as surfeiting with licentious excess, in the abuse of lawful things, and drinking too deep of worldly pleasures, under a color of Christian liberty and convenient recreations, fall fearfully into a dead sleep of carnal security, and cursed forgetting of God, at least, for a time, until they be revived and quickened by the inquisitive hand of some piercing Ministry, the smart of some outward heavy cross, or wrath of God upon their consciences; if they fall not quite away.

3. Things not sinful in their right use, and offering themselves with unsuspected representation of harmlessness and allowance, without extraordinary watchfulness and heed, do more easily lime our earthly ravenous affections; far sooner ensnare and deceive; insensibly draw and drown us in many scandalous excesses and estrangements from God, before we be aware.

Thus much also of natural actions.

CHAP. V. – Concerning Civil Affairs.

III. NOW CONCERNING CIVIL affairs, and dealings in the world: That thou mayest settle and keep thine heart and hands in a holy temper, and untainted; without wound, wrong-doing, or any uncomfortable entanglement:

1. Ever in all their bargains, contracts, covenants, dealings, negotiations, mutual intercourse of any kind of commerce with others, represent seriously and solemnly to the eye of thy best judgment and deepest consideration, that royal Principle, Do as thou wouldest be done by. In a fellow-feeling real conceit, put thyself into the place, and impartially put on the person of the party with whom thou art to deal. Weigh well all the circumstances, conditions, covenants, inconveniences, consequents, and passages of the whole business; and then returning to thyself, deal out, and proportion unto him, that measure in every particular, which thou wouldest be willing, upon good ground and sound reason, to receive at the hands of another, if thou wert in his case. This is the sum of the Law and the Prophets, for serving our brethren in love, pressed upon us by the Lord Jesus himself. Matth.

7:12. All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. Which, if it were as effectually: and feelingly taken to heart, and practiced, as it is ordinarily talked of and pretended; it would not only cut off, and prevent all cruelties, oppressions, grinding the faces of the poor, all cozening, undermining, over-reaching, defrauding, defaming, &c. but also stir up and quicken our affections, with a compassionate lively touch, to a mutable exercise and exchange of all offices of humanity, kindness, and love in all kinds.

But that you may understand this rule a right; conceive, that when we counsel men to do unto others, as they would be dealt with themselves; It is not to be understood, of any irregular, passionate, exorbitant will: but that which is grounded upon right reason, guided by a rectified conscience, ordered and enlightened by grace and God's Truth.

And I the rather refresh your memories with the true apprehension of this point, that you may clearly see the rottenness and vanity of the Usurers cunning cavil, but of cruel consequence.

Ob. I deal, saith the Usurer, as I would be dealt with, and do as I would be done by: and therefore all that while I hope I do no wrong: I would willingly pay ten in the hundredth, if I had need, and then why may I not take so?

To which, I answer:

1. That Royal Rule, Do as thou wouldest be done by, must be understood and expounded, as I intimated before, according to the grounds of a good conscience, dictates of right reason, and directions of a just and rectified will; not out of the mists and miseries of a depraved and exorbitant judgment. Otherwise, Abimelech, Saul, and other of that desperate rank and resolution, might conclude, that it were lawful for them to kill other men,

because they were willing to be killed themselves. See Judges 9:54:1. Sam. 31:4, for they might say, they did but as they would be done by. It would also follow very absurdly; the Magistrate being in the malefactors case, would gladly be pardoned, therefore he must pardon the malefactor: Some son of Belial would be content villainously to prostitute his wife whom he cares not for himself, to others; therefore he may abuse another man's wife whom he loves better. These, and the like abominable and absurd consequents, demonstrate the vanity of the Usurers inference, and that Christ's rule is not so general, but restrainable to that will, which is orderly and honestly guided by the light of Nature and God's Law.

2. We must then have recourse to this general Fountain of the second Table, and fetch light and direction thence; when we have no express and special word in God's Book; but the Scriptures have clearly and directly determined and resolved the point of Usury.

3. If the Usurer were in the borrowers case, he would not willingly, as he pretends, give ten in the hundred. I mean, with an absolute and free will, but of force and constraint, because without paying after that rate, he could not have it. If a man would borrow upon Usury, to buy land, engross, forestall, or compass some unlawful matter; that were a corrupt will, and no rule: But if his desire so to borrow were just and lawful, as in some cases it may be, then it is no entire will, but mixed and forced by some necessity, for the avoiding of a greater evil; and therefore denied in the eye both of law and reason, to be any will at all. He that would borrow, should have need to borrow, for a needless desire is unlawful; and an ingenuous man who hath need to borrow, would not willingly borrow but for need, much less would he pay Usury. Therefore the will of the borrower, in this case, is either

corrupt, or no will at all, and so consequently without the compass of Christ's rule.

The will of the borrower in this case, is like the will of an honest Traveler, in giving his purse to an arrant thief; for fear he should lose both purse and life. Is such a man willing, think you, to lose his money? Or like the will of a man, whose house being on fire, plucks down part thereof to save the rest; willingly indeed as the case stands with him, yet not simply, but upon necessity. So the borrowers will is not free, but forced; and so a will against will.

2. With an infinite disdain, and resolute contempt abhor to get so much as one farthing all the days of thy life, by any wicked means or wrong doing. Do not plague thy present outward state, be it little or much; neither empoison it to thy posterity, by any addition unto it; by usury, bribery, simony, sacrilege, stealing, grinding the faces of the poor, oppression, lying, falsehoods, forswearing's, over-reaching tricks of wit, cozening, cunning conveyances, &c.

1. Thereby thou shalt desperately fall into the revenging hands of an angry God: divine vengeance will dog thee hard, and continually at the heels for thy destruction. Which is incomparably a greater plague then extremist beggary, and the bitterest confluence of all the most vexing outward miseries in the world.

Let no man, faith Paul, go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such. 1 Thes. 4:6.

2. Secondly, A little ill got, naturally accompanied with God's curse, may so empoison thy whole inheritance and all the rest of thy goods, that it may prove like a dead Fly in a box of precious ointment; a spark of fire in the thatch; a strong incentive to divine justice, not only to eat up all honest

comfort in outward things, but also to consume and waste all thy wealth: Nay, and since immoderate desire of enriching and raising his posterity, is the keenest spur to his unconscionable hoarding; even to cut off also many times the cruel worldling himself, and cast him out of the world without stock or seed. And therefore though the covetous caitiff out of the hardness of his heart, and searedness of conscience, be fearless and senseless of the wrath of God, the wrong of his neighbor, and the wretchedness of his own soul; yet if he desire, as he doth, with a raging insatiableness, like the grave, or hell, to thrive in his outward state, and prosper in the world; let him not meddle so much as with a stick, or a straw, a pin, or a point of another man's; neither at any time put his hand to any wicked way of getting, lest, beside the loss of his soul at last, and a world of miseries in the meantime, he miss the very mark so eagerly aimed at; of making him and his great in the world. For hope of which he is cursedly content to part with all true contentment in this life, and a Crown of bliss in the Kingdom of heaven.

For this purpose, and to persuade, and press this point unanswerably, let us take a view in God's Book of the diverse ways, how he is wont in wrath to deal with wrongdoers and unconscionable dealers.

It comes to pass, sometimes that the wicked worldling, insatiable earth-worm, God cursing his covetousness and cruelty, may see an end of his wealth even in this world, according to that, Jer. 17:11. As the Partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not: so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool. Job 20:15,28. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

Or it is no strange thing to see him prosper by unconscionableness and craft, usurious and other injurious practices, all his life long; but then having scraped together his hoard of iniquity, with a great deal of carking, thoughtfulness, and self-vexation; kept it with extreme fear, slavish distrust, and heart-gnawing jealousies; parted from it with much anguish, horror, and almost with as painful divorce as that of the soul from the body: at last after the loss of it soul and all.

1. He either leaves it to them who will liberally let fly abroad, and enlarge those golden heaps which greediness had formerly confined, and strongly guarded with bolts and bars: According to that, Prov. 28:8. He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor. See also Prov. 13:22, Job 27:16,17.

2. Or it may be wholly scattered amongst mere strangers, according to that, Eccl. 6:2. But a strange man shall eat it up: See also Psal. 39:6, Eccl. 4:8, 2:18,19.

3. Or being bequeathed to his own children, and blasted by God's secret curse, it may melt away in their hands, as snow before the Sun, according to that, Eccl. 5:13,14. There is a sore evil which I have seen under the Sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But these riches perish by evil travel; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

But howsoever, whether ill-gotten goods perish or prosper in the owners hands, or his posterity: sure I am, the inevitable plague and just vengeance of God cleaves inseparably unto his soul; and hunts that man to destruction, whosoever he be, that enricheth himself by wicked and wrongful means, without timely repentance and true restitution, if he be able.

He that hath oppressed the poor and needy, or hath spoiled by violence, — or hath given upon usury, or hath taken increase; the same reason is also of all indirect and unlawful getting, shall he live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations, he shall surely die, his blood shall be upon him, Ezek. 18:12,13.

And marvel not, neither be misled, though thou observe sometimes wicked worldlings themselves, their heirs, and heirs heirs, to wallow also in that wealth which the Grandfathers got wrongfully. For they are for all this, but as so many sensual earth rooting hogs, fatted for the knife; and have this woeful brand set upon them by the Spirit of God, Psal. 17:14. They are men of the world, and have their portion in this life. But ever hold this as a terrible and true principle. It is one of the greatest curses under the Sun; to prosper in our ways, and be out of the way to Heaven.

3. Thirdly, it is a ruled case and concurrent resolution amongst Divines: That if thou doest not restore, being able, whatsoever thou hast any ways got wrongfully, and wickedly; thou canst have neither well-grounded assurance of unfeigned repentance, nor true comfort of the pardon of that sin. A cutting conclusion against all cut-throat Usurers, Simonists, Sacrilegians, Bribe-takers, Grinders of poor men's faces, Hoarders by fraud, Oppressors of all under them of the same trade, by some Machiavellian trick, and the rest of that cruel crew.

How can he be said to repent soundly, that lies still soaking in his sin, wittingly, and willingly? Now, whosoever keeps still in his hands anything wickedly got, continues a wrong doer still; and therefore doth it not faithfully, but only feigneth repentance. Whereupon saith Austin, If a man restore not ill gotten goods being able, his repentance is not comfortable, but counterfeit.

Dreadful also is the doom of the said Father upon all wrong-doers, The sin is not remitted, except that which hath been unjustly taken be restored: Either in act, if thou be able; or at least in unfeigned affection, if thy state be wasted.

What a bedlam folly is it then, and cursed cruelty to thine own soul; to heap up those riches of iniquity, by baseness and wrong, which thou must afterward restore in the sense I have said, or else never enjoy any comfortable assurance of a true conversion or pardon of sin? Were he not a foolish thief, that would keep his stolen goods both in the face of his accuser and Judge? Though in the meantime thou conceal thy cunning conveyances from the discovery and doom of human justice; yet assure thyself, besides the secret grumbling of thyself-accusing conscience; the angry eye of God also sees clearly, and will shortly most certainly revenge.

4. Alms-deeds, charitable erections of Colleges, Hospitals, Free-Schools, and other inferior bountiful contributions; when God enables by good means; the necessities of his Poor cry for relief, and the sanctified heart with affectionate sincerity, aims at God's glory; are sweet-smelling sacrifices with which God is well pleased, Philip. 4:18, Heb. 13:16. But if his slavish gifts, and good deeds, largesse's, and liberalities in this kind, be empoisoned with former fraud, oppression, and wrong; though it be well that the Church of God sometimes, the backs and bellies of the poor be better thereby; yet to the impenitent and not restoring usurer himself, or any other wicked dealer, in respect of acceptation with God, and true comfort to his own heart, they are no better than the cutting off of a Dogs neck, or the sacrifice of a fool. Ill-gotten goods are for restitution, not for distribution. Lest any covetous caviler think the point too harsh and precise, hear what the ancient Fathers say to this purpose: Bernard: God receiveth not any

alms at the hands of an oppressor or usurer. Jerome: Significantly saith the Prophet; His own bread, lest men should turn bread gotten by oppression and Usury, into a work of Mercy. Austin: When God shall begin to judge, those that live now by fraud, and give alms of the spoils of the oppressed, will say; Lord, we have kept thy Commandments, and in thy name we have done works of mercy; we have fed the Hungry, we have clothed the Naked, and entertained Strangers. To whom God will reply, You tell me what you have given; but you tell me not what you have taken away. You recount whom you have fed; but why remember you not whom you have undone? They rejoice whom you have clothed; but they lament whom you have spoiled, &c. A man is filled with bread, whom thou feedest with spoil: but the Lord will bless, not thee, but him whom thou hast undone, &c. Chrysostom; But what is the excuse of many? I have indeed been a Usurer, say they, but I have also been good to the poor. A sweet piece of matter, sure! But God accepts not such sacrifices. It were far better to give nothing to the poor at all, then give in that manner. That wealth which is won by thy just labors, is many times quite marred with such wicked mixtures, &c.

The very Heathen man tells us, That the poor are not to be fed like the Whelps of wild beasts, with blood and murder, rapine and spoil: but that which is most acceptable to the receivers; they should know, that that which is given unto them, is not taken from anybody else.

Nay, one of the bloodiest men that ever breathed, Selymus, a Turkish Emperor, yet upon his bed of death replied thus to his Bassa, moving him with the wealth taken from the Persian Merchants, to build a Hospital for relief of the poor: Wouldest thou, Pyrrhus, that I should bestow other men's goods wrongfully taken from them, upon works of charity and devotion, for mine own vain glory and praise? Assuredly I will never do it: nay rather, see

they be again restored unto the right owners. Which was done forthwith accordingly, to the great shame, saith the Author, of many Christians; who minding nothing less than restitution, but making *ex rapina holocaustum*, do out of a world of evil gotten goods, cull out some small fragments to build some poor Hospital, or mend some blind way. A poor testimony of their hot charity. Wretchedly then do they delude the World, and deceive their own souls, who vainly think, that some works of mercy at last, when they must needs leave all, will expiate and recompense the cruelties and unconscionable dealings of their whole life before. Zacchaeus penitent Proclamation consisted of two branches, Luk. 14:8. As well for restitution, as distribution. He that would find the same mercy, must follow the same method.

3. Let thy desire and delight never fall, or be fastened immoderately upon any earthly thing, though never so excellent, delicious, or amiable. For exorbitancy and error this way brings many times, 1. A loss of the thing so doted upon. 2. Sometime a cross. 3. Ever a curse.

1. For the first; our righteous and holy God, when he sees the current of his creatures affections to be carried inordinately and preposterously from the Fountain of living waters, upon broken Cisterns that can hold none; from the bottomless treasury of all sweetest beauties, dearest excellencies, amiable delights, upon painted shadows; from the Rock of eternity, upon a staff of Reede; I mean, from the Creator, upon the creature; He wisely and seasonably in the equity of his Justice, and out of the jealousy of his own Glory takes away that earthly Idol, that the occasion of such irregular affection removed, he may draw the heart, in which he principally takes pleasure, to his own glorious Self, the only Load-Star of all sanctified love, and boundless Ocean of happiness and bliss. Nay, it may be said in the

sweetness of his mercy also, when he sees us distracted, and as it were, desperately mad with making too much of any transitory thing, so that our mind doth still run and rest upon it, as our only heaven upon earth; He snatches the edge tool out of our hands, lest we make away our selves spiritually; and withdraws the beloved vanity from before our eyes, lest we grow stark blind in the mysteries of Faith, and matters of Heaven, by too much gazing upon the fading beauty of any baser earthly object.

Thus the immoderate partial affection of Parents, may become many times occasional and accessory to the untimely taking away of a sweet, fair and towardly child. Whereby our gracious God justly intimates unto them their intolerable unthankfulness of his mercy, and extreme indignity to his Majesty, in wickedly preferring in their love, a creature before their Creator, and mercifully teaches them, that the flower and fervor of their best and dearest affection is only due, and should be wholly devoted to the greatest Good, God himself, and those truest, unutterable, ever-during delights prepared for the Blessed, in his Word here, and in the World to come hereafter, 1 Cor. 2:9.

Conceive proportionably of other things immeasurably desired, and delighted in. If thou dotest upon a good wit, thou mayest be stricken with distraction: if upon abundance of learning, or much worldly wisdom, thou mayest be infatuated, at least at some special times, when thou wouldest gladly do the best; or in some important business, which most concerns thee: if upon some high-place, thou mayest with Haman, Shebna, and thousands more, be thrown down into the gulf of calamity and woe, contempt and scorn: if upon a fair house, it may be levelled with the ground, by the flames of God's wrath: if upon a beautiful face, it may be disfigured with the Pox, or other deformities: if upon a hoard of gold, it

may be dispersed by fire, robbery, desolations of war: nay, if even upon thy graces with an overweening conceit of self-excellency, self-opinion, self-sufficiency; if they be only general graces, thou mayst be quite stripped of them; if saving, thou mayst be cast into a damp and desertion for a time, in respect of all comfort, sense, use and exercise, &c.

2. For the second, though God may permit thee to possess still that outward worldly comfort, upon which the fury of thine affection is so fastened, and thine heart grasps with such greediness and excess; yet in this case thou mayest justly expect a cross; either, 1. In the thing doted upon. With what a deal of cutting discomfort, and gashes of bitter grief did Absalom dandled in David's affection with too much indulgence, rent his Fathers royal heart by imbruing his hands in his brothers blood, and with unnatural traitorous violence and villainy snatching at the Imperial Crown upon David's head? Another famous instance to this purpose we find in the story of the Greek Emperors. The old Emperor Andronicus doted with such extreme impotency of partial affection upon his Nephew, young Andronicus, that in comparison of him, he did not only disregard the rest of his Nephews, but also his own children: and as the Story tells us, was not willing to spare him out of sight either day or night. But what were the consequents of this cockering? When he was stepped further into years, besides a world of miseries and molestations created to his Grandfather in the meantime, at length pressing without resistance upon his Palace, with purpose to surprise his person, though the old Emperor entreated him with much affectionate Royal eloquence, which might have pierced an heart of steel or Adamant, That he would reverence those hands, which had oftentimes most lovingly embraced him, yet crying in his swathing clothes: that he would reverence those lips, which had oftentimes most lovingly

kissed him, and called him his other Soul: that he would spare to spill that blood, from which himself had taken the fountain of life, &c. For all this, after some kind words, and courteous embracement, at first indeed premised, and in hot blood; in conclusion, being polled and shaven, was made a Monk, and the Anvil of much dunghill scorn and vilest indignities, until the workmanship of death had finished the sorrowful business of a wretched life. A third, and very remarkable to fright all Parents from foolish doting, hear out of Austin. By reason of a terrible and dreadful accident, he called his people together, as it seems, to a Sermon the third time, the same day; thinking, no doubt, out of his watchful spiritual wisdom, to work more successfully, and to leave more strong and lasting impressions in their hearts, while the bloody unnatural villainy was yet fresh in their eyes and ears. And when they were met together, he relates the doleful story: Our noble Citizen (saith he) here of Hippo, Cyrillus, a man mighty amongst us, both in work and word, and much beloved, had, as you know, one only son, and because he had but only one, he loved him immeasurably, and above God. And so being drunk with immoderate doting, he neglected to correct him, and gave him liberty to do whatsoever he list. Now this very day, this same fellow, thus long suffered in his dissolute and riotous courses, hath in his drunken humor wickedly offered violence to his mother great with child, would have violated his sister, hath killed his father, and wounded two of his sisters to death. O mighty domination of the Devil! &c. But I need not prosecute this point by further illustration out of strange Stories. Daily experience presents unto our eyes and ears, the many woeful discomforts, unkind requitals, and unnatural usages, which Parents receive at the hands of those children, which in their younger years they made wanton with their love, and undiscreetly doted upon. 2. Or in some other kind; for example: If

thine heart be set upon riches, God may justly, and mercifully too, exercise, and afflict thee with his heavy hand; upon thy body, with sickness; upon thy conscience, with terror; upon thy reputation, with disgrace, or the like, thereby to unglue thy noble spirit from the dust, and rent it from grovelingness upon the earth. If thou be ambitiously enamored upon honors and high rooms; after wasting thy wealth, wounding thy conscience, wearying thyself with bribery, baseness, and irksome waiting, thou mayest be taken away untimely in the very pursuit, or presently after the attainment of them, &c. Thus it is not strange or extraordinary with God, to prevent, or take off our hearts from taking self-conceited pleasure or pride in anything we enjoy, by crossing and correcting us in other kinds. Even Paul, that blessed Saint and servant of the Lord, lest his heart should be too much pleased, and puffed up with abundance of revelations; he was vexed and crossed with his own concupiscence, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, 2 Cor. 12:7, that is, as I conceive, he felt his original corruption sharpened, and eneagered against him, and let loose in some sort upon him: which is a terrible cut to a tender conscience.

3. For the third, howsoever it fare with thee otherwise; if thou settle thine heart upon any earthly thing with inordinate desire and delight, thou shalt be sure to be haunted with a double curse: 1. The rage of insatiableness, unsatisfiability: 2. That greatest plague, hardness of heart.

1. The Father of Spirits hath inspired into our immortal souls a large capacity, and such an infinite appetite, that no finite excellency, created comfort, or earthly thing can possibly fill. Gold, silver, riches, honors, crowns, kingdoms, are no fit matter or adequate object, for such an immaterial and heavenly borne spirit, to repose and feed upon, with final

rest and full contentment. Nay, not this whole material world, were it beautified and set out with all the amiableness, splendor, and allurements, which the devil by his juggling Alchemy put upon it, when he presented it to the eye of Christ Jesus, Matth. 4:8, with addition of the starry and Empyrean heaven, shining with all their admirable beauty and glorious inhabitants, could by any means confine, satisfy, and content the irksome wanderings, unlimited desire, and vast comprehensiveness of the soul: but it would still be transported with the passionate disquietness of self-vexation, and tortured upon the rack of restless discontent; until it fasten and fixe upon an object, infinite both in excellency and endlessness, wherein is contained the whole latitude of Entity and goodness, the ever-blessed and only adored Trinity. Where, and when alone, it softly and sweetly, with the height and fullness of all desirable contentment, rests in the arms of God, and bosom of eternal bliss; which all blessed souls attain thus, and by these means:

When it pleased God by the merciful violence of his Almighty hand, to turn the sensual bent and powerful current of the seduced soul, from the creature, to the Creator; from the painted bravery of this vain world, to the heavenly beauty of his blessed Word; from carking encumbrance about many things, to pursue and ply that One needful thing; by a sound and universal change of the whole man, and translation of him from the darkness of natural ignorance, death in sin, and power of the devil, to the light of saving knowledge, the life of sanctifying grace, and the living God: I say then, the restless wanderings of the unsatisfied soul, begins first to settle with some sweet contentment, upon the flowers of Paradise, glimpses of heavenly glory, infallible earnestness of everlasting bliss, saving graces; and its infinite appetite is well stayed in the meantime, with that comfortable

intercourse and blissful Communion, which it enjoys in part with the blessed Trinity, by the Word, Sacraments, and other his holy Ordinances, appointed and sanctified for that purpose; until it remove from a house of flesh, into the Empyrean heaven. And then,

1. The understanding is first filled with final and everlasting contentment, by a clear glorious sight of God, which they call Beatifical vision; when we shall see him face to face; know him as we are known, 1 Cor. 13:12, see him as he is, 1 John. 3:2. For as the Sun of this world, by his beams and brightness illightened the eye, and the air, that we may see, not only all other things, but also his own glorious face: so God, blessed forever, the Suns Creator, the Imperial Sun of the world above, in whose presence, the united splendor of ten thousand of our Suns would vanish away, as a darksome mote and lump of vanity, doth by the light of his holy Spirit, so irradiate the minds of all the blessed, that they are thereby enlarged and enabled, not only to behold eminently in him, the beauty, goodness, and excellency of all creatures, in a far more admirable and orient manner than in their own beings; but also his own face, essence, will and counsels, perfections and attributes, incomprehensible greatness and Majesty.

2. Secondly, the will also is then fully and forever satisfied with a perfect, inward, eternal communion with God himself. Our sweet glorified Savior, being God and man, by his human nature assumed, uniteth us to God, and by his divine nature assuming, uniteth God unto us: so that by this secret and sacred communion, we are made in an admirable and blessed manner, partakers, and as it were, possessors of God himself; and communicate with him in all his goodness, perfections, excellencies, and happiness. O bottomless depth, and dearest confluence of all joys, pleasures, sweetness's, delights, inconceivable, unutterable, infinite! This is the supreme end of our

Creation and Redemption; the very flower, quintessence, and sinew, as it were, of our Sovereign good. By this act of blessedness, we are filled with all the fullness of God: He becomes unto us All in all; so that thereby we live his very life, in purity, eternity, sincerest pleasures, highest perfection; though not to the height of his infiniteness; for we are but creatures; yet in proportion to our capacity, and utmost possibility, which is a felicity above measure, and past imagination. In these two acts thus exercised about an infinite Object, God himself, doth Blessedness, essentially and formally consist: but principally in the fruition of God, by a full, immediate, and complete communion with him, and most blessed participation of all his glory and All-sufficiency. And therefore Aquinas and all his followers come short, in placing our highest bliss, only in the act of the understanding, the Vision of God. I am wont to express and illustrate it thus: though there be an infinite distance and disproportion in the things compared: It would mightily delight a man, really and in person, with ease and safety to pass over and view the circuit of the whole earth, and all the wonders of the world; all the great cities, renowned men, magnificent courts, rich mines, spicy Islands, Crystal mountains, coasts of Pearls, rocks of Diamond, &c. of which Geographers write, and Travelers talk: but if besides, as he passed along, he should have sure and everlasting possession given of them all, what an immeasurable material addition would it make unto his speculative delight? And with what strange amazement and admiration of his making forever, and marvelous happiness, would it ravish his heart? Even so proportionably, but above all degrees of comparison; though a boundless Ocean of endless sweetness, and inexplicable joy arise in the soul from the sight of God; yet this blissful communion, whereby we possess and enjoy him, in a near, excellent unspeakable manner; and partake with him in all

his excellencies, perfections, and felicities, doth crown, as it were, our Crown of glory, and actuate that heart-ravishing contemplation, with the very life of everlasting life, and soul of heavenly joys and highest bliss. Thus, and in this manner do the restless wanderings and infinite appetite of these aspiring sparks of heaven, our immaterial and immortal spirits, come to final rest and everlasting repose: When at last they shall grasp in the arms of their desire, that chiefest Good, the most glorious Deity, and bathe themselves freely and fully in that ever-during Wellspring of Immortality and Life. But now set aside the fruition of this Object, infinite both in excellency and endlessness, the only aim and end of the souls endless aspirations: And though thou shouldst crown a man completely with the worth of this whole world, the admirable splendor of the Empyrean heaven, the beauty of a shining Sun-like body, the rich and royal endowments inherent in a glorified soul, the sweetest company of Saints and Angels, the comfort of eternity; yet his soul would still be full of emptiness and appetite, and utterly to seek for the surest Sanctuary, and supremist solace to settle her unsatisfied longings upon. Only once admit it to the face of God, by Beatifical Vision, and to fruition of the most glorious and ever-blessed Trinity, by immediate communion, and so consequently to those Torrents of pleasures, and fullness of joy flowing thence; and then presently, and never before, its infinite desire expires in the bosom of God, and it lies, as it were, down softly, with sweetest peace and full contentment, in the embracement's of everlasting bliss. The other innumerable inestimable joys in heaven, are, I deny not, transcendent, and ravishing: but they are but all accessories to this Principal, drops to this Ocean, glimpses to this Sun. Well then, if this be the only way to the souls eternal welfare; then those unhappy souls, which run a contrary course, and

seek for satisfaction in any creature, or created comfort, stand deservedly still upon the rack of restless discontentment, and are justly cursed with the gnawing rage of insatiableness: and must needs be so. For besides, 1. That the furious torrent of our sensual corruption, being once on foot after worldly pleasures, and swelling by a continual infusion of hellish poison, doth with an impetuous headstrongness, bear and break down all bonds and banks of moderation and stint, and will never be restrained from its insatiable rage, if God help not, until it be swallowed up in the bottomless gulf of misery and horror: for it is the native property, or rather, poison of inordinate affection, not only to drink deep of sinful delights, but to carouse, to be drunk; nay, to add unquenchable thirst unto drunkenness, sucking them in with fresh supply of endless greediness, as the Horse-leach corrupt blood, till it burst again. 2. That the infinite desire of the soul confined to a creature, or any worldly comfort, is pained and pinched, as a foot wedged in a straight shoe; it being no competent or proportionable satisfaction to its expectation and large capacity. Hence it is, that give Rome to Caesar, as they say, and he will ambitiously pursue the Sovereignty of the whole earth. Let Alexander conquer the world, and he will ask for more: let those be subdued, he would climb up the stairs of his vast desires towards the stars: if he could aspire thither, he would peep beyond the heavens, &c. No rest unto man's soul, but in God's eternal rest. 3. That there being no proportion between spirits and bodies; thou mayest as well undertake to fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue; as thine immortal soul, with gold, silver, riches, high rooms, this whole material world, or any earthly thing. See Eccl. 5:10. 4. I say, Besides these three causes of unsatisfiability, God himself doth justly put that property and poison into all worldly things doted upon, and desired immoderately, that they shall plague the heart that

pursues them; by filling it still with a furious and fresh supply of more greediness, longings, jealousies, and many miserable discontentment's: So that they become unto it, as drink unto a drunkard, a man in a dropsy, or burning fever, serve only to inflame it with new heat, and fiery additions of insatiable thirst and inordinate lust. No marvel then though the working heart of every natural man, unreconciled to God, be like the raging sea that cannot rest. That roaring Element, to which the Spirit of God resembles a wicked man, must needs be a much troubled and very restless creature; since it is continually tossed, and turmoiled with variety of contrary and confused motions; that of estuation, revolution, reflection, descension, and agitation by the winds: semblably, if thou couldest see the inside of the greatest graceless Monopolist, and engrosser of all the most desirable excellencies under the Sun, glistening in the highest Imperial Throne upon the earth; thou shouldest behold his heart for all that, rent asunder with many raging distempers, and tempestuous whirlwinds of contrary lusts; a very hive of unnumbered cares, sorrows, and passions; boiling incessantly with irksome suspicions, false fears, insatiable longings, secret grumblings of conscience, torturing distractions, and tumultuations of hell.

By the way, let me tell you, that this immoderate desire, inordinate delight which I speak of, glued to some special sensual object, which natural corruption singles out, and makes chiefest choice of, to follow and feed upon, with greatest contentment and carnal sweetness, become the parents of every man's bosom sin.

If it fall in love with honors and greatness, it breeds and brings forth ambition, which is an unquenchable thirst after visible glory, and a gluttonous hunting after high rooms. As it inhabiteth the highest and haughtiest spirits, and is superlative and transcendent in its object and

aspirations; so of all the stormy perturbations, which rent and rage in the heart of man, it is most tempestuous and desperate. Venturous it is to climb up any stairs of baseness, bribery, blood; to tread upon the ruins of the noblest innocence, upon the merciless desolations of dearest friends and nearest kindred, to domineer for a while, though it be damned everlastingly afterwards; as it is too clear in the Turkish Emperors, and in that great Master of mischief and Machiavelism, Richard the third, of this Kingdom, who with a bloody hand pressed out the breath of those two orient Princes in the Tower, his Nephews, and natural Lord's. It is victorious over all other affections, and masters even the sensuality of lustful pleasures; as appears in the greatest Warriors and ancient Worthies amongst the Heathen, who tempted with the exquisiteness and variety of choicest beauties, yet forbore that villainy, not for conscience sake, and fear of God whom they knew not; but lest they should interrupt the course, and stop the current of their warlike reputation, ambitious designs, and achievements of state. But whatsoever other pestilent properties empoison it, it never fails to engender in the heart, which harbors it, as its proper Thunder-bolt, and blasting, fears, cares, jealousies, envies, enraged thirst of rising still, impatience of competition, uncapableness of satiety, which is most for my purpose. For the proud and ambitious man enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied. Hab. 2:5. Who can fill the bottomless pit of hell, or stop the insatiable jaws of death? Neither can the greedy humor of a haughty spirit, the aspiring insolency of a boisterous Nimrod be possibly stayed or stinted; no not with the top and variety of highest honors, though he should alone and absolutely be crowned with the Sovereignty of the whole earth, and command the felicities of this wide world.

If it fall in love with riches, it breeds and brings forth covetousness, the vilest, and basest of all the infections of the soul, in the most contemptible, and dunghill disposition. For this kite-footed corruption wheresoever it seizeth, and domineers, blasts, and banisheth all nobleness of spirit, natural affection, humanity, discretion, reason, wisdom, manliness, mutual entertainments, intercourse of kindness, and love; and turns all, even the soul itself, into earth and mud. It draws by a cunning reserved baseness, all occasions, circumstances, advantages, wit, policy, even friends, and acquaintance; nay religion, conscience, and all to be serviceable, and contributory to a greedy wolf, and raging gangrene of hoarding up Gold, and worldly pelf. In a word, it makes a man with a Bedlam cruelty to contemn himself, body and soul, for a little transitory trash; willfully to abandon both the comfortable enjoyment of the short time of this present mortality, and all hope of the length of that blessed eternity to come. And as the object of it is most earthly, base, and incompetent, so of all other vile affections, it is most sottishly, and senselessly unsatisfiable. For how is it possible that earth should feed or fill the immaterial, and heaven-borne spirit of a man? It cannot be, and the Spirit of God hath said, it shall not be. Eccl. 5:10, and 4:8. He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver. The eye is not satisfied with riches. Hence it is, that the deepeliever and more eagerly the dropsy heart of the covetous man doth drink of this golden stream, the more furiously still it is inflamed with insatiable thirst: nay certain it is, that if he should purchase, and possess a Monopoly of all the wealth in the world; were he able to empty the Western parts of Gold, and the East of all her Spices, and precious things; should he enclose the whole face of the earth from one end of heaven to another, and heap up his hoard

to the stars; yet his heart would be as hungry after more riches, as if he had never a penny, and much more.

If it fall in love with beauty, and the swaggering bravery of good fellowship, it begets lust, and sensuality; which make their minions mad with bitterness and malice, against the very least glimpse of holiness, or any religious restraint; enrage them with mutual fury, to engulf themselves into the bottomless whirlpool of sensual pleasures, and so empoison their hearts with a furious unquenchable thirst after them, that they will never leave their hold, and haunt, until they either be broken with the hammer of the Word, or burst with the horror of despair. You may trace these pestilent properties in the practice of those voluptuous Gallants, Wisdom 2. (A book though not of divine authority, yet profitable for precepts of morality.) In which Chapter you may find, as I have ever conceived, a description to the life, and most exact Character of the good-fellows of our times; who are transported equally with a desperate insatiable humor of ravenous feeding upon the froth, and filth of their impure delights, as greedily as the Ox sucks in water: and with an implacable enmity against the purity, and power of godliness. For the first, hear their cry unto their companions. Verse 6, &c. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly Wine, and Ointments: and let no flower of the Spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with Rosebuds before they be withered. Let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness: let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place; for this is our portion, and our lot is this. For the other, take notice of their boisterous swaggering combination, to become bloody goads in the sides, and cruel pricks in the eyes of God's people. For proportionable to their impatency of being crossed in their course of pleasures, is their

rage in persecuting the godly. And therefore being resolute to live and die good fellows, they also resolve from the same ground, to hold an everlasting irreconcilable opposition to the way which is called holy, especially, since everywhere it is so spoken against. Whence, I say, they grow, and glue themselves together in this combination, ver. 10, &c. Let us oppress the poor righteous man, —Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble, is found to be nothing worth. Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous: because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings, he upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and objecteth to our infamy, the transgressing of our education. He professeth to have the knowledge of God: and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. He is grievous unto us, even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits: he abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness: he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boasts that God is his Father: —Such things they did imagine, and were deceived: for their own wickedness hath blinded them. As for the mysteries of God, they know them not: neither hoped they for the wages of righteousness: nor discerned a reward for blameless souls.

If it edge, and eneager malice, it breeds revenge, a wolvish, and unnatural thirst after blood: which haunts most, the most weak, fearful, and cowardly spirits. For we ever see the basest and most worthless men, to be most malicious and revengeful. Seldom doth it find any harbor in a well-bred, and a generous mind. As Thunders, Tempests, and other terrible agitations in the air, trouble only, and disquiet these weaker frail bodies below, but never disturb or dismay those glorious heavenly Ones above: so scurrile girds, imperious doggedness, disgraces, and wrongs, vex, and distemper

men of baser temper: but the nettling disposition, causeless spite, and childish brawling's of hasty fools, wound not great and noble spirits. Now this boiling and biting distemper, though against nature it feed upon blood; yet, so true is the point I pursue, (but would you think it?) is also insatiable. Witness that Monster of Millaine, who, as Bodin reporteth, when he had surprised upon the sudden, one whom he mortally hated, he presently overthrew him; and setting his dagger to his breast, told him, he would certainly have his blood, except he would renounce, abjure, forswear, and blaspheme the God of heaven. Which when that fearful man, too sinfully greedy of a miserable life, had done in a most horrible manner; he immediately dispatched him, as soon as those prodigious blasphemies were out of his mouth: and in a bloody triumph insulting over his murdered adversary, as though whole hell had dwelt in his heart; he added this most abhorred speech: Oh, says he, this is right noble, and heroical revenge; which doth not only deprive the body of a temporary life, but brings also the never-dying soul unto everlasting flames. Witness the cruelest of men, Mahomet the great, who as the Story reports, was in his time the death of eight hundred thousand men. But above all, that Beast of Rome carries away the bell for insatiableness in blood-sucking, who though he was long since drunk with the blood of the Saints, as with new Wine; and in his drunken humor, hath furiously spilled, and poured out upon the face of Christendom, a world of blood, almost all in our remembrance: Witness the incredible deal of Christian blood which that merciless monster, the Popish Inquisition swallows down in secret: Witness the horrible butcheries executed upon Professors in the Low countries: Guess the rest by that cruel confession of Alva, who bosting in the bloodshed of the Saints, said on a time at his table, that he had been diligent in rooting out of heresy; (so the

Antichristians call the right way to Heaven.) For besides those which were slain in war, and secret massacres, he had put into the hand of the Hangman eighteen thousand in the space of six years: Witness Farnesius his feral resolution at his departing out of Italy; to make his Horse swim in the blood of the Lutherans: Witness that most abhorred prodigious villainy, that ever the Sun saw; the massacre at Paris, when in diverse places of France, about threescore thousand persons were murdered, and the streets of that City, as the Story tells us, strewed with carcasses, the Pavements, Marketplaces and River died with blood: Witness, besides other cruelties and bloody afflictions, three hundred faithful servants of Christ burned to ashes in this Kingdom, within less than five years: Witness that horrible parricide perpetrated upon the Royal persons of two French Kings, Henry the third and fourth, who were successively butchered in a most barbarous manner, by two Popish Assassins, Clement and Ravilliac: Nay, in the late civil wars of France, twelve hundred thousand natural French are said to be slain: this Romish Beast being the bellows and incendiary, &c. Yet I say, Though he hath already drunk up such a deal of blood as insatiably, as Behemoth the River Jordan: he is yet still like a she-wolf in the evening; and at this very time carousing almost in all corners of the Christian world, the blood of the Martyrs of Jesus as greedily, and with as furious thirst, as ever he did, since the Dragon first gave him his power. But I hope in the strong God of our salvation, (For strong is the Lord God, who judgeth the Whore) that this is the last draught, and that upon his next health, as it were, begun to the Devil, in this cup of fiery cruelty against the servants of Christ, the Vial of God's unquenchable wrath will choke him forever. Blood he shall have enough, but from the revenging hand of the Lord God of recompenses, in fury, and jealousy.

2. Besides that thus the rage of insatiableness and restlessness of pursuit, doth still boil in every carnal heart, that is carried immoderately after its own ways, or inordinately upon any earthly thing: it is also thereby in God's just judgment extraordinarily hardened, and estranged from God. For the deeper our affections are drowned in the World, and endeared to any sensual delight; the more desperately are they divorced from God, and deadened to heavenly things. It is just with God, to suffer that heart to be turned first into earth and mud; and after to freeze and congeal into steel and Adamant, which prefers Earth before Heaven; a dunghill before Paradise; broken cisterns which can hold no water, before the ever-springing Fountain of glory and bliss; a few bitter-sweet pleasures, for an inch of time in this vale of tears, before unmixed and immeasurable joys, through all eternity in those glorious mansions above. Our hearts are originally hard by the curse of Nature, Ezek. 11:19, afterward by a willful course, and continuance in sin, we add Adamant of our own, Isa. 48:4, Zech. 7:12, and by not suffering the Sword of the Spirit to search and sunder our minion-delights from our bosoms, Heb. 4:7. Then Satan is let loose to put to his iron sinews, Luk. 22:3. Lastly, God himself hardeneth by an act of Justice, as we may see, Exod. 9:12. Thus the heart which hates to be reformed, being glued to a sensual object, or worldly lust, by its own inbred corruption, infusion of hellish poison, and just curse of God, grows into such a prodigious rock: That no cross or created power; not the softest eloquence, or severest course; nay, not the weight of the whole World, were it all pressed upon it, can possibly mollify or reclaim it. It will never yield or relent, or be rent from its darling delight, but die in its deadness, and be desperately hardened for the very depth of Hell; except the Almighty Spirit take the hammer of the Word into his own hand, that by his special

irresistible power, and merciful violence, he may first break it in pieces with legal remorse, and after by the sprinkling and powerful application of Christ's blood, resolve it into tears of true Evangelical repentance; that so only by a gracious miracle of divine mercy, it may be softened, sanctified, and saved. The stubborn Jews were heavily loaden with an extraordinary variety of most grievous crosses and afflictions. There was nothing wanting to make them outwardly miserable; and no misery inflicted upon them, but upon purpose to humble, and take down their rebellious hearts. The Prophet Isaiah, chap. 1, paints out to the life, the rueful state of their fresh bleeding desolations; The whole head (saith he) is sick, and the whole heart is heavy, &c. (for the place is meant, not as some take it, of their sins, but of their sorrows.) But all these blows and pressures were so far from melting them, that they made them harder: Wherefore should you be smitten anymore, for ye fall away more and more? What created power can possibly have more power upon the souls of men, then the sacred Sermons of the Son of God, who spake as never man spake? And yet His dear entreaties, and melting invitations, which sweetly and tenderly flowed from that heart, which was resolved to spill its warmest and inmost blood for their sakes, moved those stiff-necked Jews never a jot: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I, and you would not? Matth. 23:37. Isaiah, that Noble Prophet; whose matchless style, incomparably surpasseth the utmost possibility of all human invention; and to which the choicest elegancies of profane Writers, are pure barbarism, shed many, and many a gracious shower of most heavenly, piercing, sweetest eloquence upon a sinful Nation, and rebellious people, which were fruitlessly spilled as water upon the ground, or lost, as upon the hardest flint. His many heavenly soul-searching Sermons, which breathed nothing but spirit and life; yet to them hardened in their sins, and hating to

be reformed, were but as an idle and empty breath; vanishing into nothing, and scattered in the air. The Lord (as he saith) made his mouth like a sharp sword, and himself a chosen shaft; and yet that two-edged sword was full often blunted upon their hardest hearts; and his keen arrows discharged by a skillful hand, rebounded from their flinty bosoms, as shafts shut against a stone-wall. Which made that Seraphical Orator cry out; I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain. A course of extraordinary severity and terror, was taken with the Tyrant Pharaoh, he was not only chastised with rods, but even scourged with Scorpions; and yet all the plagues of Egypt were so far from taming, and taking down his proud heart; that every particular plague added unto it a several iron sinew; so far they were from softening it, that they seared it more. No material weight can more crush the heart of a man into pieces, then braying in a mortar: and yet saith Solomon, Though thou shouldest bray a fool, an old obstinate sinner, in a mortar among wheat with a pestle: yet will not his foolishness, his willful cruelty in killing his own soul, and Bedlam madness, in exchanging a little transitory pleasure, with endless pain, depart from him. Prov. 27:22. Now what a horrible hardness, and hellish stone is that, which no ministry or misery, nay, nor miracles, See Exod. 10:27, 1 King. 13:33, 2 King. 1:11, John. 18:12, nor mercies, Isa. 26:10, can possibly mollify?

Here now should I have passed out of this point, did I not conceive, that of all the weightiest civil affairs incident to human deliberation, there is none more material, important, or of greater consequence, either for extremist outward vexation, and hearts-grief; or extraordinary sweet contentment, and continual peace, then matter of marriage. A word or two therefore of, 1. convenient entrance into, and, 2. comfortable enjoyment of that honorable estate.

For the first: 1. Let thy choice be in the Lord, according to blessed Saint Paul's Rule, 1 Cor. 7:39, only in the Lord. Let piety be the first mover of thine affection, the prime and principal ponderation in this greatest affaire; and then conceive of personage, parentage, and portion, as they say, and such outward things, and worldly additions, as a comfortable accessory, considerable only in a second place. Let the world say what it will, to a mind truly generous, and ennobled with grace, the absolutest concurrence, and quintessential exquisiteness of beauty, gold, birth, wit, or what else besides may be found most remarkable and matchless in that sex, should be nothing, nor hold scale with the lightest feather upon any Ladies head, in respect of a gracious disposition and godly heart. Religion and the fear of God, as it is generally the foundation of all human felicity; so must it in special be accounted the ground of all comfort and bliss, which man and wife desire to find in the enjoying each of other. There was never any gold, or great friends; any beauty, or outward bravery, which tied truly fast and comfortably any marriage knot. It is only the golden link, and noble tie of Christianity and Grace, which hath the power and privilege to make so dear a bond lovely, and everlasting; which can season and strengthen that nearest inseparable society with true sweetness and immortality.

2. Let conjugal love warm thine heart, at least in some measure with affectionate contentment, and some more special repose upon the party, as one with whom thou canst heartily and comfortably consort: for the husband, all concurrents, and ordinary possibilities considered, ought to settle his affections upon his wife, as the fittest that the world could have afforded him: and the wife should rest her heart upon her husband, as the meetest for her, that could have been found under the Sun. By a constant intercourse of which mutual contentment in each other, the husband will be

to the wife as a covering of her eyes, that she lift them not up amorously upon any man: and the wife to the husband, the pleasure of his eyes, that he may still look upon her with sober and singular delight. Otherwise they will find but cold comfort in that counsel and commandment of Solomon, Prov. 5:18,19. Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving Hind, and pleasant Roe: let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love. Without this mutual complacency, that I may so speak, and loving contentment each in other, I doubt whether I should encourage any to proceed. And yet why should not a comfortable concurrence of grace on both sides, consent of Parents, meetness in state, stature, birth, years, and all other requisites besides, create in a mortified heart, matrimonial affection? And yet I would by no means causelessly confine and ensnare any. And yet I would not have an invincible Antipathy, and I cannot love, but I know not why, pretended, when as perhaps indeed and truth it is only carnal curiosity which breaks a convenient match.

3. In going about such an important business, plie the Throne of Grace with extraordinary importunity, and fervency of prayer; press upon, and wrestle, as it were, with God in days of more secret and solemn humiliation for a blessing in this kind, and with that sincerity; that thou do heartily desire him, whatsoever thy conceits, and expectation of future comforts, and conveniences may be; yet if it be not with his liking, and to his glory, he would be pleased to dash it quite. A good wife is a more immediate gift of God: House and riches, saith Solomon, are the inheritance of fathers; but a prudent wife is from the Lord. And therefore such a rare and precious Jewel is to be sued and sought for at God's Mercy-seat, with more extraordinary earnestness, importunity and zeal. And methinks, that wife, child, or what other good thing is procured at God's merciful hand by

prayer, should bring with it, even in our sense and thankful acknowledgement, a thousand times more sweetness and comfort, then that which is cast upon us by God's ordinary providence, without any suite at all, unto his heavenly Highness.

4. Let the parties deal plainly and faithfully one with the other, in respect of their bodies, souls, and outward state. I mean it thus; That they should not deceive and cozen one the other by a crafty concealment: of some foul disease, special deformity, natural defect, &c. in body; especially, which they think in their consciences, and impartial consideration, if it were their case, would breed intolerable distaste and discontentment: or of some secret maim and crack in their outward state, which neither the other party, or friends, do either expect, or suspect: For so they may bring a great deal of after-misery, and too late repentance upon the match. For naturally we hate them which beguile us. And a man or woman is most impatient of failing, and being disappointed of their hopes and expectations, in so great and weighty affaire as Marriage is. And therefore it were very convenient, and much better to disclose the one unto the other, the material infirmities and wants in either of their bodies or goods, though with hazard of missing the match; rather than the one to obtain the other, with guile, cunning, and after-discomfort. I said also, in respect of their souls; by which I mean; that for the time of Wooing only, as they call it, they should not put on a visor, flourish, and show of Religion, conversion, and grace; when in deed and truth, there is no such matter. For this execrable imposture also, is sometimes villainously practiced, to the infinite prejudice, and perpetual hearts-grief of the deluded party. And not only some parties are cunning, reserved, and faulty this way; but even Christian friends are too often too forward, peremptory, and audacious, in giving testimonies and assurances

in such cases. Now this is the greatest guile, and most cursed cozenage of all; when one conceives, by the present cunning carriage of the party, and partial information of friends, that he or she hath met with a soul beautified with grace; whereas when it comes to the trial, hath just none acquaintance with God at all.

Now I come unto the second Point; A religious and comfortable continuance in the Marriage-state. For the happy attainment whereof; let us take notice of, and to heart; first, some common Duties, which are mutually to be performed on both sides.

I. Lovingness. Which is a drawing into action, and keeping in exercise that habit of conjugal affection, Matrimonial love mentioned before. It is a sweet, loving, and tenderhearted pouring out of their hearts, with much affectionate dearness, into each others bosoms; in all passages, carriages, and behaviors, one towards another. This mutual melting-heartedness, being preserved fresh and fruitful, will infinitely sweeten and beautify the Marriage state.

For an uninterrupted preservation of this amiable deportment on both sides; let them consider,

1. The wise hand of God's gracious providence guided all the business, and brought it to pass. And he commands constancy in this loving and lightsome carriage. Prov. 5:18,19. Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving Hind, and pleasant Roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love. See also Eph. 5:25. Me thinks this charge from the holy Ghost, being often reverently remembered, should ever beat back and banish from both their hearts, all heart-rising and bitterness; distaste, and disaffection; all wicked wishes, that they had never met together, that they had never seen one another's faces, &c. When the

knot is once tied, every man should think his wife, and every wife her husband, the fittest for him of any in the world. Otherwise, so often as he sees a better, he will wish that his choice were to make again; and so fall off from respect to this Commandment, and from kindness and love to his own. Which is an inexpiable disparagement to God's providence, and an execrable empoisoner of Marriage comforts.

2. That by the power of the honorable Ordinance of Marriage, the two are made one. And therefore they ought to be as lovingly and tenderly affected one unto the other, as they would be to their own flesh.

3. The compassionate and melting compellations, which Christ and his Spouse exchange in the Canticles: My fair one, my sister, my love, my Dove, my undefiled, my well-beloved, the chief of ten thousand, &c. whose chaste and fervent love, that of married couples should resemble and imitate.

4. That these mutual expressions, and exercise of this matrimonial love, are very powerful to preserve chastity and pureness in body and spirit on both sides. It is noted of Isaac, that he loved Rebekah dearly; and this was a special preservative, that he fell not to Polygamy or concubines, as many of the Patriarchs did.

II. Faithfulness. 1. In respect of the Marriage-Bed; which they ought on both sides to keep inviolable, undefiled, and honorable. Wherein, if they transgress, besides a whole hell of spiritual miseries, they strike at the very sinew, heart, and life of the Marriage Knot; and become liable (if the Magistrate should do, as God commanded amongst his people) to the bloody stroke of a violent death. And therefore it behooves all that enter this state, to be humbled, and repent for all former wantonness; or else, a thousand to one, it will break out, either into a sensual, immoderate abuse

of the Marriage; which the Fathers call, Adultery with a man's own wife; or else into a lustful hankering after the strange woman.

2. In respect of domestical affairs, and businesses of the family. The care and burden whereof is common to them both. The Husband that hath a prodigal and slothful wife, doth but draw water with a Sive, as the Heathen man said, and casts his labors into a bottomless sack. And the wife that is matched with an idle unthrifty Husband, draws a Cart heavy laden through a sandy way, without a Horse. By which is intimated an impossibility of thriving in the world, and prospering in their outward state.

3. In the concealment of each others secrets. It is a very unnatural and monstrous treachery, to publish one another's faults and frailties, or anything, which in hope of keeping counsel, they have communicated one to another. They are ill birds, as they say, that defile their own-nests; and frantic Bedlams that so throw dirt in each others faces.

III. Patience. Which is as precious and needful a holy duty, as I can possibly commend in this case, for comfortable conversing together.

For a more prepared and constant exercise whereof; consider,

1. That two Angels are not met together in a Matrimonial state, but a son and daughter of Adam: And therefore they must look for infirmities, frailties, imperfections, passions, and provocations, on both sides.

2. That it is a charge given to all; That the Sun must not go down upon their wrath: much more to Man and Wife linked together in the nearest bond.

3. That there never did, nor ever will come any good, by the falling out of Man and Wife. Well may they thereby become ridiculous to their servants, a by-word to their neighbors, Table-talk to the Country, troublers of their own house, and as a continual dropping one unto another: but they shall never

gain by their mutual hastiness, passions, and impatency. What good can come by a man's anger and indignation against his own flesh? What prodigious madness is it for them to grow strange, whom so many and perpetual bands have tied so fast; and who without dearest and most intimate familiarity, can neither enjoy civil contentment or peace of conscience? Suppose that the heart should fall out with the head, and deny unto it, those spirits which become animal in the brain, and serve for exercise both of sense, and by consequent of the higher part of the soul; What would follow, but distemper, distraction, and madness? Or that the head should fall out with the body; and thereupon restrain from it the influence of animal spirits, the instruments of the quickening and moving it; What would become of the head, when the body were dead? Proportionable mischiefs and miseries fall out upon the Marriage-state, by falling out, strangeness, bitterness, and angry reservedness between the parties.

This grace then will be of excellent use, and must be exercised many ways:

1. In bearing with the wants and weaknesses, infirmities and deformities of each other. And let the man, (for the woman is the weaker vessel) remember for this purpose; how many faults, frailties, and falls; and how many times Christ remits and pardons to his Spouse the Church. And he ought to love his wife, as Christ doth the Church, Eph. 5:25. The body doth not reject the head, because it is bald, or but one eyed: The head rageth not against the body, because it is deformed or diseased, but doth rather condole and sympathize.

2. About cross accidents in the family, losses in their outward state; going backward of businesses, &c. They must not lay the fault one upon another, to the breaking out into choler, impatency, and stamping; but both join with

blessed Job, in that sweet and meek submission to God's pleasure: The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.

3. In waiting for the conversion of one another; if either prove unconverted. In which case, be patient, pray, and expect God's good time. We have God himself a sweet Pattern for this purpose. Or if the one be but a Babe in Christ, weak in Christianity; deal fairly, lovingly, and meekly. Let our Lord Jesus his tender-heartedness to spiritual younglings, teach us mercy this way. See Isa. 40:11.

IV. A holy care and conscience to preserve between themselves, (for there is a conjugal, as well as virginal and vidual chastity) the marriage bed undefiled, and in all honor and Christian purity. It ought by no means to be stained and dishonored with sensual excesses, wonton speeches, foolish dalliance, and other unclean incentives of lust, which marriage should quench, not inflame. Even in wedlock, intemperate and unbridled lust; immoderation and excess, is deemed both by ancient and modern Divines, no better than plain adultery before God.

Two ancient worthy Fathers, Ambrose and Austin, speak thus: What is the intemperate man in marriage, but his wives adulterer? The resolution of the rest sound to the same sense.

As a man may be a wicked drunkard with his own drink; and a glutton, by excessive devouring of his own meat: so likewise, one may be unclean in the immoderate use of the marriage bed.

Even Popish Casuists discover and detest aberrations and exorbitancies of married couples in their Matrimonial meetings. (But read such passages with much modesty and judgment.)

Nay hear what a very Philosopher saith of the point: In the private acquaintance, saith he, and use of marriage, there must be a moderation;

that is, a religious and a devout band: for that pleasure that is therein, must be mingled with some severity. It must be a wise and conscionable delight. A man must touch his wife discreetly, and for honesty, &c. Another thus: Marriage is a religious and devout bond: and that is the reason, the pleasure a man hath of it, should be a moderate, stayed, and serious pleasure, and mixed with severity: it ought to be a delight somewhat circumspect and conscientious.

We may conceive, what moderate, reverent, and honorable thoughts Antiquity entertained of the Marriage state, and conjugal chastity; by Evaristus words, *Epist. 1, ad omnes Episc. Aphri*. Let new-married couples, saith he, for two or three days ply Prayer, —that they may have good children, and please the Lord in their marriage-duties.

Now all intemperate, excessive, or any ways exorbitant pollutions of the marriage-bed, though Magistrates meddle not with them, because they lie without the walk of human censure; yet assuredly God's pure Eye cannot look upon them, but without repentance will certainly plague them. Methinks therefore, if the fear of God, awfulness to his All-seeing Eye, love of purity, &c. will not restrain from immodesty and immoderation in this kind; yet that slavish horror, lest God should justly punish them therefore, with no children, misshapen children, idiots, or prodigiously wicked children, or some other heavy crosses, should fright them from such abhorred filth.

In the next place, let us take a view of, and to heart, duties peculiar and proper to each severally.

I. To the Husband:

1. Let him behave himself as a head to the body, 1 Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:23.

1. The head is, as it were, the glory and crown of the body: So let the husband shine, and show himself in a kind of eminency, excellency, and authority over the wife. To be a head, implies and imports a preeminence, superiority, and sovereignty, as appears by the Apostles gradation, 1 Cor. 11:3. Man is the woman's head, Christ is man's head, God is Christ's head. For procuring and preserving which; Let the husband be manly, grave, worthy; not light, vain, contemptible: Let him not be bitter, wayward, passionate: Let him not be base-minded, vicious, vain glorious: Let him not be a drunkard, a gamester, a good-fellow. Dissoluteness, and a disordered life in the Man, doth much abate and diminish the wives respectfulness and reverence unto him. Majesty, authority, venerableness in any Superior, is not any ways more lessened or sooner lost, then by light behavior, personal worthlessness, or unworthy deportment in his place. Whereas true worth, goodness, grace, shining from within, doth beget a more loving reverence, and reverent love, then all outward forms of pomp and state; then any boisterousness, or big looks can possibly produce.

2. The Head is the seat of understanding, wisdom, discretion, forecast. Out of which consideration; Let the husband stir up, quicken, and enlarge his manly spirit, to comprehend, and rightly conceive all affairs, provisions, occasions, offers, ingenuous deportment, and worthy usages, which may any ways procure and promote his wives true contentment, honor, and happiness. It is his necessary and noble charge, with a special and punctual care, and casting about to provide for her soul, body, comfort, and credit; with all meekness and love, to instruct and inform her in all passages of her duty, and procurements of her good.

3. The Head indeed hath the precedency and prerogative of noblest operations, and the souls divinest acts, by the benefit of its native temper

and constitution, seat of the senses, and other proper instruments fitted for such high employments, and challenge of that excellency; yet notwithstanding, the body, and other parts are animated and enlivened with the very same soul, both for substance, faculties, immortality, activeness, every way: So that if the foot, for instance, had an ear, an eye, an animal spirit, and an organization, as the Philosophers speak, apted for such functions, it would hear, and see, and understand as well as the head. And therefore the head, by a natural instinct, as it were, and sympathy, doth continually and tenderly, with fresh successions of a lively and quickening influence, cherish, and refresh other parts as well as itself. The husband, by the benefit of a more manly body, tempered with natural fitness for the soul to work more nobly in; doth, or ought ordinarily outgo the wife in largeness of understanding, height of courage, staidness of resolution, moderation of his passions, dexterity to manage businesses, and other natural inclinations, and abilities to do more excellently; yet notwithstanding, let him know that his wife hath as noble a soul as himself. Souls have no sexes, as Ambrose saith. In the better part they are both men. And if thy wives soul were freed from the frailty of her sex, it were as manly, as noble, as understanding, and every way as excellent as thine own: Nay, and if it were possible for you to change bodies; hers would work as manlily in thine, and thine as womanly in hers. Let the husband then be so far from insulting over, contemning, or undervaluing his wives worth, for the weakness of her sex; that out of consideration that her soul is naturally every way as good as his own; only the excellency of its native operations, something damped, as it were, and disabled by the frailty of that weaker body, with which God's wise providence hath clothed it upon purpose, for a more convenient and comfortable, but ingenuous serviceableness to his good; that, I say, he labor

the more to entertain and entreat her with all tenderness and honor, to recompense, as it were, her suffering in this kind for his sake.

4. The Head is the well-spring of all quickening motion and sense, liveliness and lightsomeness to the body. If the derivation of animal spirits from the brain, were restrained and intercepted for a while; the body would be presently surprised with a senseless damp and dead palsy. The wife for the husbands sake, hath forsaken her native home, fathers house, father, mother, and many comforts in that kind: And therefore good reason she should expect now, and receive from her Head; new matter, and a continued influence of lightheartedness, comfortable enjoying herself, and cheerful walking. If he to whose company and conditions she is now so nearly and necessarily confined, and, as it were, enchained, prove dogged, she holds herself utterly undone for any outward contentment.

2. Let him dwell with her, according to knowledge. 1 Pet. 3:7.

1. By a wise discovery at the first, and timely acquainting himself with her disposition, affections, infirmities, passions, imperfections; and thereupon with all holy discretion, apply and address himself in a fair and loving manner, to rectify and reform all he can; and to bear the rest with patience, passing by it without passion and impatency, still waiting upon God by Prayer, in his good time, for a further and more full redress and conformity. One of the rankest roots of distastes and discontentment in the Marriage-state, is the neglect of a punctual observation of each others properties; of taking the right measure of each others manners, upon purpose, that with mutual patience and forbearance, they may support each other in love, and lovingly bear one another's burdens. Memorable is that speech, and may be a fit medicine against marriage-jars; which a reverend man received from a husband, being asked how such a choleric couple

could so consort together: Thus, saith he, when her fit is upon her, I yield to her, as Abraham did to Sara; and when my fit is upon me, she yields to me: and so we never strive together, but asunder.

2. By a provident, discreet, and patient ordering, guiding, and managing businesses abroad, and family affairs; without that carking, impatency, prevention, and distrust of God's providence; without that clamor, boisterousness, and confusion, with which worldlings are wont to trouble their own houses. It is incredible to consider the vast and invaluable difference between the comforts, calmness, and many sweet contentment's of a household, governed by the patient wisdom of a heavenly-minded man: and the endless brawling's, bitter contestations about trifles, disorders, domestical hurly-burlies, &c. which haunt that family, where a choleric, covetous, and hare-brained husband doth domineer. This latter, is like the middle region of the air, continually torn and rent with fresh commotions, thunders, and many tumultuous stirs, which rise at first from a thing of nothing; a thin invisible fume drawn out of the earth: So earthly things, vainer than the most vanishing vapor, do ordinarily raise in such Nurseries of disquietness and noise, a world of needless troubles, passionate distempers, and self-vexations. But the former is like the highest part of the air, full of calmness, tranquility, and constant light; the Sun of righteousness shining still upon it with the blessed beams of patience, contentment and spiritual nobleness of mind; doth from time to time dissolve and drive away all mists of worldly mourning, storms of bitterness and brawling, matter of such senseless and brainless molesting one another; and doth with a sweet and kindly heat refresh and support the heart, against all choleric encounters and cross accidents; by virtue of such heavenly and healing cordials as

these, which were wont to calm and repel the most tempestuous assaults upon the afflicted Saints, Job 1:21, 1 Sam. 3:18.

3. But above all, by leading his wife in the way of life, and path, that is called Holy. This is the flower and crown of all his skill, to be a blessed and manly guide unto her, towards everlasting happiness. For want of this wisdom, and will, many a poor soul lies bleeding unto eternal death, under the bloody and merciless hand of an ignorant, profane, or Pharisaical husband; which perhaps may have knowledge enough and too much, to thrive in the world, to prosper in his outward state; to provide for posterity; nay to oppress, over-reach, and defraud his brother: But no wit, no understanding, no brains at all, to teach, and tell his wife one foot of the right way to heaven: wise to do evil, as the Prophet speaks, Jer. 4:22. But to do good, no knowledge at all: No holy habit or heart to pray with her, to instruct, and encourage her in the great mystery and practice of godliness; to keep the Sabbath holy, and days of humiliation; to read Scriptures, repeat Sermons, and confer of good things with her, &c. from which he is so far; that although it be the strongest bar to keep her from grace, and the bloody cut-throat of both their souls; he will needs persuade her that all this is too much preciseness. And yet hear Chrysostom: Let them both go to the Church, and afterward at home let the husband require of the wife, and the wife of the husband, those things which were there spoken and read, or at least, some of them. And in the same Sermon, Teach her, saith he, the fear of God; and all things will flow in abundantly, as out of a fountain: and thine house will be replenished with innumerable good things.

4 By a conscionable and constant care also, for the conversion, and salvation of their children and servants. Every husband and head of Family is as it were, a Priest and Pastor in his own house; and therefore, if he take

not a course to catechize them, pray with them, prepare them for the Sacrament, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as the Apostle counsels, Eph. 6:4, to restrain them all he can from lewd courses, ill company, the corruptions of the time: but suffer them to have their swinge in their youthful rebellions, unhallowing the Lord's Day, Alehouse-hauntings, stubbornness against the Ministry, &c. until many times they swing in an halter, as they say: Let them then know, that all those sins they so run into, by such gross neglect and default, are set upon his score, and he must be exactly countable, and full dearly answer for them at that great and last Day. Nay let me further tell him that, which will make his ears to tingle, and heart to tremble, if it be not of Adamant, and his heartstrings turned into Iron sinews: Those his children and servants, which by his impenitent omissions and unconscionableness in this kind, have perished in their sins, will curse him forever hereafter amongst the fiends in hell. They will follow thee up and down in that ever-burning Lake, with direful bannings's, and hideous outcries; crying out continually: Woe unto us, that ever we served such a wicked and wretched master, that had no care of the salvation of our souls, took no course to save us out of these fiery torments. Even thine own dear children in this case, will yell in thine ears, world without end: Woe and alas, that ever we were borne of such accursed parents, who had not the grace to teach us betime the ways of God; to keep us from our youthful vanities, and to train us up in the paths of Godliness! Had they done so, we might have lived in the endless joys of Heaven; whereas now damned souls, we must lie irrecoverably in these everlasting flames. Oh, will they say, it was the bloody knife of our own dear parents unconscionable, and cruel negligence, that all our life long stuck full deep in our souls, and hath now strangled them with everlasting horror! That this

must needs be so, ordinary observation, common experience doth too often confirm. We hear many times many miserable malefactors bitterly complain at the place of execution, against parents and masters careless and conscienceless in this kind; and saying: If they had had care and conscience to have taught and restrained us betime, we had never come to this Dogs death, and shameful end. How much more will they cry out against them with endless yelling's, when they shall feel the flames of hell?

II. To the wife.

1. Let her be in subjection to her head.

1. By a reverent and humble persuasion of his precedency and authority over her, grounded and engraven in her resolution principally: 1. By virtue of divine ordination, Gen. 3:16, Eph. 5:24. Though 2. The very law of nature, 3. Her husbands headship, 4. Womanly infirmity may also be powerful motives to this purpose. For if her heart begin to swell, and be lifted up with an overweening conceit of a sufficiency above her sex; so that she grow discontent, and impatient of contradiction and command, she brings a world of unnecessary misery and molestation into her own house, and lies in a grand transgression and grievous sin against the institution and honor of the marriage-state. It is no nobleness of birth greatness of portion, nimbleness of tongue, pregnancy of wit, or any other excellency incident to her sex, which can give her any right or privilege to seize upon the sovereignty, and take the reins into her own hands. Some servants also may be wiser than their masters: some subjects more political than their Prince; but that gives them no warrant; nay, for all that, it were monstrous and unnatural villainy; for any servant thereupon to domineer; or private man to rush into a Royal Throne. No sufficiency of gifts, or singularity of worth must jumble us out of that rank and station, wherein God's wise providence

and all-seeing wisdom hath placed us. A man may be a superior in power and place, to his superior in parts and personal endowments. No pretense then or plea on the woman's part, can possibly procure any dispensation against God and nature, of unwomanly domineering and deposing her head.

2. By an hearty and cheerful submission: 1. To all his lawful and honest dictates and directions: For her personal behavior and carriage; that it may be fashioned and addressed, with an ingenuous and loving accommodation of herself to do him all the honor, and give him all the contentment she can possibly with good conscience: for educating, ordering and disposing her children, servants, and other domestical affairs (wherein notwithstanding there are some passages, more proper and native to her sex, in which, except she be witless, graceless, and strangely weak, it will be very unmanly, dishonorable and unworthy for him to be too meddling, prying and pragmatical:;) But above all, for guiding her aright in the sweet and glorious path of Christianity, that after their nearest, and dearest comfort, and communion in the best things and spiritual blessings, which only can allay the smart of all cross accidents, and sweeten the bitterness of a few and evil days in this vale of tears, they may forever be crowned together in heaven. 2. To all his reasonable, and Religious restraints: not only from wicked haunts, and customs, sinful fashions, and passions: but in case of inconvenience, dishonor or just displeasure, for the abridging, or abandoning of her ease, will, desires, delights, this or that company, conformity to the times in her attire, &c. For the Spouse, for Christ's sake, sovereignty and love, doth deny herself, her own reason, and wisdom, her natural wit, and willfulness, her passions, pleasures, and profits, her ease and liberty, &c. And the wife is charged by blessed Paul, to be subject to her husband, as the Church is to Christ, Eph. 5:24. 3. To all his motions,

admonitions, counsels, comforts, reproofs, commands, countermands, even in everything, only in the Lord. So we see the body to rest upon the heads motion, either for rest, or motion. In a word, she ought like a true looking glass, faithfully to represent and return to her husbands heart, with a sweet, and pleasing pliability, the exact lineaments and proportions of all his honest desires, and demands; and that without discontent, thwarting, or sourness. For her subjection in this kind should be as to Christ, sincere, hearty and free.

2. Let her be a helper, Gen. 2:18, and do him good all the days of her life, at all times, upon all occasions, in all estates; of adversity, or prosperity; acceptance, or disgrace; sickness, or health; youth, or old age, &c. and that, with kindness and constancy. A most memorable, and famous pattern for this purpose is recorded by Vives. A young, tender and beautiful maid was matched (as he reports) to a man stricken in years: whom, after she found to have a very fulsome and diseased body; yet notwithstanding out of sense and conscience, as it seems, that now by God's providence she was become his wife; she most worthily digested with incredible patience and contentment, the languishing, and loathsomeness of a husband continually visited and vexed with variety and new successions of most irksome and contagious diseases. And though friends and Physicians advised her by no means to come near him, for fear of danger and infection; yet for all this, she passing by, with a loving disdain and contempt, these unkind dissuasions, plied him still night and day with extraordinary tenderness and care; with obsequiousness and services of all sorts, above her strength and ability, or possibility, as the Author saith: had not her dearest conjugal affection supplied and supported her weak body, with fresh accessions of vigor and unweariedness. She was to him friends, physician, husband,

Nurse. These are nothing: She was Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, daughter, everything, anything, to do him good any manner of way. Nay, had there been one exquisite quintessence of tenderness, dearness, affectionateness, and love collected and extracted from all these; it would hardly have matched her mercifulness, and melting affections towards him. In case of want, by reason of extraordinary expense, and excessive charges about him; she sold her Rings, chains, and richest attire; she emptied her cupboard of plate, her cabinet of chiefest and choicest Jewels, to do him good. And when he was dead, and friends came about her rather to congratulate her happy riddance, then to bewail her widowhood; she did not only deprecate and abhor all speeches tending that way: but protested if it were possible, she would willingly redeem her husbands life, with the loss of her five dearest children. And though as yet, the flower, and prime of her beautifullest and best time was not expired; yet she strongly resolved against a second match, because, said she, I shall not find a second Valdaura; (for so her husband was called.) Whence it appears, that this worthy woman was wedded to her husbands soul; not to his body: no infirmity or deformity whereof could cool or weaken the manliness, and fervency of her love. Such choice as this, were the way to make wives never weary of their husbands. Whereas affections fastened only on a man's outside, are subject to the tedious misery of inconstancy and change, and torture of many wicked and impossible wishes, according to the vanity and vexation of its transitory object. Against which hear the indignation of an ancient Father: But thy husband, saith he, is grown unhandsome, and homely. He once pleased thee: wouldest thou ever be choosing a husband? The Ox and the Horse like their mate: And if the one be changed, the other

knows not how to draw; but wants, as it were, half of himself: But thou refusest thy yoke-fellow, and wouldest often change.

Helpfulness to her husband, must be universal; apprehending and improving with all readiness and love, all opportunities to do him any good in soul or body, name, estate, &c. In a special manner she must learn, and labor with all meekness of Wisdom and patient discretion, to forecast, contrive and manage, as her more proper and particular charge, household affairs, and businesses within door, as they say. For which, see a right noble glorious pattern, Prov. 31. For the pride, vanity, idleness and luxury of these last times, wherein there is so much hell upon earth; such an impetuous reign and rage of sin in all sorts, hath transported also that sex into many monstrous degenerations: So that our great women in these days would be very loath to work after this sample, though set by the holy Ghost himself: Yet heretofore right Noble Princesses and daughters of mighty Kings, made conscience of a particular Calling, and disdained not to put their hands to housewifery. See Gen. 18:6. And 27:14, 2 Sam. 13:8.

But above all, let here be assistant to him in setting up, and forward the rich and Royal trade of grace; in erecting and establishing Christ's glorious Kingdom, both in their own hearts, and in their house. This is that one necessary thing, without which their family is but Satan's seminary, and a nursery for hell. And therefore let her be so far from drawing a contrary way (a cursed villainy of some wicked wives abroad in the world) or dead-heartedness this way, which is the grave of all spiritual graces, that, in case of negligence and slackness, she should labor by all wise, modest, seasonable insinuations, to stir up and quicken her husband to constancy and fervency in religious exercises of prayer, reading, catechizing, conference, days of humiliation, and other household holy duties. As the

two greater lights of Heaven do govern this great world with their natural: so let the husband and wife guide the little world of their family, with the spiritual light of divine knowledge and discretion. When the Sun is present in our firmament, the Moon out of a sense, as it were, of a natural reverence to the fountain of all her beauty and light, doth veil her splendor, and retire her beams. But when he is departed to the other Hemisphere, she shows herself, and shines as a Princess amongst the lesser lights. When the husband is at home, let the wife only, if need be, serve as a loving remembrancer to him, to keep his turns and times of enlightening and informing the ignorant, dark and earthy hearts of their people. But in his absence comes her course, when her graces of knowledge and prayer, &c. ought to show forth themselves, and shine upon them, to preserve them from coldness, and that dreadful curse which hangs over the head of those that know not God, and shall certainly fall upon those Families that call not on his Name. See Jer. 10:25.

For conclusion of the point, and crowning of the marriage-state with sound and lasting comfort in the meantime, and with everlasting peace and pleasures at last: Let man and wife jointly labor to sweeten and sanctify their mutual carriages, both common and several duties each to other, with often and constant meeting together in prayer. For persuasion to which practice: Consider such places as these, Gen. 25:21, 1 Cor. 7:5, 1 Pet. 3:7. That precise passage in Ambrose: You must both (speaking of married couples) rise in the night to prayer, and God is to be entreated of you with joint supplications. Continually, saith Chrysostom, teach her profitable things, and pray together.

If besides Family-prayers, wherein the more general affairs of the household are to be commended unto God, man and wife make conscience

also of this more private duty between themselves, wherein many particulars are to be petitioned, only proper and individual to that near society; I say, if they set themselves unto it with sincerity of heart, it may be a notable help, and by God's blessing prove a sovereign antidote against any root of bitterness, heart-rising, dissention, or discontent betwixt them: (wrath, and ill-will towards any, lurking in the heart, doth utterly damp and empoison the power and comfort of prayer, much more towards one tied unto thee with so many dear and perpetual bonds; so that prayer together will make them leave jarring; or jarring will make them leave praying) against all immodesties, dishonors, and defilements of the marriage-bed; against want, monstrosity, and miscarriage of children; against weariness, satiety and light esteem one of another; against plunging themselves insensibly into the gulf of worldly-mindedness, the canker and cut-throat of all grace, comfort, and nobleness of mind, &c. This private morning and evening sacrifice offered to the Throne of grace, with heartiness and life, will spiritualize (that I may so speak) their love, and renew it daily upon their hearts, with fresh, ardent, and heavenly embracement's. It will marvelously sweeten all reproaches and contumelies cast upon them for their profession by envenomed tongues; when they shall come together in private, and complain unto God, and beg at his merciful hands, patience, and Christian fortitude to take them, in submission to his will, and conformity to his Son, as so many crowns of glory to their heads, and of joy unto their hearts, Acts 5:41, 1 Pet. 4:14, Job 31:36. It will sweetly seal unto them in the meantime, their assurance of meeting together hereafter in Heaven: and when the time of sorrow shall come, and stroke of death divorce them for a time, consciousness of their former blessed communion in prayer, will not only serve as a counterpoison against all

slavish bitterness of immoderate grief incident to hopeless worldlings: but crown their hearts at parting, (which is a precious thing) with incomparably more true, inward, lasting contentment, then if they two had covetously hoarded and heaped together, all the wealth both of this and the other golden world.

Thus much for our dealing in the world and civil affairs.

CHAP. VI. – Works of Mercy, False Accusations & Earthly Mindedness.

V. NOW CONCERNING WORKS of mercy, which springing from a heart, melting with sense of God's everlasting mercy to itself; quickened with a lively faith in the Lord Jesus, and shining with saving graces, are an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God, Philip. 4:18, Heb. 13:16.

Conceive first, there be two sorts of them; 1. Spiritual. 2. Corporal.

1. Spiritual, flow from the fountain of truest mercy, and compassion of greatest tenderness and consequence; even to relieve, repair, and refresh the poverty, wants and miseries of the soul. 1. By instructing the Ignorant, Prov. 10:21, and 15:7. 2. By giving counsel to them that need, or seek it. Exod. 18:19. &c. Ruth. 3:1, &c. 3. By reducing the erroneous. Exo. 23:4. 4. By laboring the conversion of others. Psalm. 51:13, Luk. 22:32. 5. By exhorting one another. Heb. 3:13. 6. By reprovng the offender. Lev. 19:17. 7. By admonishing them that are out of order. 1 Thes. 5:14. 8. By considering one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works. Heb. 10:24. 9. By comforting the heavy heart, and afflicted spirit. 1 Thes. 5:14.

10. By forgiving from the heart our brethren their trespasses. Matth. 18:35.
11. By chastising delinquents. Prov. 22:15. 12. By raising those which are fallen by infirmity, with much meekness, and tenderness of heart. Gal. 6:1.
13. By mutual encouragements against the cruelty and confusions of the times, and in the way to Heaven. Mal. 3:16. 14. By supporting, and mercifully making much of weak Christians. 1 Thes. 5:11. 15. By patience towards all men. 1 Thes. 5:14. 16. By praying one for another. Jam. 5:16.

2. Corporal, spring from a compassionate heart, and fellow-feeling affection, yearning over the temporal wants and necessities of our brethren; whereby we are stirred up, as occasion is offered, according to our ability, to succor and support their outward extremities and distresses: To feed the Hungry: To give drink to the Thirsty: To clothe the Naked: to entertain the Stranger: To visit the sick: To go to those that are in Prison. Matth. 25:35. To put to a helping hand for raising our Brethren fallen into decay. Lev. 25:35. To lend, hoping for nothing again, &c. Luke 6:35.

Thus Christians ought to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate in all kinds to the outward necessities also: 1. First; Of those of the household of faith, the principal and most moving object to draw bounty from a truly charitable heart. Gal. 6:10. 2. In the next place; Of the lame: the blind, the sick, the aged, the trembling hand, or any that God hath made poor. 3. Thirdly; Of any whosoever, in a case of true necessity and extremity, whatsoever the party hath been before: For there thou relievest not his notoriousness, but his nature: though thou abhor the man for his former villainy; yet upon point of perishing, do good unto the common state of humanity.

Now of these two kinds; Fathers, Schoolmen, Casuists, all concur, and conclude, that spiritual alms caeteris paribus, as they say, are more excellent

and acceptable then corporal. Because, 1. The gift is more noble in its own nature. 2. The object more illustrious; Mans immortal soul. 3. The manner transcendent, being spiritual. 4. The charity more heavenly, which aims at our brothers endless salvation.

Let then every Christian conscionably and constantly endeavor to improve to the utmost upon all occasions, and seasonable offers; all his spiritual abilities, heavenly endowments, illuminations of learning, moral wisdom, providence, discretion, &c. all his skill in the Mystery of Christ; Word, and ways of God; all his experience in temptations, cases of conscience, spiritual distempers; his spirit of counsel, comfort, courage, or what other gift or grace soever he is enlightened, and endowed with; to relieve and refresh every way the souls, to procure and promote by all means, the eternal salvation of others.

Let the saving light of thy divine knowledge, spiritual wisdom, heavenly understanding, or what other excellencies, and perfections of the mind shining in thy soul; resemble in all fruitful improvement, and free communicating itself, that bountiful light in the body of the Sun. That 1. first illighteneth that goodly Creature wherein it originally dwells, and makes it the fairest and beautifullest thing in the world. 2. Next, it illuminates, and beautifies all the Orbs, and heavenly bodies about it. 3. Thirdly, by the projection of his beams, it begets all the beauty, glory, sweetness, we have here below on the earth. 4. Fourthly, it insinuates into every chink and cranny of the earth, and concurs to the making of those precious metals, which lie in her bowels. 5. Fifthly, his beams glide by the sides of the earth, and alighten even the opposite part of Heaven, with all those glorious Stars we see shining in the night. 6. Sixthly, it is so communicative, and greedy of doing good in its kind, that it strikes

thorough the firmament in the transparent parts, and seeks to bestow its brightness and beauty, even beyond the Heavens; and never restrains the free communication of its influence and glory, until it determine by natural and necessary expiration. Even so proportionably, let the fruitful light of thy divine knowledge, and heavenly counsel especially, be still working, shining, spreading to do all possible good. 1. Let it, First, make thine own soul all glorious within, fairly enlighten it with a humble reflection of self-knowledge, with purity, peace, and spiritual prudence, to guide constantly thine own feet, with all uprightness and patience, in the path that is called holy. 2. Secondly, Let it shine upon thy family, and those that are next about thee, with all seasonable instructions in convincing them of the truth, and goodness of the ways of God, either for their conversion, or inexcusableness. 3. Thirdly, let it be spent and employed upon thy neighbors, kindred, friends, acquaintance, visitants of all sorts, when they come towards thee; to warm their hearts all thou canst, with heavenly talk, and to win their loves to the life of grace. 4. Fourthly, let it insinuate also amongst strangers, and into other companies, upon which any warrantable Calling shall cast thee: and intimate unto them, especially if it find acceptance, and entertainment: That one thing is necessary: That all impenitents shall be certainly damned: That upon this moment dependeth eternity, &c. 5. Nay, let it offer itself with all meekness of wisdom, and patient discretion, even to opposites: and labor to conquer, if it be possible, the contrary minded; if their scornful carriage, and furious visible hate against the mystery of Christ, hath not set a brand of Dogs and Swine upon them. 6. Lastly, when upon all occasions, in all companies, by all means, it hath done all the good it can, yet let it still retain that constant property of all Heavenly Graces, an edge, and eagerness to do more good still, and

rather want matter and means, then readiness and resolution to propagate itself. And this way now may the poorest Christians be plentiful in works of mercy, and enrich the richest with spiritual alms. Which in the meantime may comfort the bountiful hearts of those who are true of heart; to whom the Lord out of his best wisdom, hath denied this earthly dross. But yet for all this, I would have you know, that I know none, not the poorest, excepted or exempted from seasonable ministering to the corporal necessities also of their brethren. We have a Precept from blessed Paul, Eph. 4:28. That we must work with our own hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth. And a noble president in the poor Widow, Mark. 12:44, who cast her two mites into the Treasury, which was all she had, even all her living. And if any here make a counterplea of their poverty, I would know if there be any so poor, which is not able to give a cup of cold water only; and yet this from a sincere heart, shall be both graciously accepted, and certainly rewarded, Matth. 10:42.

And therefore in a second place, I infinitely desire and entreat, (and this is that which in this point I would specially press and persuade with deepest impression) that everyone which hath given his name unto Christ, rich or poor, according to his power and proportion, would with singular care and conscience address himself to a fruitful, affectionate, and constant discharge of this much honored duty of alms-giving in this kind also, properly so called.

1. For we are bound to abound in this grace also. Therefore saith Paul, 2 Cor. 8:7. (As ye abound in everything, in faith, &c.) see that you abound in this grace also. There is no religious Professor of any reputation, upon good ground with the Church of God, but takes to heart, and desires to be exact in all commanded Christian duties every day, as Prayer, reading Scriptures,

&c. Upon thy secret then, and solitary revise and survey of the day past, call thyself to a strict account; as for others so concerning this duty also, of doing good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, Gal. 6:10. (for the discharge of this duty ought also to be daily; if thy ability will bear, and the necessities of the poor shall require: In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, Eccl. 11:6,2.) and let the sense and consciousness of any omission, neglect, or sloth in performing it, wound thy conscience also, humble thy soul, and quicken thine heart, with new life of resolution, and more lively endeavor to mend every morning; and perfume, as it were, thine every days walking with God, and this sweet smelling sacrifice also of mercifulness, bounty, and love, Phil. 4:18. Let this duty likewise with the rest, fall within the compass of thy severest search; penitent melting, renewed vows, in all thy more solemn self-examinations before the Sabbath, Sacraments, upon days of humiliation, &c. It is a profitable consideration, to think that a customary gross neglect of any one Christian duty, in its season, of which the conscience is, or may be convinced, may justly damp and dead the lightsome and fruitful performance of all the rest. For example: A willing known omission of private Prayer, or set reading the Word every day, may intercept and restrain the sweet influence of God's wonted refreshing mercy, and the fructifying beams of his pleased countenance from thine heart, in the use of all the other ordinances: an affected idleness, and dis-employment of any one grace in the soul, when seasonable occasion calleth for improvement, may blast the comfortable exercise and sensible comfort of all the rest. For example: If thou suffer thy patience ordinarily to sleep, when thy disavowed passions begin to break in upon thee like a torrent, and heat thine heart with

their swelling poison; or when some cross doth nettle thy desire of ease; no marvel though thou find a faintness also to seize upon thy faith, brotherly kindness, love, zeal, joy, and peace in believing, &c. Why then, when thou feelest thine inward man to begin to languish, and the whole body of Christianity, to grow, as it were, towards a consumption; amongst other inquisitions, why doest thou not also fear out of a godly jealousy, and labor to find out, whether the coldness of thy charity, and too much neglect of relieving the poor members of Jesus Christ, may occasion thy spiritual damp? It is the duty and property of every true-hearted Nathanael, as to have respect to all God's Commandments, Psal. 119:6, so, though they cannot in perfection and height, yet with truth and sincere endeavor, to have respect to a conscionable use of all the ordinances; to the performance of all holy duties, and exercise of all spiritual graces in their due seasons.

2. If the world hath locked up thine heart, and congealed the bowels of thy compassions towards the poor; let the blaze of thine outward profession shine never so fair, manage the heartless representations of external holiness never so demurely; keep the times and tasks of daily duties with never so great austerity; nay, though thou be able to amuse weaker Christians with some affected strains, and artificial fervency in Prayer (for by the mere power, or rather poison of hypocrisy and vain-glory, a man may pray sometimes to the admiration of others, especially less judicious, having cunningly collected the most moving passages for that purpose, from the best-gifted in that kind, and then giving an enforced action and life unto them in the delivery, as some in other cases act other men's inventions to the life.) I say, for all this, if the holy heat of brotherly love doth not warm thine heart, and upon occasion work affectionately and effectually, I dare say, thou art rotten at the heart-root, there is no true love of God in thee, no

grace, no hope of salvation. Let that terrible and flaming place against all covetous Pharisees, 1 John. 3:17, dissolve thy frozen-heartedness this way, and enlarge the bowels of pity towards the poor brethren of Christ Jesus, or else never look hereafter to look him in the face with comfort, or to find mercy at that Day. Mark it well, and meditate upon it: Whoso hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother hath need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

3. But above all other motives of mercifulness to the poor, which in the Book of God are very many, and most quickening; methinks that argument which Paul presseth to this purpose, 2 Cor. 8:9, should melt the most flinty heart: For ye know, saith he, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. Shall the only dear innocent Son of the All-powerful and ever-blessed Lord, and King of heaven and earth, disenrich, as it were, and disrobe his heavenly Highness of that Royalty and Majesty above, and become so poor, that whereas the Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; yet He not where to lay his head: that through his poverty, and pouring out his hearts blood, he might crown us with the inestimable riches of heavenly glory; with joys and pleasures more than the stars of the firmament, even forever and ever; and shall not we Worms and wretches, most unworthy the least bit of bread we put into our mouths, part with our superfluties, sometimes, both in respect of the necessity of nature, and exigency of estate, as the Schoolmen speak, to relieve the fainting soul of him for whom Christ died, and which he would take as done unto himself, Matth. 25:40, were it but a cup of cold water only? Mar. 9:41. Monstrous unthankful cruelty! Mercilessness, meriting without God's singular mercy,

and turning merciful ourselves, the fiercest flame in the dungeon of fire and brimstone.

4. The last and everlasting doom, at that great and dreadful Day, must pass upon us according to our carriage in this kind. Then shall there be a severe and sincere search and inquiry made after works, as the signs, evidences, and outward demonstrations of faith, and the root of grace in the heart: or of unbelief and rottenness at the heart-root; and consequently, as arguments of a righteous doom passed upon the Sheep and Goats. That glorious sentence of absolution; Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (which sounds out nothing but pleasures, joys, delights, glories, beauties, felicities, crowns, kingdoms, Angelical entertainments, beatifical-visions, spiritual ravishments, highest perfections, unutterable exultations of spirit, sweetest varieties, eternities) shall be pronounced upon the godly, according to the effects and fruits of their faith, to teach us in the meantime, what faith to trust unto, and rest upon for justification; even that which works by love: and at that day, to let all the world see, Angels, men and devils, that the kingdom of Heaven is given only to true-hearted Nathanael's, honest Professors, working believers. Now in the text for this purpose, there is singled out with special choice, an eminent Synecdochical instance, in one of the worthiest effects of faith, and noblest fruit of grace; even the point I now press, and labor to persuade: an open-hearted, real, fruitful bounty and love to God's people, and distressed members of Christ Jesus, for Christ's and their goodness sake. But that other doom of damnation, Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; which breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, stings and horrors, woe, and alas, flames of wrath, and the Worm that never dieth; trembling, and gnashing of teeth;

seas of vengeance, torments without end, and past imagination; shall pass upon the reprobates, for omission and neglect of this noble duty. For mercilessness to the poor members of Christ, unkindness to Christians, hardheartednesses towards the household of faith, is one of the rankest bitterest weeds, which grows out of a graceless heart; a clear pregnant evidence, that all was naught; and a notable remembrancer, as it were, to that high and everlasting Judge, that his blessed Spirit never dwelt there. How deeply then doth it concern every Christian to practice, and ply upon all opportunities, that most gainful art of alms-giving, which shall be so highly honored at that great Day, before that glorious universal presence; when every merciless man shall cry to that Rock, this mountain, to fall upon him, and hide him from the wrath of that just God; which will flame unquenchably and everlastingly against all those, who in this life have shut up their bowels of pity against His poor; and been dogged towards the dearly beloved of his Soul.

I know, Bellarmine labors to empoison this last passage with his false gloss, and Popish sophistry.

The causal conjunction For, Matth. 25:35, as he there cavils, intimates and implies works meritoriousness.

I say no. For, is there a Note of consequence and order: not of the cause, or any meritorious causality. The causal conjunction in Grammar doth indeed serve to show the reason of a former sentence: but it doth not necessarily show a reason from the cause of a thing: but many times also from the effect, and other kind of arguments. And Logic also reacheth, that there be diverse kinds of causes; principal, and less principal, &c.

Bellarmino replies: Doth not Christ there speak in the same manner, of the rewards of the godly, and of the punishments of the wicked? But no man

can say, that in these words, Go ye cursed, &c. that the cause is not rendered; but only the order and consequence implied: For the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23.

I answer: By the like fallacy also do the Popish Impostors plead for Justification by Works: Evil works damn, therefore good works save. Most falsely: as appears by that rule in the Topics: The consequence is of no validity, where there is not a perfect contrariety. Now between good and evil works, there is no perfect contrariety: for evil works are perfectly evil against the Law of God: but good works are not perfectly good according to the Law of God. By the same reason neither doth it follow: Eternal death is the wages of sin: therefore eternal life is the wages of good works.

5. If thou lay out to the poor cheerfully, seasonably, liberally, and yet but according to thy ability; thou shalt become (which besides the only course of growing comfortably rich, is also a Crown of infinite honor) Creditor even to thy Creator. He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again, Prov. 19:17. And in the mean time for repayment in due time, thou hast security infinitely above all exception, a Bill under his own hand, even his own blessed Book; wherein to fail, were to forfeit his Deity, if I may so speak, which is prodigious blasphemy to imagine. Now what a keen spur, and inflaming motive is this to be merciful: that we shall make God himself our Debtor, the ever springing Fountain of Bliss, and Lord of all goodness who doth all things like himself; omnipotently, bountifully, above all expectation, as becomes the mighty Sovereign of Heaven and Earth? If he work, he makes a world: If he be angry, he drowns the whole face of the Earth: If he love, the hearts-blood of his dearest Son is not too dear: If he stand upon his people's fide, he makes the Sun to stand still, and the Stars to fight: If he repay, he gives

his own All-sufficient Self, with the overflowing torrents of all pleasures and glory through all eternity.

6. Nay, the way to thrive and fare well in the World, if our most wise God think it fit, is to be compassionate this way. If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, saith the Prophet, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and break forth as the morning, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: and thy health shall spring forth speedily: the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered Garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. Thine horn shall be exalted with honor, and thou shalt not want. It will be then a profitable Inquisition amongst others; when a man finds himself to go backward in his estate, God's secret displeasure to blow upon his wealth, or afflict his body with painful diseases, &c. to examine well, whether he was not ordinarily wont rather to shut up his bowels of compassion, then to pour out his soul to the poor.

In a third place, take notice of the order of those objects, upon which thy Christian love is regularly and seasonably to be directed, and thy works of mercy discharged. The Catalogue of them runneth thus, as I conceive.

The public State wherein thou livest, and whereof thou art a member, challengeth the first place and precedency: If it lived a natural life, as thou doest, and thou haddest but one morsel of bread, which would only sustain the life of one of you; thou wert to perish, that it might flourish: for it is ever better, that one member should be cut off, then the whole body consumed. In the next place stands thyself; then thy wife; then thy parents; then thy children and family; then the household of faith; then thy natural kindred sprung lately from the same progenitors; then thy nearest neighbors and common friends; then thy countrymen; then strangers; then thine

enemies. For as thou wouldest be holden a child of the Highest, Luk. 6:35, thou must love thine enemies, and relieve them too, Prov. 25:21, Rom. 12:20. And because our naughty hearts do naturally rise, and swell against them with much enraged anger, disdain and contempt: ponder seriously upon these points, as counterpoisons to keep out these foul fiends, and preserve thine affections ever calm and unstained this way, and in a holy charitable temper and disposition to do them good.

1. First, he that becomes a bloody goad in thy side for thy blessed profession, and because thou followest goodness, is stark mad, and utterly besides himself in matter of salvation. He is as a dead man without all sense of spiritual self-murder: now it is extreme weakness, to even thy wit (as they say) with a Bedlam; and barbarous inhumanity, to wreak thy spite upon the dead, and basely to vex a liveliness carcass with braving insultations.

2. Thou shouldest most willfully forsake thine own mercy, and judge thyself more than infinitely unworthy of everlasting life, of any part or portion in the rich, glorious, eternal purchases of His meritorious death; if thou couldest not frankly forgive the greatest wrong of thy greatest enemy upon this ground only; because Jesus Christ hath freely poured out the dearest and warmest blood in his heart, to purchase for thee a worm, and wretch, and while thou wast yet his desperate enemy, pardon and salvation from the endless woes, and damnations of Hell.

3. Thirdly, the merciful patience of God himself in forbearing and bearing with infinite wrongs, and dishonors done unto his great Majesty every day, may be a matchless pattern and precedent to us woeful sinners, and worse than nothing, easily to pardon, and patiently to pass by all the provocations of our fellow creatures. How many blasphemous mouths are continually open against the Majesty of Heaven? With what damned oaths do they tear

and recrucify the precious body of his glorified Son, that sits at his own right hand? With what monstrous lies, and hateful slanders do they disgrace his Ambassadors, and vilify his chosen? Nay, where shall you find one of those, who have sincerely given their names unto Christ, whose neglected innocence is not trampled upon with the feet of pride and contempt; and whose guiltless fame lies not bleeding under the merciless strokes of intemperate tongues? How many sons and daughters of Belial do horribly, and with a high hand profane his Sabbaths, pollute his Sacraments, and turn their backs upon his Word? How many everywhere turn themselves into barrels and beasts, even into finks; nay, and sometimes into Sodomites, Hab. 2:15, by their swinish drunkenness? How many inclosing Nimrods, and Machiavellian Landlords, grind the faces of the poor, pluck off their skins, tear their flesh, break their bones, chop them in pieces as for the pot, and eat the flesh of God's people? In a word: How many incarnate devils walk up and down the Earth with hearts and hands as full as Hell, with all manner of mischief, lewdness and rebellion? And yet we see in the meantime, our gracious God bears patiently with these many and prodigious provocations. Though he be armed with his own irresistible omnipotency; have ever in a readiness all the Angels of Heaven, all the creatures upon Earth, all the Devils in Hell; nay, the very hands and consciences of such stubborn Rebels, to be the instruments and executioners of his just wrath upon their sin: yet doth he sweetly and fairly temper, and moderate his indignation, to see if the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering, will lead them to repentance. If Almighty God then, whose Majesty, blessed and glorious forever, is chiefly wronged, even by thy wrongs also, whose mildness and mercy is most shamefully abused with the horrible ingratitude, and intolerable contempt of such as hate to be

reformed, be so wonderfully patient; be not thou perverse: but rather heap coals of fire upon thine enemies head by kindness and love, that thou mayest be the charitable child of thy Father which is in Heaven; who suffers his rain to fall as well upon heaths and weeds, as upon flowers and fruit-trees.

4. By harboring heart-burning and angry thoughts in thy breast against those thou art tempted to hate; thou woefully hardenest thine own heart, which is an invaluable hurt, and deprivest thyself all the while thou art so dogged, of the blessing, benefit and comfort of all the ordinances; not only of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as ignorant people suppose, but also of Prayer, hearing the Word, singing of Psalms, conference, &c. 1 Tim. 2:8. Matth. 5:23,24, Jam. 1:20. Now what extreme madness is it, and Bedlam cruelty to thine own soul, by cherishing and keeping warm in thy bosom, such a base dunghill Viper, as revengeful spite, to cast the whole Frame of thy spiritual building into combustion, and to make God thine enemy, whereby thou hurtest thy self incomparably more, then thou canst ever possibly harm thine opposite?

5. A great deal of spiritual good doth by accident accrue to the Christian, by the malice of his enemies. The raging and railing enemies of God's people, serve as scullions to scour the Lord's Vessels of Honor; as Shepherds Dogs to hunt Christ's Sheep into order, and to purer pastures. 1. Their narrow watching over his ways to take him tripping, and prying into all passages of his life, upon purpose to disgrace his profession, should make him walk more precisely; and to hold a continual counter-watch over all his courses, that he give no just cause of offense, or any true matter of cavil or calumination. Whence it is, that David prayeth, Psa. 27:11. Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies, or those which observe me. 2.

Their hitting him in the teeth with the reproach of his former sins, should serve as a remembrancer unto him, to revise and renew more effectually and feelingly the great work of his first repentance; and to open afresh a fountain of penitent tears, or at least of new grief, he can grieve no more, for those particular sins, which any dogged Shimei, or slanderous Doeg brings into his mind upon such occasion. For it is the wont of ignorant enemies to God's holy ways, to charge upon his children, even with much bitterness and insultation, the faults and follies of their unregenerate time. Though God Almighty hath buried them forever in his mercy; yet they will never suffer them to die out of their malice. Though the blood of Christ hath covered them everlastingly from the sight of God, and search of Satan; yet their base and dunghill spite will ever and anon rake into them again to their disgrace. Thus were Austin and Beza, two great Lights of the Church in their times; and so are many other modern Worthies and Champions of Christ, daily dealt with. In which case learned Austin sweetly replied to the Donatists upbraiding him in such an unworthy fashion, with the impiety and impurity of his former life: Look, said he, how much they blame my fault, so much I commend and praise my Physician. And blessed Beza, to a fellow objecting unto him his youthful Poems; This man vexeth himself, because Christ hath vouchsafed me his Grace. And King David, with whom I should have begun; when Shimei railed upon him, and called him murderer; Let him alone, and let him curse: for the Lord hath bidden him. And yet besides this, I doubt not, but upon these occasions, David's heart bled afresh for his bloody sin; Augustine's, for his former heresy and sensuality; Beza's, for the vanity of his youth. 3. Their blazing abroad some special visible scandalous infirmity of his, and yet to which he is hailed, and as it were hurried by the impetuosity of some sudden passion, or violent temptation, and which is

one of his greatest griefs, and much matter of mourning in secret, should cause him to strengthen his watch, and improve all his spiritual valor against the assaults and insinuations of it. 4. Their malicious fattering upon him by false reports, those faults he yet never fell into, and yet to which he may be naturally much inclinable, should furnish him with more than ordinary care and courage, wisdom and watchfulness, to prevent the scandal of any such guiltiness. 5. Their slanderous laying to his charge, the things he never did, nor ever like to do; which is also a hellish humor, and devilish trick of profaneness against profession, should lead him to a strict inquiry into his heart and life, to find out some other sin, of which, upon that occasion, God would have him take notice, and mortify. It may be, thou art falsely charged with hypocrisy; look that thou be not earthly-minded; with pride, look that thou be not passionate; with worldliness, look that thou be not luke-warm, &c.

Thus have I somewhat enlightened, and insisted longer upon this point, purposely to stir up and quicken the spirits of all God's people, to a fruitful constant exercise of Christian charity, and bounty towards their poor brethren: to be as well plentiful in works of mercy, as precise in duties of piety: (God loves mercy as well as sacrifice; nay, in some cases, he prefers the other before this) to be so much more mindful and apprehensive of all opportunities, for a sincere discharge of this much urged and honored duty; as the wicked are malicious, and Pharisees forward, to charge upon them the contrary.

For you know, that carnal men are extremely greedy of casting aspersions and disgraces upon the innocence of religious Professors. No excellency of parts, singularity of worth, eminency of zeal, height of holiness, integrity and purity of life, can possibly privilege the best man that ever breathed the

life of grace in the bosom of the Church; from the scourge of tongues. The only Worthies upon earth, of whom the world was not worthy, were vexed with cruel mocking's: Paul, that precious Pillar of God's Church, was called, A pestilent fellow: nay, Christ Jesus himself, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, was said to have a Devil. And no marvel though they deal thus with his Children, that daily blaspheme the mighty Lord of heaven and earth, blessed forever. Daily experience tracts them in five pestilent passages this way: It is their wont, with all their cunning, and upon all occasions, 1. To lessen, disgrace, and disparage all they can, the graces, worth, and good parts of good men. 2. To report true things maliciously, and upon purpose to bring them into hatred and disestimation; so Doeg dealt with David. 3. To charge upon them, with much credulity and confidence, things they never did, never knew, never thought upon, or dreamed upon. 4. With whorish foreheads, and very impudency of hell, to fasten upon them by slanderous imputation, those sins and vices, in the contrary graces and virtues whereof, they are many times very eminent and remarkable. Elijah was slandered to be a troubler of the State; whereas in truth, he was the strongest Pillar of the kingdom, the very chariots and horsemen of Israel. 5. Nay, and which is yet more, to father upon them those faults, wherein themselves, hateful hypocrites! Are grossly and notoriously guilty. Tertullus tells Felix, that Paul was a very plague: for so is the Original: whereas not only Paul was one of the best men upon earth: but also himself, a cursed cutthroat of all goodness, and furious opposite to the glorious Gospel. His lewd Mistress charged Joseph with an assault upon her chastity; whereas not only he was most free that way, but also herself notoriously naught. Ahab called Elijah, a troubler of Israel, whereas not only that blessed Prophet was the very strength of that State; but also himself, by his

abominable covetous Idolatrous villainies, brought confusion and misery upon the whole kingdom.

Now out of this cunning malicious humor, carnal men lie at the catch, and are most eager to apprehend any shadow of occasion, or rather then fail, to make matter in their own spiteful brains, or take it up from the lying oracle of some frothy Ale-bench; whereby to stain the honor of Profession, with the unworthiest imputations of covetousness, hard-heartedness, unmercifulness; whereas themselves, mere men of this world, are as covetous as the skin will hold; fast nailed and glued unto the earth; never in their life lift up a joyful thought towards heaven, neither dare think seriously upon the world to come, without a great deal of slavish sadness and secret terror. And in their grasping of worldly goods, they care not a button for conscience, make no account at all of that most certain strict account at God's dreadful Tribunal: but only how to carry matters smoothly and plausibly in the eyes of men, and daub over their unjust dealings, with close conveyances, and tricks of wit.

I go not about here to Apologize for any uncharitable counterfeits, or those most odious outside-Christians, who put on the glory of an Angel in outward profession, that they may play the devils more unobservedly, in Usurious practices, oppressions, and unconscionable griping; wear a cloak of zeal, in conformity to the external forms of obedience to the first Table, upon purpose to cover their cruelty and inhumanity, in undermining and over-reaching their brethren, and to prey the more invisibly upon the simplicity of those whom they deceive by Seeming.

But yet I must tell you, that many times, even some of God's own best Children are full falsely and foully charged, by foul-mouthed worldlings themselves, with worldliness, covetousness, and imputations of that nature;

who by God's mercy, are so far from doting upon earth, and the fading glory thereof, that in their retired and advised thoughts, they would not lose the love and light of God's countenance, and testimony of a good conscience, to win the whole world: they would not exchange their comforts of godliness, and interest in a Crown of life, for ten thousand worlds, were they all turned into one invaluable Pearl: They feel themselves incomparably more comforted and kindly refreshed at the heart root, with one thought of heaven, and that endless joyful rest above, through all eternity, than with a world of earthly contemplations, though all composed of gold, pleasures, possessions, honors, Diadems, and all the glorious and most desirable treasures under the Sun. And who in respect of any unconscionableness, wrongs, injustice, or wicked ways of getting, might with sincerity of heart, proportionably to their states and callings, take up Samuel's protestation: Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before his Anointed: Whose Ox have I taken? Or whose Ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it. And sincere thoughts, resolutions, and protestations to this purpose, are clear evidences of unearthly-mindedness. Blessed Job doth pregnantly illustrate this point: His own friend chargeth him with inhumanity, covetousness, and cruelty; and thereupon inferreth that God's afflicting hand was heavy upon him: How much more think you, would the children of fools, and children of villains, viler than the earth, of whom he elsewhere complains, vex him slanderously? Is not thy wickedness great, saith Eliphaz, Job 22:5, &c. and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for naught, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. —

Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee. Whereas, in deed and truth, righteous Job was right nobly minded, tender-hearted, charitable, bountiful; as appears by his confident contestation to the contrary, Job 31:16, &c. If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail: or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering: If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my Sheep: if I have lift up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

Thus many times an imputation of worldliness, hardheartedness, unhospitality, &c. is laid upon God's children, without all cause, truth, or conscience; occasioned, as I conceive, (for I desire to discover unto you a depth of Satan's malice in this point,) partly from the parties accusing and slandering; partly from the parties accused and slandered.

Occasions ministered by profane men, are such as these:

1. First, They many times, when they find their consciences disquieted, their former courses controlled, their carnal humors crossed and contradicted, and themselves much diseased and disturbed in the secureful pursuit of their sensual pleasures, by the searching power of a conscionable Ministry: or when they plainly see that their unzealousness, luke-warmness, and formality in Religion, is censured and condemned by the forwardness, and zealous carriage and conversation of the Saints, they seek by all means, and labor might and main, to be meet with those Ministers which so vex them with their faithful Preaching; and those godly Christians, which

silently disgrace them with their gracious life and zealous exercise of Christianity. And therefore since many times, by God's goodness, they cannot find any visible or conspicuous matter or miscarriage, to charge them with truly; because the Saints lie not in gross and notorious sins, such as are swearing, drunkenness, lying, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking, idleness, the vanities of good-fellowship, &c. as themselves are wont; therefore, I say, they audaciously dive into their hearts with unhallowed censures, and lay unto their charges those invisible errors, which none can see but God's All-seeing Eye; and from which they cannot be cleared and acquit, but only by their own consciences, and his highest Tribunal. So that they take order that such imputations, though groundless and false; yet shall be sure to cleave to the good name of God's Children as certainly without redress or remedy, as they were devised without truth or charity. We may see this clearly in the present point, and the slander of hypocrisy, which is also the ordinary portion of the best, from men of the world. When profane opposites unto grace pry curiously into all the ways of God's Child, and can find nothing so faulty in his outward carriage, or reproveable in the ordinary course of his life, as they expect and desire; yet, left they should not show themselves the right children of Satan, the Accuser of the Brethren; they will be meddling one way or other; they will be nibbling at his good name, with some such speeches as these: Well, well, though he be an excellent Pulpit man, or a forward Professor, yet is he not so, and so? Is not he as well given unto, and greedy of the world as other men? When they hear other men commend his zeal and forwardness in Profession, these will be casting out such malicious doubts as these; Go too, my masters, I fear me all is not gold that glisters. Now how is it possible, or by what outward witnesses or compurgators may the Christian clear and discharge himself of

the imputations of worldliness and hypocrisy; since the one lies in the greedy affections of the mind, and the other lurks in the hidden corners of the heart? The purity and secrets of which, none can truly see and censure, but the Searcher of all hearts. Were a man accused of Adultery, Drunkenness, or such visible notoriousness, there might be means found for the manifestation of his innocence, by an exact scanning of time, place, and other circumstances. But this is the malicious and pestilent policy of Satan and his agents, when they see that the Saints, by the mercies of God, are free from those gross sins and notorious corruptions, which ordinarily reign in the children of darkness; they spitefully and cunningly lay unto their charge, imputations of such nature, from the which, though they be free, they cannot free themselves; and though they be clear, yet by reason of the malice of men, and invisibleness of the matter, it will never so appear; until the brightness of Christ's coming bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day; and of which they have none other ground in the world but this, because themselves are such. For put a profane worldling to prove the slander of worldliness and hypocrisy, which he puts upon the Christian, and he will be able to give you neither probable reason, nor wise word to purpose. And no marvel; for let the matter come to examining, and he shall find, that man which he so miscensures, to be, both faithful towards God, and conscionable towards man in all his ways: Not only innocent from oppression, corruption, wrongful dealings, and all unlawful ways of getting; but also in a special manner, with a most compassionate tenderness and love, right dearly affected to every true-hearted Nathanael, and the whole household of faith; (which no unregenerate man can possibly be; and which is the truest and noblest issue of sanctified charity) Nay, and besides, not any ways wanting (though it

stand not with the policy of profaneness to acknowledge it) in other charitable passages with spiritual discretion, to any truly distressed and miserable. And therefore there is no ground in the world left for such graceless lies, but only this: Carnal worldlings carve conditions to other men, out of the crookedness of their own nature; and cunningly put on the policy of Cutpurses; who in throngs at Fairs and markets, call upon others to beware of Cutpurses, that themselves being truly so, may with less suspicion and observation, dive into the pockets and purses of true men. Many there are, who being themselves truly worldly, and hypocrites indeed, call Christians so, that the mask of their villainous hypocrisies may be less marked; and themselves root in earthliness, until they reach the very bottom of hell, and no man regard them.

2. Secondly, if a man would be irreligious and unconscionable, it is a very easy thing to grow rich and into reputation with the world. If once he so far harden his heart, sear his conscience, and abandon the fear of God; that he resolves without remorse or shame, to defraud, dissemble, bribe, oppress, put to Usury, serve the time, make use of all men for his own turn, to cloak cruelty with conscience, pretend friendship, when he purposes to deal like a Turk: In a word, to plot and practice any lewd device or conscienceless course, for his advantage and rising; I do not see how such a fellow, in these griping days and times of confusion, should escape wealth, preferment, and respect in the world. And as it is easy for fellows of such ill conscience to thrive, and wicked men to grow wealthy; so methinks it is no great matter for such to make sometimes very goodly shows to the world, of bountifulness, and liberal profusions in feasts, entertainments, and larger doles to the poor, out of their superfluities, and heaps of ill-gotten goods. But herein (though it be well, that such goods do good unto some) they are

like unto thieves, who having robbed some rich Merchant, and taken hundreds from him, do scatter here and there by the way, some small pieces of silver to the poor. But this is a very poor mends for their merciless bloodshed and lawless robberies: This is, as they say, to rob Peter, and clothe Paul. Thus many great men keep great houses; and that is well: it is fit, Greatness should be accompanied with frankness; but alas, they grind the faces of the poor, and eat the flesh of God's people, to uphold their hospitality. So some Ministers heap living upon living, that so they may be enabled and furnished to purchase a great name by keeping a great house; but alas, they maintain their port and estate with the price of the precious blood of souls, and feed the greedy humor of their Pharisaical good-fellowship, with the fearful Gangrene of spiritual bloodshed. So others may be sometimes good unto the poor, and bountiful, as they say, in their own houses. but alas, they mar all their alms-giving, by unlawful getting; and turn that, which of itself is one of those sacrifices with which God is highly pleased, into abomination and sin unto themselves. A goodly matter, sure, to scatter here and there, now and then, some few drops of charitable devotions; whereas they have many huge and headlong torrents of gain and goods coming in daily; by oppression, violence, merciless enclosure, devouring widows houses, selling the poor for old shoes, racking's, enhancing's, griping's, usuries, immoderate takings, &c.

3. Thirdly, profane hypocrites are commonly Pharisaical in their alms-giving; affect, and pursue observation, singularity, vain-glorious ostentations in their contributions of charity. Their forefathers the Pharisees, when they gave their alms, made a Trumpet to be sounded before them; So these fellows, their followers, and succeeding Actors upon the same Stage of hypocrisy, lest their good deeds should die in the distribution, and be

obscurely buried in the bellies of the poor, they also get unto themselves a kind of talebearing Trumpeters too. They cunningly observe those opportunities, and single out such objects of their commiseration, and charitable devotions, whereby they may soonest, and most compendiously purchase a name of being good to the poor, and have their bountiful disposition blazed abroad, with most circumstances, best advantages, and partial enlargements. And thus it is a very easy thing for a Pharisee to be famous in this kind: for since he gives more for commendation, then for conscience; far more for praise amongst men, then out of a true-hearted compassion to the party; he dares dispense with a good conscience, and take liberty unto himself to place his good turns there, where there is best possibility of being most spoke of, and greatest hope of the richest return of applause and admiration. So that such an one ordinarily in his open-heartedness, and charitable distributions, hath a special eye and inclination to those that flatter him to his face; and are like to prove the loudest trumpets of his bountifulness abroad where they come. And he is so far from a right and seasonable apprehension of due circumstances, difference of parties, and those spiritual discretions, observable and necessary in such Christian exercises of love; and from the practice of the Apostles precept, Gal. 6:10. Do good unto all men, but especially to them which are of the household of faith: that he would rather afford his helping hand for the relief and raising up of a decayed goodfellow, then of a distressed Christian.

4. Fourthly, though carnal men be so covetous, and hold-fast of earthly contentment's, that they would rather lose their precious souls everlastingly, then leave them: yet if it might be, if they were possibly compatible, they would give anything in the world; both to serve and satisfy themselves in the ways of vanity, and after to save their souls in the day of wrath; both to

partake of the pleasures of the present, and to be secured from the vengeance that is to come. What would not the great Ones of the world give, to purchase two Heavens; one here, and another in the other world? What would not sensual worldlings part with, to redeem their sins, if they might have a dispensation to continue in sin? To live the life of vanity and lust, and after to die the death of the Righteous, and to receive their crown? In such cases in their sober considerations (so that their present temporal happiness sustain no hazard, or diminution; nor the delights of their sweet sin, any disturbance) they would not stand upon any worldly good; though it were a thousand Rams, or ten thousand Rivers of Oil: Nay, they would give their first-borne for their transgressions; even the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. Many there are which may be easily persuaded, and can well find in their hearts, to give anything towards the service of God, and salvation of their souls; save themselves; I mean, their hearts and affections, which the world and their darling-pleasures have principally possessed. Hence now it is, that many rich Ones and men of the world, being otherwise very guilty, and obnoxious in many respects, are very willing and well content many times to contribute bountifully to good uses, and to make good show of liberality towards the poor; that thereby less notice may be taken of their other notoriousness; and with some kind of hope, so to cover and conceal many gross corruptions from the wrath of God, and the worlds censure. For I know not how, there is an inbred opinion and conceit seated in the hearts of natural men and Papists, that alms-deeds, and such works of charity make amends for other miscarriages, though foul, and scandalous; and be pleasing to Almighty God, though the parties from whence they proceed, be polluted with secret impurities and reigning sins. Since therefore they persuade their hearts, that charitable devotions and

distributions have some power, as it were, somewhat to appease divine wrath, and to satisfy for other sinful exorbitancies and aberrations; and see plainly that it is the most compendious way to purchase a great deal of credit in these cold and compassionless times; and the only object to divert the eyes of the greater from the observation of their other faults: I say therefore, they open their hearts the more liberally, and enlarge their bowels to greater bountifulness; which otherwise their covetousness would keep shut. Thus, many, to diminish the horror and markableness of their unmortified lusts and open lewdness, exercise a good art without a good heart.

Occasions from the parties slandered, are such as these:

1. Christians, of all men in the world, are the special marks and ordinary objects, upon which are discharged and exercised all kinds of malice and mischief: not only the empoisoned arrows of spiteful tongues, the sword of Tyrants, the flames of cruelty; but also many lesser and less marked vexations, as wrongs, oppressions, mercilessness, and many unconscionable usages. Profane men being seated in high rooms, or besotted with the worlds favors and flatteries, do many times, out of their pride and malice, very contemptuously roll down as from aloft, indignities, insolencies, many hard and heavy inhumanities, and injustices upon God's Children, as a number of neglected underlings. So that as the Prophet speaks; He that refraineth from evil, maketh himself a prey. He that by the mercies of God breaks out of the bonds of Satan, into the blessings and blessed estate of grace, shall forever after, not only be furiously persecuted by the rage of hell, and malice of profaneness; but also lie more open to the insultations, wrongs and oppressions of his adversaries, and treacherous insinuations of false friends. Since therefore Christians, by reason of their patience, the

worlds discountenance, disaffection of great Ones, their own resolute disallowance of all indirect courses, of any base, and unconscionable advantage, are many times mightily hacked upon, and oppressed by the greedy policies, expilations, and encroachments of boisterous worldlings, and causeless opposites: and not only so, but sometimes also cunningly, and insensibly preyed upon even by professed friends: (For there are a kind of men, which putting on for the time, the glory of an Angel, mix themselves with God's people, and press into their company, only because they see and find them to be such, as from whom, by reason of the singleness and simplicity of their hearts, the unsuspectingness of their charity, the equity and conscionableness of their dealing, in these cozening, supplanting, and undermining days, they may the most fairly and easily suck out the greatest advantage:) I say therefore, since God's children are most subject both to the wrongs of open enemies, and supplantation of seeming friends, they are many times not so enabled in outward things, or strong in their worldly state, to make such a flourish in dispersing their superfluities, as those men which get without conscience, and disburse without spiritual discretion.

2. A Christian dare not for his life so far enlarge his conscience, as to gain by any unwarrantable means, or unconscionable course, as oppression, corruption, cozening, violence, lying, unjust dealing, &c. and therefore in this griping, and greedy age, in the highest noontide of iniquity, or rather darkest midnight of the works of darkness (though outward want be infinitely countervailed with inward comfort) he doth not commonly come to that excess, and superfluity of temporal things, which many times worldlings with wider consciences, easily and immeasurably engross. The largest consciences in these last and worst days, are the only devourers, and swallowers down of worldly wealth. A religious resolution to save a man's

soul, (more is the pity!) is many times a notable curb to keep him from growing rich, and into reputation with the world. God's blessings even in temporal things, I deny not, are sometimes very plentifully upon the right owners, God's own children; and both heavenly and earthly happiness have been wreathed together by the merciful hand of God, and set upon their heads: but if we look upon the common courses holden in the world that way; and in all forecast of carnal reason, he is likeliest to grow rich and rise, who is resolved to damn his soul. In ordinary conceit of profane policy, and apprehensions of worldly wisdom, Joseph mist a great deal of earthly contentment, and in a precise humor put from him much possibility of preferment, by not yielding to the impure solicitations of his wanton Mistress. Micaiah, in not iumping with the four hundred false prophets, in their lying flattery to please the two Kings: Jonathan, in not joining with his father Saul, for the prevention and confusion of David. Had a sensual worldling been in Joseph's case, an unsanctified Minister in Micaiah's, an ambitious Absalom in Jonathan's, assuredly they had all yielded to the several temptations. The conscience of an unregenerate man will marvelously stretch itself, and grant out very large dispensations, especially when any special glory, profit or pleasure of the world is in pursuit and possibility. It was so in all ages, and at this day many a good man, many times, of great spirit, worth, and understanding, sits obscurely in a very low room, and is kept under in mean estate by the worlds oppressions, because he dare not displease God, or enlarge his conscience proportionably to the vast gulf of the times corruptions. This is the very true reason why folly is set in so great excellency, and sincerity seated in the low place: why so many servants are on horseback, and so many Princes walking as servants on the ground. Since therefore the Christian is happily restrained by the

checks and tenderness of a good conscience, from all unwarrantable means, and unconscionable courses of getting; though his bowels be most compassionate, his heart heated with true charity, and his desires enlarged to do good unto all, and all the good he can; yet he is many times kept short, by reason of his short pittance, from those outward real expressions, and effects of charity, to which his tender-hearted zealous affection is inwardly, truly inflamed; and from those more bountiful effusions and liberalities, which rich worldlings may, out of the tithe, nay, the thousandth part of their ill-gotten goods, plentifully perform.

3. Thirdly, Christians know themselves bound in conscience to a careful provision for their Families; to diligence, and faithfulness in their callings; from all unnecessary expenses, and the prodigal effusions of good-fellowship, from ambitious affectation of applause, and vain-glory, by Pharisaical ostentations: and therefore to the greedy observation of carnal eyes, and undiscerning spirits of unregeneration, which want no malice to mistake, or cunning to apprehend any shadow or show of any seeming advantage for the disgrace of good men; they seem, and are miscensured to hold upon the world, to feed upon earthly-mindedness, not to be so open-hearted, good-natured, and charitably affected as other good fellows, as they call them, which make no such profession of purity, and preciseness. And this misconceit of God's children is made more passable, by the profane plausibleness of vainglorious worldlings. It is sooner, and more easily entertained; because unconscionable men take any compendious course of growing rich; which their covetous humor suggests unto them; and by allowance and exercise of unlawful means of getting, bring in many times great store of wealth with much ease; and therefore need not toil so in their trades, or follow the businesses of their proper callings with such

attention and exactness. And if at any time they resolve to be more bountiful and liberal, they commonly make choice of those times, places, persons, and other circumstances, whereby (as they think) their good natures may be most noted, and their names grow greatest for extraordinary kindness and good-fellowship.

4. The Christian doth incline, and enlarge the bowels of his special compassion towards the necessities of the Saints, and conveys the noblest issues, and effects of his inflamed charity, into the bosom of God's child. And indeed he is so pressed by the commandment; Do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of Faith. And there was never more need: For howsoever worldlings may be bountiful one to another, and exercise many mutual offices of kindness and carnal love among themselves; yet for the most part, they are very uncompassionate, straitlaced and hard-hearted toward distressed Christians. Nay, ordinarily, they are rather ready to combine and contribute their malice's, policies and purses, to throw them down lower into outward want and misery; then to put to their helping hands for their recovery, comfort, and enlargement; though it were in their sufferings for God's cause, and testimony of a good conscience. So that, as Christian distresses are the principal object of the Christians compassion and bounty: So worldlings are only heartily kind and openhearted to the men of the World. Now, that you may rightly understand the point, you must conceive, that the good deeds and commendable parts of an unregenerate man, are ever carried more boisterously and with greater noise, are entertained of the World with a far more general applause and notice, then the godly actions and divine Graces of God's children. The World deals with men in this case, saith a worthy Divine, as it deals with Witches and Physicians; the Witch, though she fail in twenty things, yet if

she do someone thing aright, though it be but small, the world loveth, and commendeth her for a good and wise woman. But the Physician, if he work six hundred cures; yet if, through the waywardness of his Patient, or for the punishment of his Patients sin, he fail but in one, that one fail doth more turn to his discredit, then his manifold, goodly and notable cures do get him praise. In this manner, saith he, doth the world deal with men: If a worldly man have but an outward gift of strength, of speech, or of comeliness, he shall be greatly praised, and counted a goodly man, though he be an Idolater, or a profane person; and though he swim and flow over in all manner of vices: But let the child of God be truly zealous in true Religion, let him be honest and holy in conversation, yet if there be but one infirmity in him, or if he have through weakness fallen into someone sin, that one infirmity against which he striveth, or that one sin for which he is grieved, shall drown all the Graces of God in him, be they never so great, and the World will account him a most wicked man. It is just so in this particular: A profane man many times by someone special markable act of bounty and contribution, or for some few seasonable ostentations of good fellowship, and kind nature, gets the start and precedency in opinion and reputation with the World, from many a gracious Christian; who bears in his bosom a constant habitual tender-heartedness to all true necessities, and as occasion shall exact, opens his heart, his hands, and his house most joyfully and compassionately, to refresh and comfort the needful exigence of any true-hearted Nathanael. And the Worldling doth the rather, and more easily carry it, because in the dispersing of his doles and largesse's, he many times makes choice of such tale-bearing Trumpeters, who knowing his Pharisaical humor, are likeliest to blaze his bounty most abroad in the World; whereas the Christian singles out specially for such purposes the distressed Saints,

from whom he expects no more but a secret and silent blessing of God in their hearts, for his goodness conveyed unto them by such an Instrument.

Thus I have discovered unto you a mystery of Satan's malice, and the cunning despitefulness of profane men, who labor many times out of pure malice, and willful mistaking's, to fasten upon God's children, imputations of worldliness, hard-heartedness, cruel dealing, and such like.

The occasions, as I have largely told you, are such as these.

Upon the Worldlings part:

1. His hearty desire to disgrace Christians, whom, since by the Grace of God, he finds free from open gross sins, presently grows to such speeches as these: Why, but are not such and such given to the world, as well as other men? &c.

2. He dare enlarge his conscience to courses of unlawful getting; and therefore it is more easy for him to open his hand now and then to some boisterous flourishes of liberal-mindedness; especially since thereby he hopes to repair his reputation for his other indirections.

3. He is commonly Pharisaical in an ambitious exercise, and more public acting of his deeds of charity; and therefore whatsoever he doth that way, is for the most part carried abroad with special and remarkable noise and notice.

4. He would gladly still the crying's of his guilty conscience, and seem to himself to redeem the sins of his soul, by a more bountiful disbursement of outward things.

Upon the Christians part:

1. He is most subject to wrongs and weakening's in his outward state; both by the violent encroachments of professed opposites, and covetous insinuations of false friends.

2. He dare not for any gold, or good, undertake any unwarrantable and scandalous course of gaining.

3. He finds himself bound in conscience, to faithful diligence in his Calling, and Christian provision for his Family.

4. He spends the best and most of his bounty and charity upon the household of Faith.

But in this point, as I said before, I apologize for none but those, whom their own consciences, and the merciful Tribunal of God do acquit. Let Christians look unto it; the World is very watchful, and greedy with great curiosity and cunning, to apprehend the least shadow of any occasions, for the blaspheming of the ways of God, and the disgracing of his children. And therefore ever and anon you shall hear the spirit of profaneness crying out, and complaining: You see these fellows, which make such show of forwardness and purity, what they are: none so covetous; none so uncharitable; none so unmerciful, and cruel in their dealings as they; none so hard-hearted to the poor, &c. Now although such bitter speeches as these, are often the mere evaporations of pure malice, and flow from no other ground in the world, but only from the gall of graceless men: yet let all those which truly fear God, take heed how they give just occasion thereunto. Assuredly it were far better for him, whosoever he be, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the Sea; then that by the continuance of his cruel and unconscionable dealings in the world, he should minister just occasion to any railing Rabshakeh, to revile the servants of the Living God, or to slander that holy Profession. Me thinks, this one preservative should be powerful enough, to keep the heart of every Christian from doting upon the world, or suffering it to be possessed thereof. It is this: Every Christian by a fruitful faith, may be

assured of a Crown of life, either by assurance of adherence, or evidence; or both. Now if but once a day he should take a serious survey of the glory, everlastingness, and unutterable excellencies of that Immortal Crown; me thinks it were able so to dull the edge, and dissolve the drossiness of all earthly desires; that they should never more be able to heat, or harden his heart with immoderate or delightful repose upon the vexing vanities of any worldly thing. I say it again; Me thinks, if a man do but once a day cast the eye of his Faith upon that Crown of life; which our dear Redeemer holds for us in his hand, ready to set upon our heads when we shall be dissolved from this vale of tears; the goodly glory thereof should be able to dispel these mists of fading vanities, and hurtful fumes of honors, riches, and earthly pleasures; which this great dunghill of the World, heated by the fire of men's inordinate lusts, doth evaporate and interpose betwixt the sight of their souls, and the bliss of Heaven.

Worldliness, earthly-mindedness, covetousness, doth infinitely unbecome an heir of Heaven. Be fired then, and frighted from all inclinations and bent that way, by such considerations as these:

1. It is a most base and dunghill distemper, which eats up, not only all Religion and honesty, manliness and reason, natural affection and discretion; but even humanity also and friendliness: So that a man had almost as well converse with a Cannibal for any ingenuous and conscionable dealing, as with a truly covetous caitiff.

2. Shall the immortal comprehensiveness of the divine and excellent Soul, which is able to peruse and pass over Heaven and Earth in a moment; is capable of the mystery of Christ, and the eternal vision of God; be unworthily confined to a piece of ground, a heap of white and yellow clay? A vile imprisonment, and inexpressible wrong to so noble a Nature!

3. It is a devouring Gangrene, an insatiable Wolf; which the more it hath, ever the more hungry it is. It is as fire which increaseth by that nourishment which is given unto it. The barren womb, the Horseleeches daughter, the grave is nothing to this gulf, and it holds the heart continually upon the rack of self-vexation and carking: For three ravenous Vultures seize upon it successively, and gnaw in their turns with incredible torment; care, fear, grief; in getting, keeping, leaving.

4. All God's blessed ones in all ages, embracing the promises of life in the arms of their faith, willingly confessed themselves to be pilgrims and strangers here upon earth, looking for a City in another Country, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And good reason, besides Religion, that they should grow into such resolutions; for all things here below are full of transitoriness, mortality and change; Vanity of vanities, all is vanity: but above, is constancy and eternity of all excellencies, perfections and pleasures. Besides, that thou shalt have there a Body brighter than the Sun, a Soul replenished with unutterable delights, the glorious company of Christ Jesus, Angels, Saints, Christian Friends; the vision and fruition of God, blessed forever, wherein consists the Crown and Life of all celestial joys; I say, to say nothing of these, but even the space of one foot upon the pavement of the Empyrean Heaven, is incomparably more worth, then the great Body of the whole Earth, were it all turned into Gold, and beset with as many invaluable Pearls, as it is now with piles of Grass.

5. Nature, saith a mere Moralist, seemeth in the first birth of Gold, and womb from whence it proceedeth, after a sort to have presaged the misery of those that are in love with it. For it hath so ordered the matter, that in those Countries where it groweth, there grows with it neither Grass, nor

Plant, nor anything, that is worth anything: as giving us to understand thereby, that in those minds where the desire of this metal grows, there cannot remain so much as a spark of true honor and virtue.

6. God is not only a Father, but also All-sufficient: Why shouldst thou then fear want, that fearest him? He provides every day for millions of Fowls; Will He then be wanting to a Man, to a Christian, to His own Child? Christ himself pressing reasons to this purpose, tells us, that our heavenly Father clothes the Lily above Solomon's Royalty, and feeds the Fowls of the air, which neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. What a cursed veil then of base distrust darkens thine hard heart, that thou shouldst either cark, or deal unconscionably?

7. One two hours fire will disperse, and consume the hoard of a hundred years heaping together. And where art thou then? Thine heart then is seized upon at once, with unutterable anguish, and the very horror of Hell, for the loss of thine Heaven upon Earth; and with cries of blood, and furies of conscience, for thy covetous, cruel, usurious, injurious courses for many years. Thus many a worldling spins a fair thread to strangle himself both temporally and eternally.

8. The Sun is a very glorious and contented creature; and yet it harbors no golden Mine in its fair and refulgent Body. The blessed Angels are full of all felicities; and yet they have no silver; they want no happiness, and yet they want gold. Heaven, the chief and Royal Seat of Blessedness, is empty of these treasures, there grow no Minerals; the Veine of silver and gold is not to be found there. The Son of God himself, infinitely the most happy Creature, I speak in respect of his Humanity, that ever issued out of the hands of God, were there any such great matter, or excellency in riches, had never said of himself: The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the Air have

necks: but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. Could a Bearing-mantle of cloth of gold, an impearled Cradle, delicious fare every day, thousands a year, make a man truly happy; the right and Royal Heir of all things, would never have chosen a Stable for his Birth-chamber, A Manger for his Cradle, Barley bread for the entertainment of his Followers, a less fixed habitation for himself, then the poorest Bird, &c.

9. The Sun and Moon are far more glistering and glorious, then the burnished gold of Ophir: and the poorest man hath as large a prospect and part in them, as the vastest Encloser, or most griping Usurer: but much more benefit by them, then the rich worldlings by their golden heaps. For he is comfortably warmed, and refreshed with the influence of their heat and light: but they, if the Devil did not hoodwink them, might see every time they look thereon, that rust cleaving to their unrighteous Mammon, which hereafter shall eat their flesh as it were fire.

10. One Star doth incomparably exceed in beauty and worth a golden earth: and if thou be truly God's, and have thy foot already upon the Moon, as thou oughtest, thou shalt hereafter tread everlastingly upon thousands of them. Disdain then in the meantime, to let thy heavenly spirit dote upon those baser hordes of shining earth, which are making themselves wings to fly away, as an Eagle toward Heaven: for riches are like transitory streams, which posting by the side of a City, no man can stay. Were it not a senseless and brainless endeavor and expectation, for a Town to hope and assay to keep with them the hasty current of a mighty River, which none of an hundred Towns before could hold? And doest thou expect any constancy of abode with thee of that thick clay, which hath passed through so many hands before? Neither is it so much thine, as the Worlds. A Dog follows two men: it is not known to whom he belongs, until they be parted. Upon the

arrest of death, thy wealth leaves thee everlastingly, and cleaves unto the World; and therefore it was worldly wealth.

11. Moderation and conscionableness in getting, may, by the mercy of God, draw from His bountiful hand, a more special extraordinary gracious providence and blessing upon posterity: whereas contrary carriage may bring a heavy curse. The Prophet, who was husband to her who came crying to Elisha for comfort, 2 King. 4:1, did fear God, saith the Text. Whereby he was happily restrained from all wicked ways of gaining, and growing into wealth. Durst he have enlarged his conscience proportionably to the corruptions of those times, and shifted his Sails according to the sitting of every wind, as pillow-sowers under men's elbows, and preachers of smooth things are wont; I see no reason, but he might have been advanced to Jezebels table, as well as the four hundred flattering false temporizing prophets; and by serving the time also, have risen, and enriched both himself and his. But this honest man would rather die in debt, leave his wife and children in extreme poverty, and expose his two sons as bondmen to the Creditor; then to put his hand to any manner of iniquity in getting, or to raise an outward rotten estate, upon the ruins and bloody desolations of men's precious souls. And what follows? Rather than the wife and children of such a man shall want, God will have the Prophet do a Miracle for their supply and comfort, as appears in the Story. But now on the other side, Gehazi in the very following Chapter, 2 King. 5, will needs by Bribing make himself and his children forever. And what is the issue? He pulls thereby a horrible curse both upon himself and his posterity: The Leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. Ver. 27. Thou haddest better then, leave a wallet to thy child, to go from door to door; then a cursed hoard of ill-gotten goods.

12. But above all, to curb thine heart from covetousness, meditate much upon such places as these: Matth. 6:25, to the end. Phil. 4:6, 1 Tim. 6:9,10, Jam. 5:1-3, Prov. 23:5, 1 Pet. 5:7.

VI. Lastly, concerning a right and comfortable managing of our spiritual estate, a point of deepest consideration, and highest consequence; take notice of two extremes, two dangerous Rocks, upon which the soul may run, and split itself spiritually.

1. The one is a proud overprizing of our own graces, with a conceited overweening self-admiration.

2. The other, a dejected, distrustful undervaluing of God's mercies, the promises of life, and those graces which we possess in truth and holy desire; though not in that degree we desire.

I. Before I can seasonably and preparedly fall upon the first, to instruct punctually, and arm the Christian against it, with whom I principally deal in this whole discourse: give me leave to discover a mystery of spiritual Self-deceit; by which Satan sits presumptuously in the darkened minds, and deluded imaginations of those, whom with his cunning and malice he hoodwinks, and hardens to their endless confusion.

Many thousands even under the means, and in this glorious mid-day of the Gospel, are groundlessly conceited, that they are right, when as in truth and trial, they are rotten at the heart root; that they are sure of Heaven, when they are as yet most certainly of the family of Hell. Neither is this any strange thing: so deluded were the foolish Virgins, Matth. 25:11,12, and so are all such outside Christians: Those, Luk. 13:26,27, and so are all, who stand only on the work wrought, and bare task of religious duties, without the power of inward holiness: The young man in the Gospel, Matth. 19:20, with that generation, Prov. 30:12. And so are all such civil Justiciaries: the

proud Pharisee, Luk. 18:11,12, who was so confident, that he gave God thanks for his blessed condition; when he was but yet a cursed unjustified wretch; and so are all of his formal strain: Those, John. 8:39 who held themselves to be Abraham's children; whereas Christ tells them, the Devil was their father, ver. 44. And so are all those, who build only upon the outward privileges of Christianity, without personal purity: Paul in the state of Pharisaism; and so are all those, who wandering out of the path which is called holy, swell with a proud opinionativeness and furious zeal, above the banks of God's blessed Book, and bounds of all holy discretion, and will needs so are aloft on waxen wings of self-conceitedness, and superficialness, to strange and uncouth heights of excellent fancies, without having ever laid sound foundation in true humiliation for sin, and in self-denial: the Church of Laodicea, Rev. 3:17, and all such lukewarm Professors. Hence we have a taste, what a world of people are woefully blindfolded by the Prince of this World; and through the insinuating imposture, and unexamined delusion of spiritual self-deceit, are put into a fools paradise, of being already safe and secure for Heaven; whereas as yet they are mere strangers to the Mystery of Christ, and the New creation; and shall be certainly damned, if they so continue: for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God, saith Christ to the self-justifying Pharisees, Luk. 16:15.

And yet some sorts of unregenerate men are here to be excepted from this general deluge of self-delusion; who lie not so grossly enwrapped in the juggling mists of the devils Angelical glory. Not that they are better than those deluded Ones, or have any good assurance upon sound undeceiving grounds of their spiritual well-being, (for such an humble true persuasion, is confined only to true Converts) but it happens by accident, that by reason

either of the extreme villainy of their lives, or desperate positions of their Antichristian doctrine, they see clear reasons stand like an armed man in their convinced consciences; that if they continue in their forlorn courses, they cannot possibly be saved; or fain reasons, and coin distinctions, upon purpose to exclude all from any infallible certainty of salvation. They are such as these:

1. Grosse hypocrites, who deceive others, but not their own hearts, as Judas.

2. Those notorious Ones; who in their cold blood will not stick to confess, that they are yet quite wrong, and utterly wide from the way that is called Holy; and will sometimes set a time when they purpose to cast off forever, and cashier their sensual courses, and swaggering company, and begin at length to look towards Heaven, and learn the Art of saving their souls; and in the mean time they make a covenant with death, and are at an agreement with Hell, Isa. 28:15.

3. Other sons of Belial; whose hearts by their obstinate wallowing in the work of darkness, hardening their foreheads by their impudent villainies against the face of Heaven; and with their own soul-murdering hands, and horrible cruelty pressing a hot iron upon their consciences, are grown at length into such a prodigious Rock; that though they know themselves to be posting towards the pit of Hell, yet they are senseless, and fearless of that fiery dungeon.

4. Those, who being convinced of the truth, and goodness of the Gospel, and approving in their judgment and conscience, the power and practice of it, as the only way to everlasting bliss; but then reflecting their carnal eyes upon the furious enticing's of their darling sins, and by the touchstone of sense comparing the pleasures of these, which they presently grasp, with the

spiritual strictness, and promised joys of the other; stand infinitely unresolved, and desperately obstinate, by no means, upon no terms to leave the present sensual joys of their earthly paradise: but rather choose even in their cold blood, to turn their backs upon God blessed forever, his holy truth, service, servants, and all the glory in the World to come. And then by good consequence, having thus subscribed and sealed by an irrevocable resolution, and sworn vassalage to be Satan's forever, and forever to stand on his side, receive into their hearts an inward certificate, that they are utterly forsaken of God, and shall be certainly damned. Whereupon they turn even young devils; (they shall have their perfection in hell) boil inwardly with much malicious blasphemous rage against God, whom they have renounced; persecute with implacable spite, the blessed Gospel and glorious ways of Christ, which they have so desperately rejected; and gnash the teeth, like so many already hellish Fiends, against all those happy Ones, whom they see walk with constancy and comfort in that holy way, to innumerable joys; which they with certain knowledge of their heart, and against the clear light of their conscience, have wretchedly abandoned forever: And so sin against the holy Ghost.

5. The Papists also, as upon the unblessed grounds of their Antichristian doctrine, cannot possibly build any true persuasion of being in God's favor; so they are bound out by the tenor of their heretical Tenet, from thinking it lawful to entertain any unwavering certainty that way.

6. Nay further, some out of a Pharisaical pretense of humility and modesty; but in truth, from the secret suggestion of a guilty conscience, which ministers unto them more than matter enough of true and just doubting, are notable wranglers for Papistical doubting.

Thus you see, some there are also, who do not assure themselves of future happiness, either upon true or false grounds. Yet I am persuaded, the greatest part of those who live within the sound of the Gospel, are ordinarily confident without cause, and secure of their salvation; when as in truth and trial They have no surer interest or better claim to the kingdom of heaven, then the foolish Virgins, and the rest of that deluded rank, which I mentioned a little before. Let a Minister of some great Congregation, wherein there are very few Professors, which is no hard thing to find, and where there is no profession, especially the Gospel being peaceably preached, there can ordinarily be no power of Christianity; shows there may be, indeed without substance; but not the power of godliness, without visible appearance; as appears in the Preparatives: I say, let him interrogate, and ask the rest of his people one after another, be they hundreds or thousands, what conceits they hold of themselves for the world to come? What they think will become of them after this life? What their present judgment is of their spiritual estate? And I think he shall scarce meet with any, who will not in some kind or other discover some groundless confidence of his wellbeing that way. Their answer ordinarily would be to this purpose: We thank God, we have a good faith to Godwards: We have believed in Christ, ever since we may remember: We hope God will be merciful; though we be not Scripture-men, nor so forward as others, or such followers of Sermons, &c. yet we look to be saved as well as the best of them all, &c. Upon the matter, and in sum: We doubt not but we shall go to heaven. And if their Minister should reply: But I pray you tell me, you that are so confident, Do you believe, and repent, and make conscience of all our ways, &c? Yea, would they say, with all our hearts, else it were pity we should live. When as, God knows, it is neither so nor so: their poor frozen

flinty hearts, never yet melted before the Ministry of the Word; were never truly touched with remorse for their innumerable sins; never warmed with any saving work of the holy Ghost; but ever thus far, mere strangers to the mystery of Christ. (Those that are true of heart, are not wont to contest for the integrity, but ever to complain of the naughtiness and untowardness of their hearts.) And therefore if they become not new men in the meantime, the veil of their self-delusion and vain confidence, will most certainly at last be frightened and fired from their blinded minds, with that terrible and dreadful doom; Depart from me, I know you not. Chrysostom in one of his homilies, to his people of Antioch, teaching them not to trust in multitude, speaks thus unto them: How many do you think, are there in our city, which be in the state of salvation? It will vex, which I am about to speak; yet I will speak it: There cannot amongst so many thousands, a hundred be found, which are in that state: Nay, and I doubt whether all those. Now had this good Father at the same time demanded of those many thousands besides, what they conceived of themselves for salvation: do you not think he would have found them all well conceited of themselves? Would not they with much bitterness and heat, have exagitated his censure, as too peremptory and unmerciful, and been ready to retort: Howsoever you dote upon the Disciples you draw after you, and only approve and applaud the Joanites: (for so they were called, because his name was John:) yet we hope to do as well as they, and come to heaven as soon as the precisest of those you have in so high esteem.

CHAP. VII. – Spiritual Estate, Avoiding Two Extremes.

HERE THEN LET ME a little enlighten and open in a word, as I promised, the Mystery of this spiritual Self-deceit.

For which purpose know, that Satan first discovers in our corrupt nature and crooked dispositions, a very pregnant ground, whereupon to practice this notable imposture, I mean, the original poison of natural presumption, whereby we are all apt to be fearless and senseless of our present spiritual misery; and hand over-head to catch at any vain shadow of counterfeit confidence for our future welfare: Secondly, he observes in the party he intends to delude, the most plausible matter, and self-pleasing apprehensions, which may make the fittest medium to mis-infer a false conclusion for his spiritual safety: Lastly, by some flashes of his personated Angelical light, he sets upon it the glimmering flourish of a presumptuous impression, and so seals up the deceived soul, with the spirit of slumber and groundless security.

Now the insufficient matter, rotten grounds, false mediums, as we call them in the Schools, which Satan by his Sophistry doth cunningly and

cruelly abuse, to cast many thousands into a pleasing golden dream of imaginary spiritual safety, and Self-deceit; and into a fools Paradise of a soul-cozening conclusion, are such as these:

1. Measuring a man's self by himself: himself perhaps formerly, grossly ignorant, and notoriously lewd: by himself now grown civil, and somewhat illuminated with divine knowledge: but yet neither holy, nor ever truly humbled.

2. Comparing himself with others, who are Satan's outrageous revelers, in respect of his moral moderation, and something more civil carriage.

3. Arguing God's special love and saving favor, from his outward prosperous state, and blessings in temporal things. So the fattening Ox might think with himself, I shall surely live; because I feed in this green rich Pasture.

4. Concluding from crosses, that he is a son, and not a bastard; that he hath his punishment here, as they say, &c. whereas they are but the just effects of God's secret curse, blowing upon his counsels, dealings, and undertakings; for his covetousness, unconscionableness, hatred to be reformed; and except he truly turn in the meantime, will prove the very foretastes, and pieces, as it were, of hellish torments.

5. Sometimes, nothing but self-love serves the devils turn, to lock up a carnal heart in this security and causeless confidence; especially in some extremely ignorant people; who easily believe that which they desire: and have no other ground of their going to heaven, but because they would have it so.

6. Common conceits and corrupt Notions, compounded of gross ignorance, and Popish folly; that a man's good meanings, and good doings, as they ignorantly speak; nay, and as some have said, his day-labor will help

him to heaven, and serve his turn for salvation. And if any of these sottish cavilers be questioned, and challenged for the unsoundness of his spiritual state; he will be ready, with absurd rudeness and irksome clamor, to break out into such brags as these: What tell you me of these high points, or trouble me with this new learning? I was never asked thus much before in all my life, and yet the time is to come that ever our Parson threatened to keep me from the Communion: I do no man wrong: I pay every man his own: I am neither thief, nor drunkard, nor whoremaster: I live peaceably amongst my neighbors, &c. I know as much as the Preacher can tell me, though he preach out his heart: That I must love God above all, and my neighbor as myself; and that I hope I do, &c. whereas poor blinded soul! He is as full of foolish pride, ignorance, profaneness, and impenitence, as the skin will hold, and is smoothly carried hoodwinked by the devil to hell, without all noise, or any contradiction.

7. The work of God's restraining Spirit: Which sometimes by its power and terror, keeps in, and confines a man's inward corruption, that it breaks not out into such open outrages and outward villainies, as in some other wicked Ones: And that for the good and quiet of his own people, or some other secret ends seen, and seeming good to his heavenly Highness. Now this restraint, by the delusion of the devil, and deceit of a man's own heart, may be apprehended as a great conquest over corruption, and so a conversion thence vainly concluded.

8. Education in a religious family, thus: Some in such a place, being only outwardly warmed with the heat of holy exercises about them; and by custom, and for company, grown conformable to religious duties with some contentment; depart thence with a vainglorious conceit and unsound persuasion, that they are also of the right stamp, because they were so long

amongst spiritual tools; and at the fire, which might indeed have truly melted their yet too frozen and flinty hearts. Put a Sow into a green meadow, and she will keep herself as fair as the Sheep: but let her break out, and she will wallow again in the mire as filthily as before: so it is with too many such.

9. Much knowledge, and noble defense of that blessed Orthodox Truth which we profess, without a kindly saving impression of goodness and grace in the heart. Many great men, and great Scholars, more is the pity, are empoisoned with this conceit; they are self-conceited, that if they be zealous Patrons, and protectors of true Religion, they are safe enough for salvation; though, alas! They be mere strangers, nay, too many times opposites to the power and practice thereof.

10. The benefit of a better nature, and a constitution not so precipitant and prone to some corruptions. For instance: A man hereby may see others lie remorselessly in the most abominable beastly sin of drunkenness; when his heart riseth against such swinish filth: others transported with furious and fiery passions, when as his milder temper knows no such rage: others hunting after high rooms, with the hazard of their souls, and certain ship wreck of a good conscience; when as his solitary disposition affects retiredness and home. Thus when it is many times the infirmity, impotency, or deformity of nature, or at best, but the natural moderation of a better complexion, that dis-inclines and disables him from the acting of some grosser evils; he fondly conceives, that it is the power and sovereignty of grace, which makes the difference betwixt himself and other sons of Belial, who by natures impetuosity, are more prone and provoked thereunto.

11. The heartless effects of slavish fear, which sometimes will curb some kind of men from committing some notorious sins, and spur them forward

to the outward performance of some holy duties; yet they, not marking the motives, manner, or end; nor taking to heart at all the gross exorbitancy of any of them, but only eying the work wrought; may causelessly be too well conceited of themselves, and so cozen their own souls. But let no truehearted Nathanael here mistake: I know some of God's dearest Children, who make conscience of all sin, and to please God in all things, yet in darkness of their melancholy, or heat of temptation, may fear all is naught with them; because they fear they do all for slavish fear. But their fears, jealousies, hearty complaints, and holy desires to the contrary, may minister comfort enough, if they will be counseled, until they come out of temptation.

12. Even the blessed Word of God, misunderstood, and wretchedly abused to the devils advantage, and damnation of men's souls. For instance: Some suck poison out of that heavenly flower, Rom. 10:13. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved: collecting, and concluding thence, that if they can say, Lord, Lord, though they be mere strangers to the life of Grace; yet they shall live forever. But such should know, that everyone who in that saving sense calleth upon the Name of the Lord, must depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2:19, and must savingly believe, Rom. 10:14. Now such a fruitful faith ever purifies the heart, Acts 15:9, and is inseparably attended with a glorious train of heavenly graces, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, 2 Pet. 1:5-7. I have heard with mine own ears, that place, Rom. 12:1, sottishly perverted, to the maintenance of lukewarmness, coldness in Religion, and good-fellowship: When purity in heart, holiness of life, universal obedience, and other requisites to salvation have been pressed; it hath been replied in good earnest: I pray you, why are you so hot? What needs all this? What

needs so much ado, when a reasonable thing will serve the turn? Is it not said, which is your reasonable service? Now I often wonder what such men as these mean, who are Proctors and pleaders for this Laodicean reserved mediocrity and politic moderation in matters of heaven? What worship and service they would proportion out for the All-powerful God? Doth any man of brain conceive, that the mighty dreadful Lord, and Judge of all the world, who offers unto us by the Ministry, in the meantime, his own dear Son, with all the rich purchases of his hearts blood; and would give us the full fruition of himself hereafter, with all the glory and endless felicities above, will be bobbed off (if I may so speak) with an heartless formal outwardness, with a cold rotten carcass of religion? It cannot be: He is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and truth. If men will needs harden themselves in bitterness and blasphemies, against the purity and power of godliness; if they will still browbeat and bear down their brethren, for their zeal and fervency in the affairs of God; let them tear those sacred leaves out of God's blessed Book, that sparkle out unto us the holy fire of forwardness and heat; and press upon us punctually power, spirit, and quickening in heavenly businesses, and the services of our most bountiful and ever-blessed God. See Luke 13:24, Rom. 12:11, Eph. 5:15, Matth. 5:29,30, and 11:12, 1 Cor. 9:24, 1 Thes. 5:22, Phil. 1:10.

13. A bare speculative opposition, and verbal contradiction to the corruptions of the times and controverted ceremonies. For I doubt there are some, who seeing some of God's dearest Children, both godly Ministers, and other Christians, only out of tenderness of conscience, stand unresolved about these latter; are too well persuaded of themselves spiritually, for a mere boisterous master like partaking with them in that particular; when as they have no part at all in their holy graces and humble sanctification.

14. An over-heady furious zeal in will-worship, superstitious forms, and self-conceited services: As in Paul, yet unconverted, and many ignorant Papists, not so exactly acquainted with Antichristian School-points: in the pursuit of some religious distempers and spiritual exorbitancies, bred only in some fantastical brain, given over, for horrible pride, to strong delusion; yet tendered with many holy pretenses, and representations of highest perfection; nay, sometimes seconded with strange revelations and raptures, the mere juggling's of the devils Angelical glory in melancholic, or otherwise deluded imaginations: and so Satan can put a Familist or Anabaptist even into a trance of imaginary joy.

15. Serious meditation upon that quickening passage of Christ's holy Sermon, of the fewness of those which shall be saved, should properly and naturally keen our desires and endeavors to a singular constant contention after an holy strictness, forwardness, and fruitfulness in every good work, and all the ways of God; that we might be sure to be in the number of those few: yet by accident it may confirm some kind of men not so notorious, under the means, yet unconverted, in a false persuasion of their good estate to Godward, and that thus: Some there may be of larger capacity, and more understanding, who out of a contemplation of that great universal deluge of Turkism, Paganism, Judaism, and Infidelity, which at this day doth fearfully overflow the face of the Earth; scarce the fifth part whereof now professeth Christ: and also out of a nearer consideration of the state of Christendom, wherein Popery, that foul sink and Hydra of all heresies; besides too many other exorbitant giddy deviations from the sobriety and analogy of true Religion, and the path which is truly called Holy, mightily prevail, and damnably empoison innumerable souls: and which is yet more, feeling so many amongst those who profess Christ truly, I mean, in respect of

doctrine, notoriously lewd, and profanely naught; so many Atheists, Drunkards, Scorners, Swearers, Worldlings, &c. And then after this prospect and survey abroad, reflecting a partial eye upon themselves, and their own ways; and finding themselves in the bosom of the Church, and civil men; think verily out of their extreme blindness and spiritual folly, that Heaven would be unfurnished, and unfilled, if they should be excluded; and that it were a disparagement to the mercies of God, to rank and arraign them amongst Turks and Pagans at that last great Day. But if to their civil honesty, they add a formal profession; why, then they think, they have a great deal of wrong, if salvation be denied them: then already in conceit they knock and bounce, as it were, at the Gates of heaven for entrance, with great boldness and confidence like the foolish Virgins, Matth. 25:11, and those, Matth. 7:22, and with the Pharisee, give God thanks for their good estate to Himward. Alas, poor souls! Let no man deceive you with vain words, neither delude your own souls with idle fancies. To whomsoever the glorious Gospel of Christ shines savingly, and breathes spiritual life, they must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world. Mere civil honesty never brought any unto Heaven. And every lukewarm Professor shall certainly be spewed out of the mouth of Christ.

16. But amongst all the unsound grounds, insufficient matter, and false mediums, upon which Satan, and the deceitful heart labor to erect their rotten buildings of vain hopes in the credulous conceits of those, who are carried hoodwinked towards Hell; all which in the time of trial, and under the tempest of God's visiting wrath, will prove but a Spiders web. They shall lean upon their house, but it shall not stand; they shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. I say, amongst them all, there is not any that doth set on

the counterfeit seal of this false persuasion with more peremptoriousness and confidence, then a concurrence of those excellencies, perfections, endowments incident to Temporaries, and attainable in the state of unregeneration; which I have touched in my Discourse of true happiness, and may be collected from such places as these, Matth. 27:3,4, Mark. 6:20, Luk. 13:26, and 18:11,12, Matth. 12:53, and 25:1, &c. Heb. 6:4,5, 2 Pet. 2:20,22.

Now these and the like, are the unsound, seeming, and insufficient grounds whereupon the Devil works; and doth easily, by the aide of natural presumption, and his own Angelical flashes, insinuate, and infer his soul-cozening conclusions, and cunningly infuse the poison of spiritual self-deceit thus, or in the like manner: (I will give instance only in the last; he is wont also proportionably from the rest, to conclude such groundless confidence, and false persuasions of a good estate towards God.)

Whosoever doth with some penitent remorse tremble under the revenging wrath of God for sin, and out of that horror confesseth and maketh restitution: (and yet so did Judas, Matth. 27.) Whosoever reverenceth a godly Minister, hears him gladly, and doth many things after his doctrine: (and yet so did Herod, Mark. 6:20.) Whosoever doth hold conformity in profession with the best, &c. (and yet so did the foolish Virgins, Matth. 25.) Whosoever is a hearer of the Word, and that with quickness, and receives it with joy: (and yet so doth the stony ground, Matth. 13:20.) Whosoever is able to disclaim gross sins, gives every man his due, fasteth, prayeth, and giveth alms: (and yet so did the Pharisee, Luk. 18:11,12. Matth. 6:1.) Whosoever is enlightened, tastes of the heavenly gift, &c. (and yet such may afterward fall away irrecoverably, Heb. 6. &c.) is sure enough to be saved at last.

But I, may the deluded Pharisee, and formal Professor say, find and feel all, or most, or many of these in myself: (For what any unregenerate man hath heretofore attained, it is not impossible, but that any now, or hereafter, may attain the same.)

Therefore doth he conclude falsely out of Satan's Sophistry, I am safe enough for salvation.

And in all this, Satan, lest he should be wanting to his, labors by a lying resemblance, to imitate the work of the holy Ghost, in the hearts of the faithful. For that which the Devil, putting on the glory of an Angel of light, puts upon his followers in this kind falsely and groundlessly; That the blessed Spirit performs to those, who are true of heart truly, and upon good ground.

For it is not the universality, and excellency of all natural, civil, merely moral, political, and learned endowments, and sufficiency's: but above and besides all these, a supernatural, heavenly, and special work of the Spirit, sanctifying then all for God's glorious service. It is not a bare task of holy duties, religious exercises, presence at the ordinances outwardly performed: but the soul, as it were, of saving grace, animating and informing them with spiritual life, reverent heartiness, and fruitful improvement. It is not the glistering blaze of a visible forward profession of Religion: but the power of godliness, and sincere practice of works of justice, mercy and truth. It is not a general participation of the Spirit, the Spirit only of illumination, or largest speculative comprehensions of sacred knowledge: but a humble, fruitful, experimental skill, and dexterity in the mystery of Christ, and of walking humbly with our God; which doth soundly comfort the heart of a man spiritually wise, about assurance of his happy estate to Godward. And therefore the true Christian, when he would refresh his spirits with the

sweet contemplation of his spiritual safety, and comfortable being in a gracious state, causeth his sincere conscience to answer in truth to such like interrogatories, as those which I have proposed for trial in such a case, in my *Discourse of true happiness*, pg. 85. &c. Review the place, and ponder well upon them. He ordinarily hath recourse unto, and runs over in his mind with a humble ravishing commemoration, the heavenly footsteps, and mighty works of the holy Ghost in his conversion; special watchfulness over his ways; sincere-heartedness, holy strictness, and sanctified singularities in his conversation; which as they are peculiar to God's people, so are the mysteries and strange things to the best unregenerate man; and that thus, or in the like manner:

Blessed be God, saith he within himself, that ever it was so, yet so it was: The holy Ministry of the Word sanctified, and guided particularly for that purpose by the finger of God, happily seized upon me, while I did yet abide in the arms of darkness, and the Devils snares, a most polluted, carnal, abominable wretch; and effectually exercised its saving power upon my soul, both by the workings of the Law, and of the Gospel. It was first as a hammer to my heart, and broke it in pieces. By a terrible cutting piercing power, it struck a shaking and trembling into the very center of my soul by this double effect.

1. It first opened the book of my conscience, wherein I read with a most heavy heart, ready to fall asunder, even like drops of water, for horror of the sight; the execrable abominations of my youth; the innumerable swarms of lewd and lawless thoughts, that all my life long had stained mine inward parts with strange pollutions; the continual wicked walking of my tongue; the cursed profanation of God's blessed Sabbaths, Sacraments, and all the means of salvation I ever meddled with. In a word, all the hells, sinks and

Sodom's of lusts and sin, of vanities and villainies I had remorselessly wallowed in ever since I was borne, I say, I looked upon all these engraven by God's angry hand upon the face of my conscience, in bloody and burning lines. 2. Whereupon in a second place, it opened upon me the Armory of God's flaming wrath, and fiery indignations; nay, and the very mouth of hell, ready to empty themselves, and execute their utmost upon mine amazed, and guilty soul.

In these restless, and raging perplexities, wherewith my poor soul was extremely scorched, and parched with penitent pain; His wrath, who is a consuming fire, wringing my very heart-strings with unspeakable anguish; Jesus Christ blessed forever, was lifted up unto me in the Gospel, as an Antitype to the erecting of the brazen Serpent in the Wilderness. In whom dying and bleeding upon the Cross, I beheld an infinite treasury of mercy and love; a boundless and bottomless sea of tender-heartedness, and pity; a whole heaven of sweetness, peace and spiritual pleasures. Whereupon there sprung up and was enkindled in mine heart, an extreme thirst, ardent desires, vehement longings after that sovereign saving blood, which alone could ease my grieved soul, and turn my foulest sins into the whitest snow. So that in the case I then was, had I had in full taste, and sole command, the pleasures, profits, joys and glory of many worlds, willingly would I have parted with them all: and had I had a thousand lives, freely would I have laid them all down; nay, with all mine heart would I have been content to have lain for a season in the very flames of Hell, to have had the present horror of my confounded spirit comforted from heaven; and my spiritual thirst allayed and a little cooled, but with one drop of Christ's precious blood; the darkness, desolations of my woeful heart refreshed, and revived, but with the least glimpse of God's favorable countenance. The edge, and

eagerness of which inflamed affections, made me cast about with infinite care how to compass so dear a comfort. Then came into my mind, (the holy Spirit being my merciful Remembrancer,) those many melting compassionate invitations, more warming, and welcome to my heavy heart, then many golden worlds, more delicious than delight itself, Matth. 11:28, Rev. 21:6, John. 7:37, Isa. 55:1, and 57:15,16, Ezek. 18:30-32, and 33:11. So that at last, O blessed work of faith! Staying myself, and resting my sinking soul upon the Rock of eternity, and the impregnable truth of these sweetest promises, sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus, and as sure as God himself, I threw myself into the merciful and meritorious arms of my crucified Lord; with this resolution, and reply to all terrors and temptations to the contrary; that if I must needs be cast away, they shall tear, and rent me from the tender bowels of God's dearest compassions, upon which I have cast myself: If they will have me to hell, they shall pull and hale me from the bleeding wounds of my blessed Redeemer, to which my soul is fled. Whereupon I found, and felt (and I bless God infinitely, and will through all eternity, that ever it was so,) conveyed, and derived upon me from my blessed Jesus, the wellspring of immortality and life, a quickening influence of his mighty Spirit, and heavenly vigor of saving grace, whereby I became a new man, quite changed, new created. By this vital moving, and incubation, as it were, of the Spirit of Christ upon the face of my soul, all things became new: mine heart, affections, thoughts, words, actions, delights, desires, sorrows, society, &c. Old things passed away, behold, all things become new. And I am sure my change is sound, and saving; for it is not 1. A mere moral change from notoriousness, to civility, and no further. 2. Nor a formal change only, which adds to moral honesty, outward profession, and outside conformity to the ordinances, holy exercises, most

duties of Religion; and no more. 3. Nor merely mental. I mean it thus: (for I know, true repentance is called change of mind, in another sense.) When the understanding only is enlightened with divine knowledge, gilded over, as it were, with the dazzling splendor of general graces, not without some speculative flashes of fleeting joy, swimming in the brain indeed, but not rooted in the heart. 4. Not temporary only, such as that, Matth. 12:43, 2 Pet. 2:20,22, when a man discontinues, and surceases from the outward practice, perhaps of all gross sins for a time: out of terror; sudden fright from some Son of thunder; or upon trial, whether by his own strength, he be able to endure, and digest a divorce from his darling pleasure; and the holy ways of those who walk towards heaven, without too much discontentment; (for without too sore a crush to his carnal heart, he could be content to look after a crown of life, and I [blame] him not.) Or for some other by-end. But because his heart was not honest and good, neither did the Word take a humble root in it, nor himself resolve upon a sincere, general and constant self-denial at first, he falls again upon his former vomit, and again wallows in the mire of his sensual pleasures, with more rage and resolution then before. 5. Nor partial, where there may be an outward reformation in the most things; but yet there is still retained a secret resolved reservation of an impenitent, entire enjoyment of all the delights, and full sweetness of the bosom sin; which is utterly incompatible, and cannot possibly consist with a truly religious and regenerate state. I say, my change (I only, and infinitely magnify, admire, and adore the free grace and love of my most holy, and ever blessed God for it) was not only moral, formal, mental, temporary, or partial, in the sense I have said: but universal, both in respect of the subject and object, as they say; without all reservations, exceptions, sensual distinctions, Pharisaical imposture, partialities, hypocrisies, self-delusion.

For my teachers have told me by the touchstone of his pure and holy truth: That every true change is of the whole man, from the whole service of Satan, to the living God, in sincere obedience to his whole Law, in the whole course of our lives. That it is discernible, and differenced from all partial, insufficient, hollow, half-conversions: By 1. Integrity of change: I mean, in all parts and powers of spirit, soul and body: in the understanding, judgment, memory, conscience: in the will, affections, desires, thoughts: in the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet: for even as they were members of the body before employed wholly for Satan and sensuality; so now are they also become instruments of righteousness unto God. God begets no monsters, as they say: a child new-borne hath all the parts of a man, though not the perfection of his growth: So a new-borne babe in Christ is thoroughly, and universally changed; though not yet a perfect man in Christ.

2. Sincerity of change: as well in heart, and inwards parts, as in life and outward carriage. O Jerusalem, saith the Prophet, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? No external privileges of Religion, though never so glorious; no exactness of the work wrought; no Pharisaical forms of devotion; no outward behavior, be it never so blameless; no cost or contributions in the service of God, will serve the turn, without sincerity of heart. Though a man should come before the Lord with thousands of Rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil: should he give his first-borne for his transgression, the fruit of his body, for the sin of his soul: should he bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned: were he able to comprehend within his brain the whole Book of God, and with the largeness of his understanding devour all that holy sense: should he eat, and drink up at the Lord's Table, all the sanctified Bread and Wine; were he

plunged over head and ears in the Water of Baptism: nay, if it were possible, washed outwardly from top to toe in the precious blood of Christ; yet all this were more then all in vain, and utterly unavailable, without uprightness of the heart, and purity in the inward parts. 3. Spiritual growth. Unregenerate men at the best, grow but in the generalities, flourishes, devout representations, and temporary forwardness of formal Christianity. Which is like the growth of corn on the house top; or the seed springing out of the stony ground; but the honest and good heart bringeth forth fruit with patience. Spiritual stunting's there may be, and standings at a stay for a time. But as good corn in a good soil being refreshed after a binding drought with a ground-shower, springs up faster, and more freshly: so it is with the sound hearted Christian, after a damp in grace; to which he may sometimes be subject. For being roused and awaked out of such a state, by the quickening voice of a piercing ministry; the cutting sting of a heavy cross, or some other special hand of God, he lays hold upon the Kingdom of Christ with more holy violence then before, and labors afterward, by the help of God, to repair his former spiritual decay, with double diligence in watchfulness, zeal, and heavenly-mindedness. Progress in Christianity is resembled to the thriving of a Child; which may fall into sickness; but it many times proves a growing ague: To a man in a race, who may stumble, and fall; but after his rising takes surer footing, and runs faster: To the ascending of the Sun towards midday, which may be overcast with a cloud; but after he hath recovered a clear sky, shines more brightly and sweetly. 4. Self-denial. He that would soundly comfort his conscience with the true testimony of a true Convert, must at the first giving his name unto Christ, and upon his proclaiming War, and entering the lists against Satan, sound with a sincere heart, the depth of that fundamental principle of Christianity,

and Christ's own holy rule: If any man shall come after me, let him deny himself, &c. As soon as he resigns up himself to this Royal service under the colors of the Lord Jesus, he must presently in our Saviors sense, make over all his interest in liberty, life, livelihood, all earthly pleasures and treasures, without any reservation, or he will certainly faint, and fall off in the day of battle. The necessity of this rule and resolution, is intimated unto us in two Parables, Luk. 14:28,31. A man that will build, must count the cost beforehand, and make sure of means to defray the charge. Otherwise to begin, and not able to make an end; were but to lay a ground-work of his disgrace and scorn, in the loss of his cost and pains. A Prince which would wisely make War, must first have a true trial of his own, and dexterity to discover his enemy's strength; otherwise to bid him battle, were but to incense him more, and thrust a title into his hands, to defeat him of all he hath. He that seriously sets himself to seek God in truth, and to save his soul indeed, must cast up his reckonings beforehand, what will be required at his hands, and consult with his own heart, whether willing to forgo all such contentment's, hopes, pleasures, preferments, worldly comforts which are incompatible with a good conscience, and the path that is called holy: and to endure all those troubles; and indignities from the angry world, which ordinarily are wont to crown the heads of all Christ's Soldiers; else most certainly he will shrink in the wetting. He must resolve by the invincible nobleness of his Christian courage, to digest the hate and opposition of dearest friends, nearest kindred; the railings, and reproaches of men most abject and contemptible, in respect of those whom they revile: he must be content to become the drunkards song, table-talk to those that sit in the gate, and the byword of basest men, viler then the earth, &c. In a word, he must

prize, and prefer his sweetest Savior, His truth, cause and service infinitely before the whole world.

Now besides my blessed change thus qualified, and this glorious work of the Holy Ghost upon my soul; by the help of God, I have stood at the staves end with the darling pleasure and minion delight of my former damned time ever since I was new borne: I have ever since made conscience of all sin, and to perform all holy duties: I have had respect to all God's Commandments, and all his Ordinances: I have loved dearly my blessed Lord, and all things that belong unto him; His Titles, Attributes, creatures, works of Justice and Mercy; His Word, Sacraments, Sabbaths, Ministers, Services, Children, Presence, Corrections, Coming: I have since delighted in the Saints, the only excellent Ones upon earth, whom I heartily hated before: I have daily, with as great earnestness and fervency, as my poor dull heart could possibly, complained, and cried unto my God in Prayer against mine own sins, passionate distempers, rebellious risings, the malice of Satan, the allurements of the world, corruptions of the times, the cruelties of strange injections and horrible temptations, my many and often failings, frailties, and imperfections. Upon due and impartial examination, I have happily rid mine hands of all that consuming pelf, which any way crept into mine estate, by wicked and wrongful means in the days of mine iniquity. (For scarce any man in the state of nature, but deals falsely in one kind or other.) I have desired and endeavored to adorn my profession, as well with works of justice, mercy, and truth, as by the outward acts of piety: Herein I have exercised myself, to have always a good conscience, void of offense, toward God and toward man, &c.

And in all these passages and particulars, both of my conversion and conversation, had I only reposed upon the outward act, and rested in the

work wrought, I had utterly fainted, and been quite undone in the day of adversity. But truth of heart was the touchstone, and sincerity is the sinew of all my assurance and comfort this way.

I have been, I confess, yet full sore against my will, and the hearty desire of my soul, haunted, and hindered in passing thorough the pangs of my new birth, and managing my Christian businesses; with the violent intrusion, and insinuating mixture of many imperfections, distractions, temptations, wants, weaknesses, infirmities, and failings; privy pride, secret hypocrisy, distrusts, and deadness of mine own naughty heart. I was much wanting, by reason of the natural rebellion of mine hard heart, to those workings of the Law and Gospel mentioned before. I have come far short of that sorrow for sin, which I desired, and of that heavenly-mindedness in performing holy duties which was required. But then I have from time to time grieved, and groaned under those too many frailties and defects, as under a heavy burden. I have many a time bitterly bewailed them in secret: they have made me walk more humbly before my God, and towards men. I have continually complained heartily against them at the Throne of Grace. I have sincerely desired, and endeavored after all those means which might restrain and mortify them, and made conscience to discover and decline their unwelcome insinuations, and so I have gone on still in the holy Path, with sincerity of heart, and in obedience unto God; still upholding mine heart with consideration of the sweet and merciful disposition of my dearest heavenly Father, whoever, if the heart be upright and truly humble, takes the will for the deed; and accepts us according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not. And therefore I am most sure (neither, by the help of God, shall all the devils in hell drive me from this hold) that they are all buried forever in the righteous and meritorious blood

of my blessed Savior. And so I hold up my head still against all contradiction of carnal reason, natural distrust, Satan's cruel suggestions; being well assured: That hearty humiliation, and grieving under weakness in well-doing, is as true a fruit of sanctification, and mark of true conversion; as spiritual ability to do well. It is not so much the muchness and quantity, as the truth of grace, not so much the exactness of the outward act in performing holy duties, as sincerity of heart, which qualifies a broken heart, for comfort in the promises of life, and assurance of God's love. Though I know well, there was never any who tasted truly grace, but he sincerely thirsted and endeavored after more. Never did any man well in the worship and services of God, who did not bewail his wants and failings therein, and truly desire and labor to do better. It is the property of Pharisees and formal professors, to conceive that they are spiritually rich enough already, and have need of nothing: but the better the Christian is, the more sensible he is, and heartily complaining of his spiritual poverty, naughty heart, and manifold imperfections.

Here now then may we see in this Discourse of the true Convert, comforting himself in the point of his spiritual estate; other kind of stuff, sincere matter, sounder grounds, more special workings of the holy Ghost; then any one of the fore-mentioned deluded Ones was ever practically and experimentally acquainted with. Neither is this all. The true Christian hath yet more noble, immediate, and demonstrative evidences, to strengthen his heart in the assurance of God's everlasting love unto him through Christ, and present possession of his favor. For (with submission to better judgments, and the spirit of the Prophets) I conceive that a sanctified man may be assured of his spiritual safety, and sound estate to Godwards diverse ways.

1. By the evidence and single act of internal Vision. We have received, saith the Apostle, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, that is to say, say our Countrymen of Reims, Christ's Incarnation, Passion, presence in the Sacrament, and the incomprehensible joys of heaven. But it is clear in the Text, that the Apostle speaks of all the gifts generally that are given us of God, whither serveth the argument of comparison, that as a man's spirit teacheth him to know all his thoughts that are in him, at the least, in some measure: so also the Spirit of God teacheth the Believes to know all that God hath given them. He doth not say, that we know God's gifts; but that we know the gifts that God hath given unto us. See further to this point and purpose, 1. John. 5:13, 2 Tim. 1:12. By a secret and sacred irradiation of the Spirit of faith, the sanctified soul is ascertained of its personal and particular dependence, and reliance upon the promises of life, and God's mercies through Christ, by which it knows it hath eternal life, John. 3:36.

As certainly as he that hath a corporal eye, knoweth that he sees: so certainly, he that is illuminated with the light of faith, knows that he believes. The glorious splendor of such an orient, and heavenly Jewel cannot but show itself, and shine clearly to the heart wherein it dwells. Like a bright lamp set up in the soul, it doth not only manifest other things; but also itself appeareth by its own light: when I see and rely upon a man promising me this, or that, I know I see, and rely upon him: shall I by faith behold my blessed Redeemer, lifted up as an Antitype to the brazen Serpent, for the everlasting cure of my wounded conscience, and rest upon him, and yet know no such thing.

Hear how clear learned Austin is for this internal vision. Our faith, saith he, is conspicuous to our own mind. Faith itself is seen in the mind,

although that which is believed by faith, is invisible. A man holds his faith by most certain knowledge, and plain attestation of conscience. Every man sees his Faith in himself, &c. Even Durand, taking upon him to expound one of those passages in the fore-cited place of Austin, tells us: That he which hath faith, is so certain that he hath it, as he is of any other thing: for he that believes, feels that he believes, and by consequent that he hath faith, and there is nothing more certain then experience, &c. Vegaes words also in the Council of Trent, sound this way: As he that is hot, is sure he is so, and should want sense, if he doubted: so he that hath grace in him, doth perceive it, and cannot doubt, yet it is by the sense of the mind, not by divine revelation.

Obj. But if these things be so, how comes it to pass, that God's dearest children complain sometimes, that they have neither sight, nor sense of their faith?

Ans. I speak of that which is ordinary, not ever. The Sun in a clear sky discovers and manifests itself with a witness; though sometimes it be overcast with clouds, or eclipsed with the Moon. This heavenly lamp of Faith shines, and shows it self clearly enough to the sanctified heart, in the calmness of a Christian course, and serenity of the soul; especially freshly cleared, and purged with showers, as it were, of penitent tears: though in the damp of spiritual desertion, darkness of some stronger temptation, eclipse of earthly-mindedness, it may lie hid and obscured for a time. And yet for all this, if Christians would be counseled, and believe the Prophets; if they would not undervalue God's infinite mercy, by looking upon him through a slavishly dejected and melancholic humor, which is wont to represent him as terrible, fierce, and inexorable; whereas in his own nature and sweetest disposition, he is indeed ever most compassionate, tenderhearted, and

melting over the bleeding miseries of a truly broken heart: I say, if they would not thus mistake, but conceive aright of that most adored mystery and bottomless depth of his free love, Hos. 14:4, Ezek. 16:8, Jer. 31:3, Cant. 2:4, John. 3:16, and 17:23, they might, even in times of desertions, temptations, spiritual afflictions of soul, sweetly uphold their hearts with assurance of Adherence, though for the present they want the assurance of Evidence. For such an assurance is intimated, Psal. 22:1, 42:5,11, 43:5. For instance: many a faithful soul, making conscience of all sin, sincerely following the best things, resolved without reservation to do or suffer anything for Christ, would give a world to be sensibly assured of God's favor, and fully persuaded that his sins were pardoned. By reason of the want of sense and feeling whereof, he slavishly languishes upon the rack of tormenting fears and terrors, utterly without all cause; neither only so, but thereby also gratifying the devil, dishonoring God's free mercy; disabling himself for a comfortable discharge of both his callings; and that which he little thinks on, lying in the sin of not receiving comfort, and of not accepting his own proper legacy which Christ left him, John. 14:27. For in the meantime his heart doth cleave unto Christ, as to the surest rock. He cries, and longs after him, and would not part with him for all the world: He would infinitely rather have his body rent from his soul, then his soul from his Savior. Ask his affection and resolution this way; and for all his fears and sorrows, he will tell you, that he will still rest and rely upon his Lord, and ever-blessed Redeemer, let him do with him as he please; he will trust in him, though he kill him. Now the internal vision, consciousness, reflexed act, that I may speak in the phrase of the Schools, of this sincere adherence unto Christ, and those exceeding precious promises of life, sealed with his Blood, might, and ought to assure him of the everlasting safety and

happiness of his soul; and so by consequent, to comfort him infinitely more, then if he had the Crown of the whole worlds sovereignty set upon his head. Justifying faith, which gives infallible interest to eternal life, is not (to speak properly and punctually) to be assured of pardon; but to trust wholly upon the mercy of God through Christ, for pardon. If there arise question in thy fearful heart about thy spiritual state; sense and feeling is no substantial ground whereon to build, being a separable accident to the graces of salvation; but the truth and tender heartedness of Christ, in the promises which can never fail, being as sure as God himself. If some wrangling fellow should lay claim unto thy land, thou wouldest not in such a case and controversy consult with an ignorant neighbor; he perhaps out of his weakness and want of skill, might raise doubts and dangers where there were none, and put thee into a greater fright; but thou wouldest have recourse to some learned at the Law, who understandingly searching and surveying thine Evidences, and finding no flaw, would put thee out of all fear. When in time of temptation thou art terrified and affrighted with renewed scruples and distractions about thy spiritual well-being; do not in any wise advise with carnal reason, which is stark blind in the mystery of Christ; much less with that evil One, who is a sworn enemy to thy soul, and father of lies. They may tell thee, thou hast no sense, no feeling, therefore all is naught: but to the Word, and to the Testimony; let thy trembling heart cleave to the impregnable truth of those sweetest promises; Matth. 11:28, Rev. 21:6, John. 7:37, Isa. 55:1, &c. and thou art safe forever. For a more full impression of this comfortable point, I would have you to refresh your memories with a revise of those four estates of faith, which I have heretofore distinguished, upon purpose for the weakest Christians sake; and know, that the reflexed act of the lowest degree and least measure then

mentioned, might upon good ground, if he do not willfully and wickedly refuse to be comforted, fill his fearful spirit as full with unspeakable glorious joy, as the Sun is of light, and the sea of waters. These things laid together and well weighed, may confect a precious and sovereign Antidote, against the slavish terrors, causeless fears, and heavy walking of many which are true of heart, distressed in conscience about their spiritual state: who while they labor, and long with insatiable greediness (and I blame them not) for a sensible assurance, and feeling apprehension of God's favor; do too much neglect and disregard that comfort which their faith might afford them upon good ground, in that, notwithstanding their present distracting amazements and perplexity of spirit, they are able still to commit their souls unto Christ, as a faithful Redeemer, and their everlasting strength.

In this point, I have let some passages fall by the way, which may serve to discover and dissolve the vanity and weakness of that Dilemma, wherein Bellarmine plays the willful egregious Sophister: it runs thus:

The Protestants teach, saith he, that a man is justified by special faith, whereby he persuadeth himself, that he is just. Now then he reasoneth thus: When I begin to believe that I am just, I am either just or unjust. If just, then I am not justified by faith, by which I believe myself to be just, because this faith is after my justification. If unjust, then this faith is false, and so a man should be justified by a lie.

To this horned Argument we answer thus: There are sundry acts of special faith: for my purpose at this time, take notice of two.

1. A fiducial assent, resting upon the merit of Christ, an affiance, dependence, adherence, reliance, or if there be any other word expressing that act of a humbled soul, whereby it casteth and reposeth itself only upon God's promise in Christ, for the obtaining of remission of sins, and

everlasting life. In this act, the poor soul enlightened and affrighted with sight and sense of its sin and misery, and seeing an infinite impossibility of satisfying God for the one, or freeing itself from the other, by any means or merit in heaven or earth; but only by the propitiatory mediation of Jesus Christ: it throws itself into his arms, grasping fast about him, hides itself in the clefts of this Rock, from the storms of God's fiercest and fiery indignation, apprehends in him plentiful redemption, and all-sufficiency of salvation; and therefore plies him with strong cries and tears for mercy; bespeaks him in all terms of confidence and affiance: My Lord, and my God, my hope, my fortress, my rock, my strength, my salvation; save me, or I sink; hold me fast, or I am lost forever. You may see sometimes a little infant, upon apprehension and approach of some sudden danger, how heartily and hastily it runs into the mothers arms for succor and safety: even so a truly wounded soul, pursued by the terrors of the Law, and frighted with the dreadful sight of God's frowning countenance, flies with speed into the bosom of its blessed Redeemer, clings inseparably unto his bleeding wounds for everlasting protection; and there rests upon the freeness of his Love, merit of his Passion, and truth of his Promise, as upon a Rock of Eternity, never to be removed: not the concurrent rage of all the Devils in hell, or powers of darkness, being ever able to make a divorce. By this act we are accepted for just before the Throne of Grace, for Christ's sake and sufferings.

2. An act of certification, which quickened by the Spirit of Grace, when God pleaseth for his own glory and good of his Child, reflecteth upon the soul with a comfortable assurance that we are already in the arms of Christ, and His forever. The least glimpse whereof, a true heart would not exchange for all the Kingdoms upon earth. The first act makes us just: The second

finds us just; and so certifies truly; not by a lie, as lying companions, and Satan's Sophisters calumniate. It is the saying of an excellent Divine, both for depth of learning and height of Holiness, To believe that my sins are now pardoned, and that I am saved: this is not the first act of faith, but follows when now a man doth see himself to be justified in Christ.

2. By a secret application of the promises of the Gospel, in form of an experimental Syllogism, thus:

Whosoever believes and repents, is the Child of God: But I believe and repent, therefore I am the Child of God.

The major or first proposition, is clear and evident in the very letter, and by the immediate sense of Scripture. See John 3:36, Acts 10:45, and 13:39, &c.

But how do you know the minor, or second proposition to be certainly so?

By the certainty of internal vision, whereby we as clearly see our faith, as our life, will, thought, knowledge, &c. as appears in the forecited place of Austin. In his opinion, I say, Faith is as visible to the internal eye of a sanctified mind, as is a man's life and will: Nay, and we are wont to discern with a more eager eye and observation a Stranger, then an ordinary Domestic. Our life and will are inbred, faith is adventitious. By the testimony of a renewed conscience, which is as a thousand witnesses. Now had I a thousand honest witnesses at the bar before an upright Judge, to prove my cause, and justify my right against the outfacings and perjuries of a Knight of the Poast, as they say, well known to be an infamous stigmatical forgerer and murderer; I would little doubt but to get the day. It is proportionably so in this present point; I mean, between my regenerate enlightened conscience and Satan. Nay, in this case, should all the Devils in Hell swear the contrary, did carnal reason, natural distrust, or any other

adversary power cavil and contradict with never such irksome tediousness; yet by the mercy of God, I will not withstand that heavenly light standing in my conscience like an armed man: I will never take away mine innocence from myself, until I die.

But how do you know, that you truly believe? We may know, perhaps, that we have some kind of faith, but not that we have the true lively faith, which will serve the turn for salvation.

I answer: Saint Paul bids us try, and prove ourselves whether we have that Faith, by which Christ dwelleth in our hearts, which is the faith of such as are accepted with God, 2. Cor. 13:5. Now it were strange, if the blessed Spirit should bid us examine and search for that, which could not possibly be found out.

Again, if a man cannot be certain, that he believes with all his heart, that is, truly and sincerely; Philip's interrogatory to the Eunuch, Act. 8:37, had been in vain, and the Eunuchs reply rash and unadvised.

Austin was clearly of this mind, that a man may be acquainted with the sincerity of his faith. There is, saith he, a kind of glorying in the conscience, when thou knowest thy faith is sincere, thy hope certain, thy love without dissembling.

But many, say they, believe, and are deceived; thinking they have that which they have not; How then can a man be certain?

Ans. So thousands amongst us, by the false spectacles of presumption, making the bridge of God's mercy broader than it is, and larger than his truth, which confines it only to broken hearts; are woefully deluded, and ready every moment to be drowned in the dungeon of fire and brimstone: must therefore those few who are sincerely humbled for their sins, truly believe, and upon good ground have part in it, be also deceived? Because

mad men, and men asleep, know not well that they are asleep, and rage; must therefore men truly waking, and wise, not know certainly they are awake, and in their wits? The common people generally conceive of the Sun's magnitude, that it is not past a foot round; must therefore the certainty of knowledge, that it is many times bigger than the Earth, be denied to the skillful Astronomer? Some men dream that they are rich, tumble themselves amongst their golden heaps, and it is not so indeed when they awake; doth no man therefore certainly know whether he be rich or no?

Conceive proportionably of repentance, an inseparable companion and effect of true faith, which is then saving, when it is serious, sincere, and without hypocrisy; and that may be manifest and clearly discernible to the heart that hath it. Do you think, the seriousness of the Ninevites repentance was not certain unto them? We have received the Spirit of God, saith Paul, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God, which are not only life everlasting, &c. but justification, sanctification, and such like. I say, savingness of repentance, as of faith, consists not in the measure and muchness; but in the sincerity and truth, of which the true penitent may be certain, as well as of his sorrow. But now whereas the Popish Doctors being blind guides, lead their hoodwinked followers into such perplexed mazes of uncertainties, and indeed impossibilities about contrition, in respect of extension, intension, appreciation, equivalence to sin; no marvel though they plead pertinaciously for the point, and purgatory of doubting.

3. By the effects and fruits growing from the root of grace in the heart.

But there may be in the hypocrite, an exact outward conformity and obedience:

I answer: true it is, that for the outside and carcass, as it were, the works of unsanctified men, may be like to those of the godly, but they are without

the soul, life and spirit; which is in the work of a true believer; to which he is no less privy in his heart, then to the outward work which passeth thorough his hands. And we hold, that works done in uprightness of heart, only, are they which truly testify in this case.

Let every true-hearted Nathanael then comfortably conclude pardon and peace unto his own soul, from all such fruits so qualified. For instance, in one.

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren, 1 John. 3:14. I love the Brethren: therefore I am translated from death to life.

But is it possible for a man to know that he loves his Brethren as he ought, and as the Apostle requires?

Saint John makes it a sign of our being so translated; therefore it may be known. For signs manifesting other things, must themselves be more manifest. And Austin tells us, that a man knows more the love with which he loves, then his brother whom he loves.

Thus may the Christian infallibly collect, the sanctifying Spirit, justifying Faith, saving Grace to dwell in his heart, by all good deeds, holy duties, inward or outward fruits springing from an upright heart. For as it follows, and may be inferred infallibly and demonstratively from the effect, to the proper cause in other things: For example: It is day; therefore the Sun is risen, because day cannot be caused, but by the Sun's rising: so in this point also explained as before. If we pursue and ply with true hearts the whole Trade of Christianity; If we be sincerely exercised in the works of holiness, justice, mercy and truth, and walk humbly with our God; we may build upon it, that we are truly blessed. All such sound fruits of Faith, are evident

signs and demonstrations of our spiritual safety, and standing fast forever. If ye do these things, saith Peter, ye shall never fall.

4. By the testimony of the Spirit, which sometimes; as in the time of more fervent prayer, holy retiredness of mind, heavenly meditation; or in some quickening exercises of extraordinary humiliation; or after some special important service done to God and his Church with humble sincerity, and in true zeal; or upon the soul-searching passage of some well-grounded Sermon of comfort, and seasonable application of mercy; or in the beginning of spiritual, and end of natural life, as most needful times; or in the time of martyrdom, and sincere sufferings for the Name of Christ, &c. I say, at such times the Spirit may suggest and testify to the sanctified conscience, with a secret, still, heart-ravishing voice thus or in the like manner; Thou art the Child of God; Thou art in the number of those that shall be saved; Thou shalt inherit life everlasting: And that as certainly and comfortably, as if that Angel from Heaven should say to thee, as he did to Daniel, Greatly beloved. And why should any Popish caviler contradict this, since even Bellarmine himself speaks proportionably in another case? Upon a passage in Austin, acknowledging the interior efficacy of God's Spirit, giving testimony to our hearts concerning the truth of that which is contained in the Scriptures, saith he; This light of faith is a certain testimony of God, by which it is said to the secret cogitations of our hearts, That is true; thou needest not to doubt thereof. Here is an immediate testimony of the Spirit granted for the confirmation of the truth of the Word; why may not the like be expected for an assurance of the work of the Word? Mighty and remarkable was the work of the Spirit this way upon the heart of that Noble Martyr, Robert Glover, upon the first sight and representation of the Stake (so sweetly seasonable is God in all his refreshing's.) For two

or three days before his death, he was full heavily oppressed with the spiritual miseries of a dead heart, and spiritual desertion. In which time no doubt he cried mightily unto God, and often reflected the eye of his renewed conscience upon a truly, believing, penitent, humble, holy and heavenly heart; resolved to sacrifice its warmest blood in the merciless fire, for the testimony of Jesus; and yet no comfort would come. But in the very nick and needful time, as you may see in the Story, the blessed Spirit did suddenly shine into his dark and desolate soul, with the glorious beams of his own immediate comfort, and so sensibly filled it with such overflowing Rivers of spiritual joys, that no doubt they mightily abated and quenched the rageful fury of those Popish flames, wherein he sweetly fell asleep. It was a special and immediate springing of the holy Ghost in his heart, which made Master Peacock, after many days of extremist horror, profess, that the joy which he felt in his conscience, was incredible. We feel and acknowledge by daily experience, that Satan doth immediately inject; and shall not the blessed Spirit, after his holy and heavenly manner, immediately also suggest sometimes?

Neither is this to be reputed an extraordinary revelation, or Enthusiasm, without or beside the Word of God (I heartily abominate all Anabaptistical fooleries and phrensies:) For that which the Spirit so reveals unto our consciences, we ourselves may collect and conclude out of God's Word, upon the conscience of our faith, repentance, other saving endowments and holy graces shining in our souls, and uprightly exercised in our whole conversation. When we by these means have assured our souls, that we are the children of God, which is the testimony of our own renewed spirits; the Spirit of God, as another witness, secondeth and confirmeth this assurance, by divine inspiration, and by sweet motions and feelings of God's special

goodness, and glorious saving presence; and so according to the Apostles phrase, Rom. 8:16, beareth witness with our spirits. Wherefore if any man presume upon, or pretend any immediate suggestion or revelation, for his spiritual safety, and everlasting well-being, and yet want utterly the testimony of his renewed conscience to the same purpose; the testimony of universal obedience; of not lying willingly and delightfully in any one known sin; of crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, &c. I can give him none but this cold comfort; he is cursedly cozened by the Devils counterfeit glory of an Angel, casting into his abused imagination such groundless conceits, which in time of trial will vanish into nothing, and fly away as a dream.

By the way let me tell you, that though this last manner of assurance be more immediately from the Spirit; yet conceive, that the other also are not effectual upon the heart, without the excitation, illumination and assistance of the same blessed Spirit.

For the first, consider that forecited place, 1 Corinth. 2:12.

For the second; when the conscience, through the ministry of the Law, doth testify to a man his state in sin, and under the curse; it is, through the spirit of bondage, that it doth testify: then when it doth testify to him his state of grace, and freedom from the curse, it is much rather from the Spirit of Adoption. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost.

For the third, I doubt not, but the blessed Spirit, as a comfortable Remembrancer, refreshed Hezekiah memory, when he cried to the Lord, Remember now, O Lord, &c. Isa. 38:3.

But how shall a man discern, and difference a true persuasion, and the testimony of the Spirit; from a groundless presumptuous conceit, and the Devils delusion?

If Bellarmine ask me, I will easily stop his mouth:

First, by demanding him, how his Saint Francis, and S. Antony knew assuredly, that their revelations of the certain remission of their sins, were from the Spirit of God; especially since with him they were revelations quite besides and without the Word. For he holds, that this proposition, Francis is truly justified: Antony hath his sins forgiven; and so of other particular men, is not to be found in the Word, either immediately, or by evident consequence; which we upon good ground contradict, if the particular men be true believers.

Secondly, by that saying of Ambrose, urged by Catarinus in the Council of Trent: The holy Ghost doth never speak unto us, but doth make us know, that it is He that speaketh.

But if the doubtful Christian truly troubled about it, would be taught and informed in the point; or if it be possible that the Pharisee, the deluded One should heartily desire to be enlightened; I advise that they would consider upon these following marks of difference.

1. A sound persuasion upon good ground by the Spirit, is ever agreeable and answerable exactly to the Word. The inward testimony of the Spirit, and outward testimony of the Word, do always sweetly accord, and one answers to the other, as face to face in water. And therefore, if that thy present state, wherein thou conceivest thyself to be sure and safe enough for salvation, be disabled and condemned by God's Word; thy confidence is vain, and Satan deludes thee. The Scripture tells us, That whosoever is borne of God, doth not commit sin, 1 John. 1:3,9, which is not to be understood simply of the act of sinning; For who can say, My heart is clean? But in this sense: He makes not a trade of sinning; he sinneth not with purpose, pleasure and perseverance; he doth not live, lie, and delight in sin; he suffers it not to

reign in him. If then thou allowest any lust in thy heart, or go on in the willing practice of any one known sin, or sensual course, and yet be well conceited of thyself for comfort in the World to come; the Devil cozens thee: God will not hear the prayers, but wound the hairy scalp of every such a one. For instance: If thou liest in lying; (for its one thing to be overtaken that way out of fear, or ere thou be aware, another thing to continue in it habitually and resolutely against an enlightened impenitent conscience) and yet look for Heaven, thou art deceived; thou hast made a lie thy refuge, and hid thyself under falsehood. And why? Because God's Word saith, that the Fearful, and Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Liars, shall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. 21:8. Conceive proportionably of lying in any other sin damned in God's Book in the sense I have said. If thou abidest in the state of mere civil honesty, and yet thinkest with thyself, that thou art thereby furnished sufficiently for future happiness, it is but a false flash. And why? Because the Word saith; Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. Which necessarily implies; That no mere civil man can possibly be saved. If thou be a luke-warm Laodicean, and yet conceivest thou art rich enough spiritually, and lookest to be saved; thou art deceived: And why? Because the Word saith; That Christ will spew such a one out of his mouth, Rev. 3:16. Even as a filthy bitter vomit is to the stomach, mouth and man that spews it out; such are all luke-warm formal professors to the Lord Jesus Christ, as himself there professes. A terrible and flaming sentence uttered from the Judge his own mouth in the meantime; which, me thinks, should horribly affright thousands in our days; who stand for a frozen formality, heartless indifferency, reserved neutrality, and political moderation in

profession, and practice of religion. Thus a true testimony and sound persuasion of a good estate to Godward, ever holds correspondence to the Word, and is infallibly grounded thereupon.

Obj. Say you so? In spiritual cases and points of faith, how is it possible, that a man should be infallibly certain of that by the Word, which is not contained in the Word, either immediately, or by good consequence? But Bellarmine affirms, that this particular proposition, Such or such a man is truly justified; is not contained in the Word of God, either immediately or by good consequence, &c.

Ans. To let pass at this time, that which some worthy Divines press in this point, that such places as these, Psal. 103:3, Isa. 43:32, Rom. 10:9, Gal. 2:20. &c. intimate and imply such a particular proposition immediately: I answer that it is deduced by evident consequence out of the Word. For from such general promises and propositions as these; He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, John. 3:36. Whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins, Act. 10:43. And by him all that believe, are justified from all things, &c. Act. 13:39, &c. follow by good consequence, these particulars: Paul, Peter, Luther, Calvin, Beza, Bradford, or any other particular man believing in him, receives remission of sins; is justified; hath eternal life. Even as it followeth directly and infallibly, every man is a reasonable creature; therefore John, Thomas, &c. is endued with reason.

Though no word saith expressly and immediately; Thou Thomas believing, shalt be saved; yet the same word which saith, Everyone believing, hath eternal life, saith also; Thou Thomas believing, hast eternal life, or shalt be saved. As on the contrary, this universal, He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, includeth virtually, consequently, infallibly, as though they were writ in it,

these particulars: Judas, Bellarmine, or Bonner, &c. not believing, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Otherwise, if the general did not thus sufficiently include and comprehend every particular; and an universal proposition all subordinate singular propositions under it; the Law, Thou shalt not kill: thou shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; would not belong to Faux blowing up the Parliament: to this or that Priest polluting himself in hearing confession; to Bellarmine lying voluminously; because its nowhere expressly writ; Thou Bellarmine shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shaveling, beware of self-pollution. Thou Faux shalt not tear in pieces the Royal limbs of the Lord's Anointed.

If John or Thomas believing, be not bound to be assured of his salvation out of the general promise; except it were said somewhere in Scripture; That Thomas or John by name should be saved; it would follow that these particular men, were not bound to be honest men; or to fear God; because it is nowhere said in the Word; that Thomas or John ought to be honest men; or are commanded to fear God, but only in the general.

In a word, let the Jesuit tell me, whether out of the Word, he be infallibly certain that his body shall rise again at the last Day: He dare not for his heart deny it. And I pray you, Bellarmine, tell me, where it is particularly and expressly said in Scripture; That the body of Robert Bellarmine shall rise again at the last Day? All particular infallible assurance in this kind, springs out of the general proposition and promise that All shall rise, 1 Cor. 15, &c.

2. That heart which doth sweetly enjoy the Paradise of a true testimony, and well-grounded persuasion; that it presently lives the life of grace, and immortality; is sincerely affected and inflamed with a reverent love, and

insatiable longing after the Word preached and read, prayer, singing of Psalms, meditation, conference, vows, days of humiliation, use of good books, godly company, all God's ordinances, and good means appointed and sanctified for our spiritual good. Because thorough them, as so many golden conduits, those gracious saving operations of the holy Ghost are conveyed and continued unto it; which minister sound matter and true grounds of such comfortable assurance: and in the conscionable use and exercise of them also are wont sometimes to be secretly and sensibly breathed into it, such heavenly real refreshing's themselves; which the joy of the whole worlds enjoyment cannot possibly equal. But now the affection this way of those who are Pharisaically puffed up with a groundless conceit and vain confidence; is faint and formal; partial and reserved; not accompanied with that universality and uniformity of reverence and respect to all the blessed ordinances and means of grace. It is ever the wont and wiliness of such, to qualify their countenance and correspondence to these, with that moderation and temper which may be compatible, and plausibly consist with the safety of their temporal happiness, and security of their bosom sin. And no marvel though their affection in this kind be not so hearty, and hold out; for they draw no special virtue and sweetness from Christ, through them: And their conceit of being right, is not fed from the breasts of the Bible, and with the heavenly Manna of a conscionable Ministry; but built upon those insufficient grounds and rotten props I discovered and disabled before.

3. A sound and undeceiving persuasion that thou art everlastingly locked in the arms of God's mercy and love, grounded upon the Word, seconded and set on by the Spirit; is a most rare and rich Jewel, which doth infinitely outshine and overweigh in sweetness and worth any rock of Diamond,

Cristall Mountain, or this great Creation, were it all converted into one invaluable Pearl; and therefore is infinitely envied, and assaulted mightily on all sides. It is continually hunted like a Partridge on the Mountains by natural distrust, the policy of Satan, and all the powers of darkness. There is not a wicked spirit, but is transported with implacable indignation against that heaven upon earth; and therefore rages and roars about thee still, to rob and bereave thy humble breast of such an heavenly Gem. Besides the two main ends and general aims; of all the malice and machinations of those apostated angels: 1. the dishonor of God, and 2. the discomfort of men's souls; In this point they are peculiarly enraged with extreme hellish anger; to see a mortal man, a child of Adam, crowned by God's merciful hand, even in this life, with right and interest, and as it were, an earnest penny of the Inheritance with the Saints in light, and of those blessed Mansions of glory and rest, of which, by their Apostasy and pride they have unhappily and everlastingly deprived themselves. Neither only so, but they employ also their Agents, envious to the grace of God and thine own fearful heart, to charge falsely many times upon thee, Hypocrisy and delusion, left that white stone given thee by the holy Ghost; the splendor and sweetness whereof, none knoweth but he that hath it, should fairly shine upon thy sad soul with that lightsomeness and comfort, as it both may and ought. Whereupon it must needs follow, that if thy persuasion be well grounded and assurance true; it will be accompanied and often exercised with fears, jealousies, doubts, distrusts, varieties of temptations, Satan's fieriest darts, injected scruples, contradictions of flesh and blood, cavils of carnal reasons, want of comfortable feeling, &c. which will many times necessarily drive thee to cry mightily to God, and complain at the Throne of grace, against all this hellish ordnance and assaults of thy unbelieving heart; by the wrestling

of faith to warm thy soul with meditation upon the promises, to reexamine and revise thy grounds, to confirm thy watch, to resort for counsel, strength and comfort to the quickening means, experience of former sweet feelings, and motions of the Spirit; to truly judicious Divines, experienced Christians, days of humiliation, books of best relish to a spiritual taste, &c. But now on the contrary side, his presumptuous confidence and groundless conceit, lies in the Pharisees bosom with much quietness and security; without doubting, difficulty, contradiction, or any such ado. The reason is, his carnal heart is well enough content, and meddles not, because it still feeds upon the delights of his darling sin, without disturbance. Satan is too subtle to interpose, tempt or interrupt, in such a case. For he well knoweth that his foundation is falsehood, his hope of heaven but a golden dream; and therefore in policy he holds his peace, that he may hold him the faster.

Take notice by the way; that, that very thing which makes many a truehearted Christian to doubt of himself, and of the soundness of his spiritual state, should put him out of all doubt; even often exercise with doubts, temptations, multiplied attempts against his faith, and assurance of God's love; prayed against, humbly resisted, and opposed with cleaving unto the tenderheartedness of Christ, and truth of his promises, though for the present he hath little or no feeling; no such joy and peace in so believing: And that very thing upon which the deluded Ones do build, and many times boast themselves; to wit, that they are untroubled, untempted, in point of faith, and pretended assurance; may return an infallible remonstrance to their own consciences, that they are certainly deceived. For doubtless, that faith which is never assaulted with doubting, is but a fancy. Assuredly that assurance which is ever secure, is but a dream. Many a Pharisee stands by the bedside of the sincere Professor, visited with

affliction of conscience, and many heavy temptations; secretly and sinfully pleasing himself in the unblessed calmness of a groundless confidence, and in his freedom from such terrors and spiritual troubles: when as himself is like an Ox fattening in the green pastures of impunity and outward prosperity for the day of slaughter: But the afflicted party is as precious gold, purifying in the Lord's refining furnace, that he may afterward come out and shine more gloriously.

4. In that heart to which the Spirit of God testifies, that we are His children, Rom. 8:16, doth the same Spirit create many fervent ejaculations, strong cries and unutterable groanings, verse 26. The testimony of the Spirit is ever attended with the Spirit of prayer. That glorious glimpse shining into the soul, and assuring it of salvation, is so sweet, so heavenly, so ravishing; so transcendent and incomparably above all earthly joy, that it warms the spirit of a man with quickening life and liberty, to pour out itself in the presence of his Lord and his God, before the Throne of Grace: sometimes in more hearty triumphant, and as it were, winged prayers: at other times, in those which are more faint and cold, yet edged with infinite desires, that they were more fervent, and therefore by the way, as it were, mingled and perfumed with the sovereign and satisfactory incense in the Golden Censer, which the Angel of the Covenant holds in his hand, are graciously accepted of him, which by an excellency and title of highest honor, is styled the Hearer of Prayers: or at least, with inexpressible groans and inward wrestling's, for preservation, recovery, and enlargement of that same comfortable assurance itself, and of all other holy graces and fruits of the Spirit, purity of heart, conquest over corruption, nearer communion with God, spiritual-mindedness, and such other heavenly guests; amongst whom it is wont to dwell with delight, and represent itself more comfortably. But

now on the other side; every deluded Pharisee is a mere stranger to the power of Prayer. His presumption and groundless confidence, is but a weed which will grow of its own accord; and therefore is not sensible of any necessity, neither feels any want of constant prayer from a broken heart; universal obedience; or the holy preciseness of the Saints to support it.

5. An assurance of God's Love upon sure ground, doth mightily quicken, keen, and spur forward the ingenuous Christian to more holiness, hatred of sin, resolution in good causes, watchfulness over his heart, walking with God: Having these promises, saith he, let me cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: Having this hope, I will labor to purify myself, even as He is pure. To let the principal motive pass, it is impossible but that the feeling consciousness that God's free love, through Christ, hath freed us from eternity of torments; one hour wherein, is infinitely more stinging and terrible, then all the tortures that all mankind hath, doth, or shall endure, from the Creation, to the end of the world; and certainly interested us to eternity of joys, one hour wherein, doth incomparably surpass all the delights of this wide world, were they collected into one lump of pleasure; I say, it cannot be, but that such an assurance should stir up the blessed soul to do or suffer anything for Christ's sake; rather to die then turn Papist, to do worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem. But now the other groundless confidence, being in truth but a fancy, must needs be powerless, fruitless, unactive; and makes the deluded rather secure, careless, presumptuous, only formal.

6. The blessed Spirit is wont to spring in our hearts, with heavenly refreshing, and his sweetest testimony; especially at such times as these: When we retire and recollect ourselves to converse with God in a more solemn and solitary manner; opening our consciences, breaking our hearts,

and pouring out our souls into his bosom: when we are preparedly and fruitfully exercised in the ordinances: in our innocent patient sufferings, for good causes and conscience sake: when we feel that we have conquered or well curbed some corruption, by the power of Prayer; in the believing contemplation and revise of our change, and the infallible marks thereof: when we meditate effectually upon the bottomless depth of God's free love unto us, with which he hath loved us from everlasting to everlasting: upon days of humiliation, &c. But that other counterfeit flash keeps a deluded Pharisee in a fools Paradise continually; he is ordinarily at all times alike peremptory in the point of assurance. You shall not take him any week in the year, any day in the week, any hour in the day, without a bold persuasion, and protestation, if need be, That he hopes to be saved as well as the precisest. He is as confident this way, when he is caviling against the purity of the Saints and power of Godliness; as when he is the deepest in his Pharisaical devotions.

7. The presumption of the Pharisee is ordinarily at the height, in his height of outward prosperity; and when God's Candle shineth faireliest upon his head with worldly blessings. But the persuasion of the Christian, is for the most part then strongest, when the world most frowneth upon him for his forwardness; and in heat of persecution.

8. Those that are deluded with a groundless confidence, have ordinarily been so conceited of themselves, ever since they may remember, or had any thoughts of heaven; and that without consciousness of any conversion, change, or supernatural saving work upon their souls at all. For though the devil seals it with more security upon their hearts, by his counterfeit Angelical glory; yet he finds matter enough in our corrupt nature, ministered originally for such a golden dream, and imaginary castle in the

air. But the testimony of the Spirit, and that other true persuasion is supernatural, and never felt before conversion; nor ever to be found but in a regenerate soul. I doubt not, but many Christians to their singular comfort and further assurance, can tell their experience of both: Their bold peremptory ill grounded presumption in their unregenerate time: and their now true, kindly, sweet persuasion, so much envied and assaulted by Satan accompanying their conversion.

9. Natural presumption, gilded over with the devils delusion, ever shrinks in the wetting. Troubles of conscience, fiery trials, heavy crosses, the face of the Prince of terror, disastrous and dismal times, dissolve it into nothing. But the other true testimony holds out like armor of proof, against thickest hail-shot of all adversary power: Nay, it is wont to shine and show itself with united vigor and more lightsomeness within; in the greatest damp of outward discomforts, and most confusions abroad.

10. The Christian can give sound reasons for his resolution, in the point of assurance; from his conversion, holy conversation, love of the brethren, universal obedience, &c. those means I mentioned before proper to the Child of God. But put the Pharisee to prove in this case, and perhaps he will not be able to say so much as his formal deluded brother, Luk. 18:11,12. Sure I am, all that he can produce for that purpose, being tried by the Touchstone of God's Truth, will prove too light and inconsequent. Revise the false mediums and insufficient grounds discovered before, and you shall perceive, that none of them can possibly infer a comfortable conclusion.

11. The Laodicean longs far more for gold, then growth in grace; thinks himself already rich enough in Religion, and that he hath attained that very temper which every wise man should rest upon, without any more meddling; that if he should stir forward, he should be too precise; if he

should grow any worse, he should be too profane; and therefore concludes, I have need of nothing. But the enlightened Christian, having truly tasted of the assurance of God's love; is infinitely greedy of growing in grace, of conquering corruptions, of nearer communion with his Christ, of doing his God all the most glorious sincere service he can possibly, before he go down into the pit, and be seen no more. His performances, by the grace of God, are many, his endeavors more, but his desires endless, and ever unsatisfied with his degree of well-doing, his present pitch of grace and measure of obedience.

Thus having premised a discovery of spiritual self-deceit, whereby many so overvalue themselves, in point of their spiritual estate, that they conceive they are very right, whereas in truth and trial, they are stark rotten at the root: Their case herein, is like that man's, who lying fast asleep upon the edge of a steep Rock, dreams merrily of Crowns, Kingdoms, and the very confluence of all earthly contentment's; conceiving that he wallows himself in the overflowing's of all worldly felicities; but upon the sudden starting for joy, breaks his neck, and tumbles into the bottom of the Sea. They are lulled asleep by the deluding charms of the Devil, upon their beds of presumptuous security, all their life long, dreaming of no danger at all, but ever confident their case is good enough to Godward: but their consciences being awaked upon their beds of death, or at farthest, at God's Tribunal, they are suddenly swallowed up of despair, and drowned in everlasting perdition. I come now to forewarn and forearm the true Christian, that with all watchfulness and constancy, he would ever labor to prevent and defeat the secret assaults and insinuations of that white Devil, as a worthy Divine calls it, Spiritual pride. A gilded poison, which Satan, that cunning Alchemist and hellish Spider, doth first extract out of the very sweetest and

fairest flowers in Christ's Garden; I mean, the most holy virtues and heavenly gifts implanted in his Children's hearts; and then thereby so envenoms and blasts them, that they lose not only their own native splendor and gracefulness, but also their fruitful communication to others, and comfortable acceptance with God. I say, when he sees a man extraordinarily enriched with spiritual graces, he seeks might and main to make him swell with privy pride; and to puff him up with an overweening conceit of his own worth; that so the Christian himself may want the comfort of them; his brethren, the fruit of them; and God, the glory of them. When the strong man can no longer keep goodness out of the soul, but the holy Ghost with a merciful violence breaks in upon him and dwells there; his next endeavor is, to abuse even Grace itself, as an unhappy instrument, to weaken and wound itself: nay, so subtle is he, and endless in his attempts, that if he cannot make a man proud of anything else, he will labor to make him proud that he is not proud, and to glory vainly, because he is not vainglorious. The original and breeding of this canker in the sanctified soul, I have discovered in my *Discourse of true happiness*, pg. 25, and there made tender of some corrosives and counterpoisons against it. To which at this time I add these:

When thou beginnest with an overweening conceit to admire thyself immoderately and above that which is meet, cast thine eye,

1. Upon the purity and piercing of God's all-seeing Eye, ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, and purer then purity itself; which sees sin to be infinitely more sinful and loathsome then thou canst possibly: whereby His holy Justice is incensed with infinite indignation, and unquenchable severity against it. Witness the turning into Devils, irrecoverable destruction, and everlasting downfall of so many glorious creatures, the top

and masterpiece, as it were, of all God's handywork, shining once so fairly in the highest heaven, and nearest unto his Imperial Throne: The curse which fell upon Adam and all his posterity, for eating the forbidden fruit: The confusions which came upon the first world by the flood: The burning of Sodom with fire and brimstone from heaven; The fearful rejection of his own ancient people: The horrors of a guilty enraged conscience, which is a hell upon earth, and damnation above ground: The everlasting fire which is prepared for reprobate men and angels, &c. Neither doth this brightest Eye only see all thy sins in their native foulness, but also in their truest number. Thou perhaps, for want of more spiritual eye-salve, beholdest them but as stars in a gloomy evening: but assure thyself He sees them, as motes in the Sun, and as Stars in the clearest winters midnight. Me thinks, this mortifying meditation should rather make thee grow into further detestation of sin, then admiration of thyself.

2. Upon the incomprehensible perfections and absolute pureness of God's most holy nature: the splendor whereof doth dazzle the clearest eyes of the brightest Seraphim's; doth drown, as it were, all Angelical glory; as the Sun's presence, the light of lesser stars; much more doth it utterly darken the material beauty of all the lights in heaven. Were the Sun which is made all of brightness, and the ever-springing fountain of fresh shining beams, presented before that unapproachable Light which besets God's sacred Throne; it would vanish away, as a darksome mote and lump of vanity. Where then would a frail sinful man in a house of flesh appear? Behold, saith Job, he put no trust in his servants; and his Angels he charged with folly: how much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the Moth, chap. 4:18,19. Behold, he putteth no trust in his Saints; yea, the heavens are not clear in his

sight: how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? Chap. 15:15,16. Behold even to the Moon, and it shineth not, yea, the stars are not pure in his sight: how much less man, that is a Worm: and the son of man which is a Worm? Chap. 25:5,6. A glimpse as it were, of that highest glory, shining everlastingly in that purest uncreated Essence, God blessed forever, did make righteous Job to abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes: Holy Isaiah to cry, Woe is me, for I am undone. And so if thou also turn thine eye from the vanity of self-admiration, toward the infinite Sun of absolute and incomprehensible purity; and then reflect upon thyself, as he that hath gazed too much upon our visible Sun, looking down again seeth nothing; thou shalt behold the nothingness of thine overweened worth, and nothing but darkness and deformity; and so shalt find infinite more matter of humiliation and abhorring thyself in dust and ashes, then of self-estimation and conceitedness.

3. Upon the clear Cristall of God's pure Law, which can discover unto thee the least spot that ever stained so much as any one of thy thoughts; shines with that perfect light, that it would guide aright every step which thou makest in the way which is called Holy, and is of that latitude for prohibition of sin, and leading to purity and exact pleasing of God: that though we may see an end of all perfection, yet it is exceeding broad. And therefore though such as hate to be reformed, especially, if their consciences be waking and working, are drawn to a particular and punctual survey of themselves and all their ways in this pure Cristall, even as a Bear to the stake, a Bankrupt to his counting book, an Elephant to the unmudded water, a foul face to the Looking-glass: They are well enough content to hear the Commandments read, restraining their understandings only to the gross

acts, Thou shalt not kill, &c. and perhaps justifying themselves Pharisaically thereabouts; but come to the holy strictness of Christ's exposition, Whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, &c. and it strikes full cold to their impure hearts, and causeth them to cry out against the men of God, Why do you torment us before our times? I say, though it be thus with the unregenerate, by reason of their guilty and galled consciences; yet let it be thy delight, who art blessed with an everlasting impregnable protection, by the blood and merit of Jesus Christ, from the curse and rigor of the Law, to peruse thyself punctually by this heavenly Looking-glass, for the discovery of thy defects and aberrations; and to dive with searching and serious meditation into this adored depth of perfection and purity, to see how far thou comest short: and then thou shalt find infinite more cause to press hard towards the mark, then to look upon that which is behind, or proudly to prize anything that is past. Only I advise, when thou settest thyself thus solemnly to rip up thy conscience, and ransack thy heart to the root, to bring it down and into the dust, for increase of humiliation and lowliness in thine own eyes: as thou holdest out in the one hand the clear Cristall of God's pure Law, to discover the crookedness of thy vile natural disposition, the villainies and scarlet abominations of thine unregenerate time, the daily spots and stains which light upon thy soul, &c. hold out also in the other hand, or rather lay hold upon Christ Jesus by the hand of faith, hanging, bleeding, and dying upon the Cross, for those very same sins; that thereby thou mayest utterly quench all Satan's fiery darts, prevent drawing towards despair; nay, preserve thy spirit in sweetest peace, and unconquerable comfort against, if it be possible, the least distrustful intrusion of any slavish terror.

4. Upon the holiest men that ever breathed, the life of grace upon earth, and the most renowned in the Church thorough all generations, for all spiritual sufficiency's and excellencies; and thou shalt find them ever most humble in their own conceits, vilest in their own eyes, nothing in their own account. Me thinks holy Paul's heavy complaint, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! Heavenly David's continual cry, I am a worm and no man: There is no rest in my bones, because of my sin. My sin is ever before me, &c. Blessed Bradfords abasing himself, who was one of the worthiest Martyrs, and the Heavenliest minded man that ever breathed out his last in the flames, and ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot, as himself spake at the stake: I am as dry as a stone, saith he, as dumb as a nail; as far from praying, as he that never knew any taste of it. He sometime subscribed in this manner to those Letters which were full of spiritual life, divinest strains, and demonstration of the Spirit: The most miserable hard-hearted unthankful sinner, John Bradford. A very painted Hypocrite, J. B. &c. I say, Me thinks, the humble deportment of these and all truly holy Ones should rather make thee sink yet lower in thine own conceit, then swell with the poison of Pharisaical self-conceitedness.

5. Keep in a readiness, and in fresh remembrance such considerations and cooling cards, as it were, as these; when thy heart begins to swell vain-gloriously: That thou haddest thine hand in that fire-work, which blew up all mankind; I mean, in Adams transgression, that brought forth such a bloody sea of sin and sorrow into the World; such a world of miseries and mischiefs upon all the sons and daughters of Adam; all tortures upon earth, and torments in Hell thorough all eternity: That thou camest into this world, a sink, a Sodom, a very hell of all filth and impurity; of all corruption and

crookedness, even a little Devil for darkness and damnation: That thou woefully lost and mis-spentest many years, perhaps the best of thy time, strength of youth, flower of thy age in Satan's service, and upon thy own abominable lusts: That now upon thy conversion, the mere work of God's free grace, thou being honored with part in Christ's Passion, with the presence of the blessed Spirit dwelling in thee, with the highest advancement of being God's Favorite, the dearly beloved of his soul; yet the best Sabbath that thou passest over, the holiest duty that thou performest, is distained and distempered with so many imperfections, distractions, frailties, and failings: That while thou yet inhabitest a house of flesh, thou hast inherent in thy bowels, secret seeds, and inbred inclinations to all sin, (Bless the sanctifying Spirit for thy privilege and preservation) even to Atheism, self-murder, Sodomy, despairing of God's mercy, familiarity with wicked spirits, sin against the Holy Ghost, &c. That whereas thousands about thee go on in their sins, and perish everlastingly, thyself, it may be, before thy change worse than most of them; yet now being sanctified, thou mayest be assured, thy name was writ in Heaven, from all eternity; and therefore from everlasting thou layest in the bosom of God's love, and from the same everlasting had the Lord Jesus, set apart to shed his blood in the fullness of time, for the salvation of thy soul; and have patience but a little, and everlasting refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: thou shalt shine as the brightness of the firmament forever and ever. And in all this who made thee to differ? Thou wast framed of the same mold, made, as it were, of the same cloth, only the sheers going between, with those that perish: It was only God's free grace, the good pleasure of his will. These and the like considerations laid together, should infinitely rather move thee with all humble reverence to adore the bottomless depth of God's free love

unto thee; then conceitedly to magnify thyself above thy brethren, or proudly insult over those that are without; to praise thy God with a never satisfied admiration of his inconceivable bounty, then to plague thy soul, and, as it were, empoison thy graces with a humor of pride.

6. Thou must shortly be strictly accountable at the just Tribunal of God, for the use and employment of all the good things he hath given unto thee; of thy life and every moment of it; of thy goods and every farthing of them; of every word thou ever spokest; of every thought that ever sprung out of thy heart; of every Sermon thou ever heardest; of every Sabbath thou hast solemnized; of every line thou hast writ; of every glance of thine eye; of every journey thou hast made, &c. of thy wit, memory, learning; of thy strength, courage, credit; of thine honor, power, and high place. In a word, of every benefit or any good thing in any kind thou ever receivedst from the bountiful and blessed hand of Almighty God. And the more and more excellent and extraordinary endowments, and gracious indulgences have been vouchsafed thee from the ever-springing Fountain of all good; the more exactly must thou be answerable, and in proportion accountable for more. Wherefore, since the graces of salvation incomparably excel and outshine all other human abilities; all excellencies of nature, art, policy, learning, or what else can be named admirable in the eyes of men; God looks that we should keep those heavenly Jewels especially, orient, bright and shining; communicate them most frankly and abundantly to our brethren; and with all watchfulness and wisdom upon all opportunities, employ them to our Masters greatest and most glorious advantage. Now there is nothing more hinders the fruitful improvement of them then Pride: Nothing makes them more passable and profitable then Humility. A proud man puffed up with an opinion of his good parts, doth ordinarily, out of an

itching ambitious humor, single out such seasons for discovery of himself, and ostentation of his gifts; when he may win most applause from men, and show himself vain-gloriously; and thereupon is more rare, dainty, and reserved in exercising his talent. But a downright humble Christian is in this kind unreservedly and indifferently for all places, times, and persons; where, and when he may bring glory unto God, good unto others, comfort to his own soul in discharging a good conscience. He dares not for his heart, either out of humor, or for fear he should make himself too cheap, as they say, or any other vain respect, conceal anything in his heart or brain, were it the highest strain of his heavenly skill, or any experimental secret in the mystery of Christ, from the meanest Christian, could he wisely and seasonably thereby do him any spiritual good. Let us therefore infinitely abhor, by filthy vain-glory, to stain the glory, and blast the fruitfulness of our graces; but rather with all humility and watchfulness observe and apprehend all the ways, occasions and callings, whereby we may glorify God most with them, and improve them best for our Lord's advantage; that so we may give up our account at the great and universal Audit, with more favor, and enter more comfortably into our Masters joy.

7. Let the fear and foresight of the many fearful effects, and much ill that certainly follows, and is ever found where this white Devil, spiritual pride, haunts, hunt it out of thy heart, and keep a continual narrow watch against all its sly insinuations. Besides that it plagues the soul that harbors it, with many spiritual miseries, distempers, disacquaintance with God (for He is ever most familiar with those who are most humble) Pharisaical swellings, inflammations of furious zeal, and the like; it ever proves also of pestilent consequence and prejudice to the common state of goodness, to the honor and acceptance of Christianity. 1. A truly proud professor, puffed up with

his gifts and supposed sufficiency's; which wickedly aims more at vain-glory, then glorifying God; at his own praise, then profiting others, is for the most part very irksome, tedious and burdensome to the company of humble, wise, judicious Christians. For ordinarily he is overtalkative, swift to speak, and too full of words; far more forward to over-rule and domineer, in opposing, moderating, resolving, then seven men that can render a reason. An itching humor after applause, and of carrying away the credit, for ability to discourse, and eminency above others, puts him on too often to pour out himself indiscreetly and impertinently in all companies, to press and obtrude upon others with much verbal importunity, and unconquerable stiffness, his master-like conceits, without due respect or seasonable observation of the humble abilities and sufficiency's of by-standers, and that many times when he hath neither calling, fitness, efficacy of matter, or power of the holy Ghost. And if a man do not presently upon the bare and first proposition, accord and accommodate his judgment to every circumstance of whatsoever he holds, and square exactly to his Oracles; he begins to shake the head as though he were a lost man, and is ready, ipso facto, to excommunicate him out of his conscience. I speak not thus, to stop the current of comfortable talk, edifying discourse, and fruitful conference, in any true-hearted Nathanael's. There is infinitely more need to stir them up, and quicken them to more forwardness and forth-putting this way at Christian meetings: but only to intimate the vain-glorious, empty, opinionative talkativeness of such as are possessed with this white Devil. 2. Such an One also is wont to be too austere, censorious, sour, and imperious in his carriage towards those which are without; whereby he becometh; both a stumbling block to them in their way to Christianity; and brings also an unnecessary, scandalous, false aspersion upon the ways of God, and yoke of

Christ, as though they were harsh, heavy, and unpleasant; when as they are most sweet, easy and amiable. I know full well, there is not the wisest, holiest, humblest, discreetest Christian alive, can so possibly bear and behave himself; but profaneness will plague him with slanderous imputations of any kind. Jesus Christ our Master was not free this way; which of his servants then can, dare, or will expect and desire exemption? Blessed be God, that our good names are oiled, so that the ink will not stick which is cast upon them.

There is scarce a religious Professor, especially of resolution and spirit to be found, but some men of the world will charge him with surliness and pride. Whereas many times, not only the imputation is misgrounded, mistaken, miss-imputed, fastened upon him for the most part, by reason of his 1. inconformity to the courses of the world, and corruptions of the times, 2. unsociableness with profane men, 3. resolution and undauntedness in good causes, 4. innocence and independency, which beget boldness and braveness of mind, &c. but also those fellows themselves, who so slander him; because their consciences were never enlightened with sight, sense, and acknowledgement of the foulness of sin, their own vileness, the exactness of God's Law, purity of his most holy Nature, severity and certainty of his Judgments; cannot possibly choose but be passingly proud. Yet for all this, I would advise all those who have in earnest given their names to Christ; that they would walk warily, and so demean themselves, that they give no just offense in this kind. For when they have tried both ways, they shall find, that mercifulness and meekness to those which are without; humility and humanity; affable, courteous, and loving deportment; and so becoming all things to all men in Paul's sense, and so far as we may with a good conscience, is the better way, subscribed unto by the manifold

experiences of wisest and worthiest Christians, to win honor to our profession, to gain more unto God's side, and to preserve our selves in as much peace amidst a naughty and crooked generation, as holiness will possibly permit. 3. God in his just judgment gives over such an One sometimes to fantastical opinions, odd and absurd tenets, swerving brainlessly and senselessly from the holy harmony of confessions, and our blessed pure Orthodox Articles of Religion; the truth whereof, every honest Man, if need required, ought to seal with his blood: which when superficialness, and its ordinary consort, self-conceitedness, have unhappily brought forth, by the midwifery of a kind of spiritual wantonness; be they never so monstrous and misshapen, yet some giddy heads will hearken and hanker after them; so that many times many weak, ungrounded, unstable young beginners in Profession, are limed, and woefully entangled, as we see too often in our chiefest City, whence ensues an incredible deal of prejudice, hurt and hindrance, even to the common state of goodness; to the honor and acceptation of Christianity. For thereupon is raised a cry in all conventicles of good fellowship, and consistories of worldly wisdom: That these forward professors will all turn fantastical, Familists, Anabaptists, Arians, anything. Which cry awakes the eye of State-jealousy; and so by an unworthy consequent, draws upon those who are true of heart, even God's best servants, and the Kings best subjects, discountenance, suspicions, if not molestations; unnecessarily, causelessly. For so might ye root up your Rose-trees, because a worm sometimes breeds in the sweetest bud. So might ye extinguish Monarchies from the face of the earth, because they sometimes degenerate into tyrannies. So might ye conceive ill of Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, because Judas proved naught, &c. 2. Sometime he suffers him to fall into some gross sin, in the face of the World, and before the watchful

eye of scornful enemies; the infamy and scandal whereof, being once on wing, fly abroad as swift as the Eagles of the Heavens, over a whole Country, over a Kingdom; the Devils and their drunken trumpeters are speedy Dromedaries to carry such news: and this concurrent cry resounds from all places with much wicked triumph and insultation: You see now what these professors are; One so famous for his forwardness, is fallen into such a gross sin, and so notoriously; They are even all alike, &c. Which by accident, and in the event redounds too often, to the inexpiable disgrace of our holy profession, the strengthening of the stubborn, the staggering of the strong, the stunting of those which are coming on, the hindering of the weak, the hardening of the wicked, the chaining of the scorner, far faster to his chair of pestilence. Woe unto him by whom such offense doth come; except by a remarkable repentance and recovery, after blessed David's example, he reestablish himself in the hearts of God's people, and stop the mouths of the adversaries, who are equally guilty of impenitency, as of far, perhaps, grosser impieties. Austin doth excellently express, and to the life, the wiliness of the wicked, and humor of the world upon such unhappy occasions. There was, as it seems, some such scandalous accident befell in his family. Whereupon he writes an Epistle to the Ministers, Seniors, and whole City of Hippo; and heartily entreats them all, that themselves would not therefore either faint in that Christian course, and holy profession; or fall foul with suspicions and censures upon all, for the faults of a few: for there is no society so happy, which is not stained with some villainy. Although, saith he, discipline be exercised in my family with a watchful eye, yet I am a man, and live amongst men; and therefore cannot presume that mine house should be better than the Ark of Noah; then the house of Abraham; then the house of Isaac; then the house of Jacob; then the house

of David, &c. In all which, some were naught; nay, then the family of Jesus Christ, in which there was a traitor and a thief. Lastly, then Heaven itself, from which the Angels fell. But that which I would principally have you take notice of in that Epistle, and for which I specially mention it, is Austin's emphatical, elegant, and effectual expressing the eager, itching, ambitious humor of the wicked, to father and fasten the faults of some, upon the whole generation of the just. Instant, saith he, *Satagunt, ambiunt*; I cannot express their full significancy in English: but part of his meaning is; They every way, and infinitely labor, that when some professors of holiness have foully fallen indeed, or be only so slandered, the World would believe, That they are all such. Do you not think in his time the World did thus insult and exclaim, or in the like manner upon Lots fall: Here now you see Puritan Lot, who could not endure the good fellowship of the Sodomites; he is now himself seized upon by Incest, They are all such, I will a warrant you. In David's time: What, David? A man so precise, that he professeth, a liar shall not tarry in his sight, Psal. 101. Hath he taken away another man's wife? You see now what they all are, &c. Proportionably in these times, (and it will be the humor of those that hate to be reformed to the worlds end, so to calumniate) if any who have given their names unto Christ, be detected, nay, or suspected of any notorious scandalous crime, it is a sufficient warrant for the wicked to raise a general cry, and to proclaim everywhere; They are all alike. And good fellows, as they call them, will think themselves wronged, if the World thereupon do not conceive the only difference between them, and forward Professors to be; that these carry things more cunningly, and have an art in concealing their miscarriages. We, say they, are plain-dealing men, and appear, as we are; we are flesh and blood, and must have our pleasures; and therefore refresh ourselves at many

merry and Jovial meetings: we swear sometimes, and drink, and game; and to tell you true, do a great deal worse; but without hypocrisy: whereas these demure holy Ones bear themselves more reservedly, wear a vizor in their visible conversation, but assure yourselves, sin in secret as well as we. Just as Austin saith in the forecited place; The wicked watch and observe; and if they spy any of the betterer side to fall, they would presently have the World to think, That the rest are all such; only they are not ever discovered. Now the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, who so infatuatest the judgments, and blinds the understandings of men, otherwise of good parts, and very worldly wise, whom thou woefully hoodwinkest and hardenest to their endless overthrow. 1. That they should wickedly and absurdly condemn all for some, whereby they bar themselves everlastingly from the love of the Brotherhood. 2. That they should erect Tribunals in other men's consciences (which is God's Royal prerogative;) and so miscensure their hearts, to their own hardening. 3. That they should not be able to discern between being hailed and hurried, as it were, into some sin, against the general purpose of a man's heart, and practice of his life, by the violence of some temptation, passion, or impetuous sudden ensnarement, which he after heartily bewails with much bitterness of spirit, and exemplary repentance, willing, if God were so pleased, to redeem the scandal of his fall with the shedding of his blood; taking occasion thereupon to walk more warily, and to do more nobly in the service of his God, all the days of his life: and a resolved delightful wallowing in variety of lusts, pleasures, and gross sins, without any repentance or reformation at all.

I conclude the whole point, and a good part of my meaning in the words of an excellent Writer, not much altered. I not only hold it lawful to rejoice in those good things, wherewith God hath blessed us in any kind

whatsoever, especially the saving gifts of the holy Ghost; but a note of much unthankfulness, to entertain them with a sullen and unfeeling disposition. Yet all human affections and endowments, wherein due reverence to God is wanting, are no better than obscure clouds, hindering the influence of that blessed Light, which clarifies the soul of man, and predisposeth it unto the brightness of eternal felicity. So that insolent joy and overweening which a man in the pride of his vain imagination, conceiveth of his own worth, doth above all other passions blast our minds, as it were, with lightning, and make us reflect our thoughts upon our own seeming inherent goodness; forgetting the whilst Him, to whom we are indebted for our very Being: and besides, it blows upon our gifts with such a malignant humor, that they also become unfruitful, and unprofitable to others.

Thus much concerning the first extreme and error in managing our spiritual estate, to wit, a proud overprizing of our own graces with a conceited over-weening self-estimation. I come now to the second, which is, A dejected distrustful undervaluing of God's mercies, the promises of life and graces which we possess.

And here I cannot hold, but must, even with some indignation, expostulate and contest with many of God's hidden Ones, about their heavy, pensive, and uncomfortable walking; for that they are so far from entertaining and expressing that unspeakable glorious joy, which upon their new birth, is their native portion and patrimony; their just and due inheritance; as certainly theirs by an everlasting propriety and right (if they would but open their eyes to see it, and enlarge their hearts to grasp it) being a fruit of that holy Spirit which dwells in them; and a price of Christ's Kingdom established in their souls, as their clothes upon their backs, their

hearts in their bodies, and blood that runs in their veins: I say, they are so far from walking in the strength, and light of this joy, that they wickedly, I dare say, if not willfully, abandon and expose their spirits, freed forever by the Lambs blood, from the hellish fangs of any slavish horror, to the unnecessary rack of much fruitless, unworthy, and slavish sadness. Whereby, besides their own needless sinful self-created torment:

1. They most unworthily undervalue, abridge, and disparage the infiniteness of God's dearest and tender mercy; who is a thousand times more ready and forward to bind up any broken heart, than it to bleed before him.

2. They unnecessarily disable and indispose themselves for the duties, and comfortable discharge of both their Callings.

3. They gratify Satan, and satisfy his cruel humor; who if he cannot have a man's company in Hell hereafter; (for if he were sure of that, he would make him live as joyfully and jovially, as he could possibly) he labors might and main, to hold him upon the rack of slavish distrustful terrors, all the days of his life.

4. They are thereby many times occasions of discouragement, and disheartening to those which are without, that they are more loath to enter into the ways of life; prejudging them to be thorny and rough, dark and deep, full of dumps and drooping, of heaviness and horror; whereas indeed and truth, they are all paved with mercy and love, strowed with Violets and Roses, full of fresh springs of spiritual comforts, and sweetly enlightened even in the darkest passages, with heavenly and healing beams of the Sun of righteousness. For whether it be fit to believe the Spirit of all truth and comfort; or the scornful spirit of impure drunkards, and Satan's Revelers; judge you. This precise and strict walking, say they, which is pressed upon

us with such importunateness, and confidence, would not lead us to mopishness and melancholy; would enchain us to that abridgement of our pleasure, restraint from company; from crowning ourselves with Rose-buds, and former courses of good fellowship and mirth, of which our generous and jovial spirits are most impatient, and utterly incapable. But what saith the blessed Spirit; Her ways are ways of pleasantness: and all her paths are peace. They give them occasion to mis-conceive, that the yoke of Christ is burdensome, and will gall their necks: whereas in truth and trial, it is easy and light, and would prove a chain of heavenly Pearls to adorn their souls; that after they have given their names to profession, they shall never have merry day, but must necessarily bid adieu to all delight: whereas their joys should not be taken away, but only changed, as one of the Ancients speaks; and that most happily, and with an invaluable advantage. For the filth and froth of their sensual bitter-sweet pleasures, fugitive follies, and furious delights, which pass away in the act, as the taste of pleasant drink dieth in the draught, should be turned into that true unconquerable spiritual joy, which the World cannot give, nor man, nor devil take away. Their crashes of loud laughter amid their pots and pastimes, which are but as the cracking of thorns under a pot, the Devils Wakes and Music for Hell, should be converted into a sweet, constant, habitual contentment of mind. Nay more; whereas before in the very height and ruffe of their maddest meetings, most roaring outrages and revelings, their hearts upon remembrance of death, their secret impenitent guiltiness, that strict account at God's dreadful Tribunal, at which they may be arraigned the next hour, &c. were full often twitched and stung with many inward bitter griping's, and slavish foretastes of hellish terror; yet upon their change, and change of joys, even in the highest tide and torrent of their penitent tears, and sorrow for sin, (and they

should be sad for nothing else) their spirits shall be refreshed and ravished with a Paradise of sweetest peace, and heavenly glimpses of eternal light. In a word, if they would in earnest abandon the Devils service, come out of Hell, give their names unto Christ in truth, and try; I dare assure them in the Word of life and truth, they would not exchange the saddest hour of all their life afterward, with the prime and flower of all their former sensual pleasures; might they have ten thousand Worlds to boot. Here then is no loss in the change. But in the meantime, much to blame are they, who being truly God's, yet out of weakness, want of wisdom, willful listening unto the father of lies, will not give way to the counsel of the Prophets, that they may prosper in spiritual hearts-ease, and so prevent such occasions.

Let those that hate to be reformed, hang down their heads: let swaggering Belshazzar's countenance be changed; let his thoughts trouble him; let the joints of his loins be loosed, and his knees smite one against another: let the hearts of all ambitious Nimrods, covetous Worldlings, swinish Drunkards, filthy Whoremasters, cruel Usurers, lovers of pleasures; or whosoever live and lie in any beloved sin against an enlightened conscience, tremble as the leaves of the Forest that are shaken with the wind: Let a sound of fear be ever in their ears, and sorrow seize upon their hearts, as the pangs of a woman in travail; even as the torture of her that bringeth forth her first child: Let trouble and anguish, and the cup of trembling in the hand of the Lord make them afraid; and let them every hour look to meet their angry God, as a Bear bereaved of her Whelps, to rent the very cowl of their hearts, and to devour them like a Lion: Let sadness sit upon their foreheads as its proper seat, and furies of conscience affright their spirits still with cries of blood: Let no voice of joy or gladness be heard in their habitations, but the most grizzly apparitions of damned horror, dwell forever in the eye of their

guilty consciences. For without repentance, this is their lot, and this is their everlasting portion. And most happy were they, if anything would fright and fire them out of the arms of darkness and snares of the devil; I say, let the aspiring Lucifers look heavily, upon foresight of their dreadful downfall; for though they exalt themselves as the Eagle, and though they set their nests among the stars; yet thence will I bring them down, saith the Lord. Though their excellency mount up to the heavens, and their head reach unto the clouds, yet they shall perish forever like their own dung. Let all covetous worldlings cry out, for so the holy Ghost commands them; Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments motheaten, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Let all impure goodfellow-drunkards hold down their heads, and howl for the horrible Woe which dogs them at heels: Woe to the Crown of Pride, to the Drunkards of Ephraim. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong One, which as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm; as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand, the Crown of Pride: the Drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden down under feet. Let the very heartstrings of all lascivious wanton's tremble at the terror of that cutting commination, Heb. 13:4. Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge. Let that stinging But, Eccl. 11:9, strike cold to the hearts of all sensual Gallants and sons of pleasure: Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: But, know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Nay, let the heart of every man, whosoever he be, of what cloth soever his coat be made, that goes on

in the willing allowed practice of any one known sin, fall asunder in his breast like drops of water, for the day of horror that is at hand, and the sword of vengeance which hangs over his head. For certainly, at length the Lord will wound the hairy scalp of everyone that goeth on still in his trespasses. In a word, wailing and wringing of hands, woe and alas, is the merriest song that any wicked man upon earth can sing upon good ground, while he yet abides in his unregenerate state. Who doth not see and acknowledge it; except he willfully shut his eyes, or be grossly hoodwinked by the Devil or a rank Atheist? For there is a cup, which is called, a cup of God's fury, and a cup of trembling, in the hand of the Lord; whose little finger is able to beat the greatest mountain to powder, and rent the hardest Rock in pieces: and the wine is red; which intimates unto us the sharpness and fierceness of God's fiery indignation: it is full of mixture; brimful of stinging ingredients: and he poureth out of the same; to stir up and quicken, as it were, the bitterness and very bottom: and all the wicked of the earth shall, will they, nill they, wring out the dregs thereof and drink them, Psal. 75:8.

But now on the other side, Let all those of the Brotherhood, I use the phrase of the holy Ghost; all those who have given their names to Christ in truth, and are true of heart in his holy service, upon whose heads everlasting light doth rest, lift up their heads. Let the amiable aspect of sweetness and peace ever dwell upon their foreheads: Let heavenly beams of spiritual lightsomeness and mirth shine fresh in their faces: Let never uncomfortable damp of any slavish sadness or touch of hellish terror, vex their blessed hearts: Let them never more be afraid of any evil tidings, or of destruction when it cometh. In a word; Let them be infinitely and forever merry, and sweetly glad at the very heart root. And good cause why. It is the charge and

command of the Spirit of all truth and comfort, Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart, Psal. 32:11.

Oh therefore that the Lord would be pleased so to perfume and sweeten the ensuing passages, with the refreshing glimpses of his glorious face, and dear infusions of Divine Joy; that I might be vouchsafed that honor of being his humble Instrument, to raise up, and quicken the drooping spirits of all that are true of heart; of all that bear a sincere invincible affection to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and power of Godliness; that they would be everlastingly merry; that they would arise and shake themselves from the dust, and put on their beautiful garments; that they would forever, with a resolution never to be shaken with all the powers of hell, banish and bar out of their happy souls, all their unnecessary scruples, distrusts, dejections, sad thoughts, and heaviness of heart; that they would out of sensibleness of their present unutterable felicity, and strength of their truly Heroical spirits, bear and behave themselves as heirs of heaven indeed; and as the Favorites of the King of Kings! So should they infinitely more honor the sweetness of God's merciful disposition; the dearness of his love; the tenderness of his compassionate bowels; the bottomless mystery of his free grace; the preciousness and truth of his promises; the invaluable-ness of his Sons Blood; the pleasantness of the ways of grace; and the glorious work of the holy Ghost upon their own blessed souls.

Let them ever keep fresh and strong in their minds for this purpose, such causeful considerations as these.

1. True joy, the most noble, sweet and amiable affection, that ever warmed the heart of man, is by warrantable propriety and rightful interest, only peculiar and proper to honest, humble, and holy hearts. Such gracious and

golden Cabinets are only fit for this heavenly Jewel. The beauty and deliciousness of it, are confined only to the communion of Saints, the sealed Fountain, the Spouse of Christ. The Brotherhood alone is blessed with its refreshments and ravishing influence. It never did, or ever will shine or sparkle out the least glimpse upon the world, or to any earthly heart. The most ambitious eager hunters after pleasures, the worlds greatest Favorites and dearest minions, have only but engrossed and grasped a Bedlam counterfeit of it: I said of laughter, saith, Solomon, It is mad. For the truth is, no wicked or unregenerate man hath any true cause or good ground at all to rejoice, laugh, or be merry. I will make it plain in a word, even to the scorner. Suppose a great man convicted and condemned for Treason, going towards the place of execution a mile off: and let there a Table all along be furnished with variety of dainties; let him tread upon Violets and Roles, cloth of Arras, cloth of Gold, or what you will, all the way; let him be attended on both sides with most exquisite music and honorable entertainments: Do you think all this would make him laugh heartily, carrying this in his heart, that he must lose his head at the miles end? I think not. As far less true cause hast thou to laugh, whosoever thou art, that walkest on impenitently in any wicked course, or liest delightfully in any beloved sin; as a temporal death is less then endless torments. For he is but going to lose his head; but thou, as an already condemned man also, art posting towards hell. He that believeth not, saith John, is condemned already, John. 3:18.

If we peruse punctually the happiest estate of the most glorious worldling, and all his ways; we shall find no matter at all for true joy, either to breed in, or feed upon. Let us walk into his fools Paradise, and survey all the fading flowers of his imaginary felicities. It may be we shall find wealth,

power, pleasures, honors, pomp, and magnificence of state; perhaps an Imperial Crown, the top of all earthly happiness. And what of all these? Alas! Gold and Pearl, as one says, are but shining dust, or excrements of the earth: Power, is but a flash of lightning, that fears or strikes another, and forth with itself is suddenly extinct: Pleasure, is but a bait, and yet passeth away in the act, as the taste of a pleasant drink dieth in the draught: Honor, is but a breath, and yet binds a man in gilded fetters, and blasts his spirit with far more care and fear, then when he was most mean: Even as highest boughs are most shaken by the winds, and the points of steeples beaten most with storms and lightning. All worldly splendor and pomp, is but a smoke, which vanisheth as it riseth, and draws tears from the eyes. Even a Regal Diadem, in the sense and censure of a Heathenish King, is attended with such a weighty irksome, and painful charge, that, saith he, He who foreknew the weight of a Scepter, should he find it lying upon the ground, he would not deign to take it up. And what is himself, the owner and Lord of all these? A little walking earth, a colored piece of clay, a warm piece of dirt, a very bag of choler, phlegm, and other filth; today a man, tomorrow none: his breath is in his nostrils; stop but his nose, and he is dead. And what is his abode amongst these painted vanities and things of naught? For sudden passage and change, it is like a Shepherds tent, a Weavers shuttle, or a water bubble; like a hying Poast, or a flying cloud; like a ship under sails, or an Eagle on her wings; like a fading flower, or a falling leaf; like foam that is scattered, or dust that is driven with the wind; like a vapor, a thought, a smoke, a wind that passeth and cometh not again; like a flying shadow, yea, the very dream of a shadow, as one says, and that a morning dream, which is even as soon ended as begun. But let us look into his inside, and the state of his soul, and see if we can there find anymore peace, comfort, or

constancy. No, there you shall behold a lively resemblance of the very restless tumultuations of the raging sea; the never-dying Worm breeding and growing big in the froth of his filthy lusts, and rottenness of his rebellious heart: In a word, his poor soul bleeding to eternal death. Let us come unto his death; from the inevitable stroke whereof, all the Gold and Pearl of East and West can no more redeem him, then can an handful of dust; and there he shall find despair and horror, like two evening Wolves, enraged with hellish hunger; ready to tear his soul in pieces, when there is none to help. And what follows? He must lay down his cold carcass among the stones of the pit, at the roots of the rocks: his name, by reason of his former pride; luxury, oppression, opposition to goodness, shall rot as fast, and stink as bad above ground, as his body in the grave. And lastly, the only forethought whereof should make him tremble all the days of his life; his immortal soul sinks irrecoverably by the weight of sin, into the bottom of the burning Lake; where there are torments without end, and past imagination; exceeding not only all patience, but all resistance; where there is no strength to sustain, nor ability to beat; that which there, whilst God is God, forever must be borne. And when they have been endured millions of years; yet are no nearer end, then when they began; nor the soul nearer out, then when it came in. Tell me then, I pray you, in all this, is there any room for rejoicing? Is there any matter for true mirth? No more then taste in the white of an egg, then strength in a broken staff of reed, then sweetness in the apples of Sodom. Why then, it is a shame for the weakest Christian that breathes but the spiritual life, even of holy desires; not to be infinitely more merry then the most glorious and magnificent worldling upon earth. Shall a graceless wretch, going towards hell, to whom God himself hath proclaimed, There is no peace, no joy, as the Septuagint's tender it; who is a

mere. Thief, Robber and usurper, in respect of all the joys upon which he intrudes; and which way soever he casts his eyes, if he wear not false spectacles, or be blindfolded by the Devil, can see nothing but the ugly face of horror, and true cause of trembling. If he look backward upon the time past; he may see all the abominable lusts of his youth, all the sins of his former life, registered with an iron pen in the book of his conscience; and lurking there like so many sleeping lions; who upon the very first touch of God's visiting hand, will awake, arise, and rent in pieces. If he look upon his present state, through the clear Crystall of God's righteous Law: He may see Divine vengeance dogging him hard at the heels; ready to strike him down into hell, upon the next riot and rebellion against his patient Lord, That most horrible fiery tempestuous storm, Psal. 11:6, ready to fall upon his head, even when he is warmest in his wealth, and in the hottest gleam of his worldly prosperity: sudden destruction ready to seize upon him unavoidably, as travel upon a woman with child, when he is singing the securest Requiem to his soul of safety and peace. If he look forward to future time, he sees death, the grave, God's strict Tribunal, the last Judgment, and endless miseries of the other world: the sting, poison, and terrors of which, he shall never be able, either to avoid or abide. I say, Shall such a fellow flee in the face? And shall not a true hearted Nathanael, to whom Jesus Christ hath bequeathed a legacy of peace; whom the Spirit of God bids rejoice evermore; and who, which way soever he looks, if he open his eye of faith, shall see nothing but matter of sweetest contemplation; infinite cause of truest joy, and spiritual ravishment: If he look backward upon the time, whilst he yet lay under the tyranny of the Devil, and dominion of the first death; he shall see the Catalogue of all his former sins, should it be as black as hell, as foul as Sodom, as red as scarlet, fairly, and

forever washed away in that fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, even the precious blood of that immaculate Lamb Jesus Christ, the Holy and the righteous: If he look upon his present state, he shall find himself preserved as a Jewel most safe in the precious Cabinet of God's dearest providence; environed with a glorious guard of mighty Angels; kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time: If he look forward, he shall see death indeed; but the sting taken out of it by the death of Christ; the grave perfumed to his hand, by his Saviors blessed Burial; wherein he may lie down as in a bed of Down, fenced with the omnipotent arm of God, for the glory of the Resurrection; the Throne of grace in Heaven, standing upon pillars of mercy and love; where Jesus Christ sits as Judge, who shed his hearts blood for him; and is his Advocate, while he yet abides in this vale of tears; the bosom of Abraham, the arms of God Almighty wide open, and stretched out to receive him at the end of his Pilgrimage into his Masters joy: I say, shall such a happy soul not have an Heaven in his heart, but be heavy-hearted? Shall a vassal of the Devil laugh, and an heir of Heaven look heavy? Monstrous absurdity!

2. Every Christian, after his new creation, hath ever incomparably more matter of mirth than mourning; infinitely greater cause to be ravished with spiritual joy, than to be dejected by grief. Though this may seem a paradox to the clearest eye, and best apprehension of worldly wisdom, yet in truth it is a true principle in the mystery of Christ. I do thus manifest it, and make it good to the saddest mourner in Zion; if he do not give more care to the lying malicious dictates of the Devil, and distrusts of his own heart, than to the well-grounded counsel of the Prophets, and impregnable truth of God's blessed Word. In the right estimate and valuation, all the afflictions and sufferings of this life; whether of soul, body, outward state, or any way, are

but dust in the balance, in respect of that exceeding excessive eternal weight of glory, purchased and prepared for him by the blood of his dearest Lord. In the original it is, as a worthy Divine says well, a superlative transcendent phrase of speech, which far passeth the height of all human Oratory, and all the Rhetoric of the most eloquent Heathens; because they never treated upon such a Theme; they were not inspired with such a spirit. Whereupon saith the Apostle in another place, I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us. Whence it followeth, that a very fore-imagination of that most inconceivable happiness to be had hereafter; to wit, the shining splendor and sun-like glory of our bodies; the unspeakable perfections and excellencies of our souls; the admirable beauty of the place; the glorious comfort of our heavenly company; the beatifical fruition of the most blessed Trinity, &c. and that which crowns our bliss with impossibility of further addition, endlessness of all these: I say, a serious preconceit hereof, enlightened and strengthened by saith, is able to hold up the Christians heart with infinite strength, and to refresh it with a secret unutterable gladness, even amidst variety and extremity of all worldly troubles; and doth minister as far more matter of rejoicing, then these of mourning, as that forementioned exceeding excessive everlasting weight of glory, is to be preferred before a little momentary light affliction. Hence it is, that the holy Martyrs of Jesus were so merry, and sweetly contented in the midst of all their outward miseries, pressures, persecutions, and Martyrdom itself. I was in prison, saith one of them, till I go into prison. I feel no more pain, saith another, in the fire, then if I were in a bed of Down; it is as sweet to me as a bed of Roses. I believe, saith a third, there is not a merrier heart in the world at this instant then mine it. To One objecting to a fourth, Christ's agony and

sadness to his cheerfulness: Yea, saith he, Christ was sad that I might be merry. He had my sins, and I have his merit and righteousness. But specially let us look upon Paul, a blessed and precious pattern for us to imitate in this point. He was troubled on every side; Without were fighting's, within were fears. He was in stripes above measure: in prisons more frequent: in deaths oft: Of the Jews five times received he forty stripes save one: Thrice was he beaten with rods: Once was he stoned: Thrice he suffered Shipwreck: A night and a day was he in the deep: In journeying often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in peril by his own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the City, in perils in the Wilderness, in perils in the Sea, in perils amongst false brethren: In weariness and painfulness, in watching's often: in hunger and thirst, in fasting's often: in cold and nakedness. He was called a pestilent fellow. He was accounted as the filth of the world, and off scouring of all things: And yet for all this, he professeth of himself, that he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. Nay which is more, and more punctual for my purpose, he saith in another place, That he was filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all his tribulation. Now every sincere-hearted Professor is bound to over-abound exceedingly in this joy, as well as Paul. Not so, saith the weak Christian; for Paul had a stronger faith than I, and more grace. It is true, but yet thy faith is as true as his. And it is not so much the muchness, as the truth of faith, which gives right and interest to a Crown of life, comfort in all afflictions, and everlasting lightsomeness. Therefore well said a worthy witness to the truth, Paul and Peter were more honorable members of Christ than I, but I am a member: They had more store of grace than I; but I have my measure; and therefore sure of glory. It is strange then, that any true-hearted

Nathanael having such good ground of rejoicing; sinning in that he doth not rejoice; and joy being so sweet and welcome a guest to the heart of man; should wear out a few and wretched days in unnecessary heaviness, and sinful sadness; whereby he highly dishonors God's free love; hinders others from the ways of life; hurts full sore his own soul, and only gratifies Satan.

3. It is a constant mark of every regenerate man, to make conscience of all God's Commandments, Psal. 119:6, Now the holy Ghost doth not only in many several places give us charge to rejoice, but is very earnest upon us in this point: Nay, doth so often double and treble with extraordinary emphasis and elegant gradation, his entreaty and importunity in the same place. Let the Saints, saith he, be joyful with glory, Psal. 149:5. Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee, Psal. 40:16. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, Psal. 33:1. Rejoice evermore, 1. Thes. 5:16. Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice, Phil. 4:4. Let all those that put their trust in thee, rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, Psal. 5:11. Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice, Psal. 68:3. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart, Psal. 32:11. It is not an arbitrary or indifferent thing, as some may suppose, to rejoice, or to be sad. But a comfortable commandment is sweetly enforced upon us, by the fountain of all comfort, to rejoice; and we break a commandment, if we rejoice not. And therefore we are bound in conscience to shake ourselves from the dust, to pluck up our spirits, to expostulate and be angry with our hearts, if they grow heavy as David did: Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? For we must answer as well for not rejoicing, as for not praying: for breaking this commandment, Rejoice evermore; as that

other, Thou shalt not kill: (I know full well there are difference and degrees in sin.)

But here a weak Professor being pressed to the entertainment and excellency of this joy, may be troubled and tempted upon the survey of the definition and nature of it. For this spiritual Christian joy, is a delicious motion of the mind, stirred up by the holy Ghost, from the presence and possession of Christ Jesus our Sovereign God, dwelling in the soul by faith; whereby the heart is extraordinarily ravished and refreshed with a sweet, holy, unspeakable delight. Now, saith he, if it be so; I must tell you, I find and feel no such sensible grasping of Jesus Christ, in the arms of my faith, or assured possession of him, that I dare admit of this joy, or meddle with it.

But know, that in the time of thy spiritual infancy, temptations, desertions, and other damps and dejections of soul especially; let thy feeling or acknowledgement be what it will; thou dost most certainly enjoy the Lord Jesus, even by a sincere hunger and thirst after him and his righteousness, and by thine upright hearts adhering and cleaving unto him, as thy only and chiefest joy: and by consequent art upon good ground, and by true right interested to all that joy, which the blessed Spirit doth so importunately press upon thee in so many places. Here refresh thy memory with the revise of my former distinction of assurance of evidence, and adherence.

4. What canst thou think upon, or what can possibly befall thee; out of which thou being turned unto God, and true of heart, mayest not collect matter of comfort, and by the mighty help of faith extract some joyful meditation? 1. If thou survey thy graces, with which the free mercy of God hath glorified thy soul, thou shalt see in them a sacred heavenly sun-shine, which is able to alighten the darkest midnight of all thine outward miseries; to disperse and dissolve the blackest and most tempestuous clouds of

temporal troubles. Thou shalt feel in them such an inexplicable excessive sweetness, which were the world above thee a Sea of bitterness and gall, might turn it all into sugar. Thou shalt find in them such an impregnable mortal vigor, that will most certainly uphold thy spirit unconquerably, at thy dying hour, and before that last dreadful bar; when all impenitent wretches shall roar like wild Bulls in a net full of the terrors of God, and cry upon the Hills and rocks to hide them from his unquenchable wrath; which they shall never be able either to avoid or abide. Hence springs that abundant and unexhausted matter of joy, that the joy of Harvest of dividing great spoils, and that which is of such ravishing temper, that we think we are but in a dream, is but a toy and trifle, a type and shadow to it; and whichever predominates and incomparably transcends all matter of mourning. 2. If thou look out upon thine outward state; upon thy wife, children, friends, health, goods, good name, Orchards, Gardens, possessions, honors, or whatsoever thou hast attained, or dost enjoy with good conscience and sanctifiedly; thou art bound to rejoice in them, as temporal tokens of God's eternal love; notable encouragements to do more nobly in his glorious service and comfortable additions to thine hope of heaven; but so, and in such order, that as thy clothes first receive heat from thy body, before they can comfortably warm it: so some inward joy of reconciliation to the Creator, must first warm thine heart, before thou canst take any kindly comfort from the creatures. 3. Concerning crosses, afflictions, troubles, persecutions; which are wont to present themselves to the apprehension of carnal men with much horror; even in the very bitterness and extremity of them, if thou cast the enlightened eye of thy soul upon such places and promises as these: 1 Cor. 10:13, Heb. 13:5, Rom. 8:28, Heb. 12:6, 2 Cor. 4:17, Isa. 63:9, and the 43:2, and then reflect upon thy afflicted self, thou

mayest, by the marvelous work of faith, draw a great deal of joy from them. A patient submission unto, and fruitful exercise under God's visiting hand, is an infallible demonstration that thou art a son, and not a bastard. Is there then not more sweetness in those afflictions, which are evident marks thou art in the right way to Heaven; then in worldly pleasures, which clearly remonstrate to thy conscience, that thou art posting towards Hell? Hence it was, that the Apostles rejoiced, being beaten, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus: that Paul and Silas sung in prison at midnight: that Ignatius cried; Let Fire, Racks, Pullies, yea, all the torments of Hell come on me, so I may win Christ. 4. Nay, even contumelies and contempt; reproaches and scorn from the World for thy profession, which naturally much nettles a noble spirit, do crown thy head, and should fill thy heart with abundance of glory, blessedness and joy. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, saith Peter: for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you, 1 Pet. 4:14. Blessed are ye, saith Christ himself, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, Matth. 5:11,12. Scurrilities and scoffs, all spiteful speeches, odious nick-names, lying imputations cast upon thee in this kind, by tongues which cut like a sharp razor, are in their due estimate, and true account, as so many honorable badges (Let no cowardly Christian then decline them with wounding of his conscience) of thy Christian magnanimity, and resolute standing on the Lord's side; and at the Throne of Christ will be certainly reputed as characters of special honor, and remembrancers of thy worthy service, whereby thou shalt appear more acceptable and amiable in the eyes of Almighty God, and all that glorious triumphant Church above. 5. If thou rightly temper, and well weigh even thy sorest sorrow, and the very

bleeding of thy heart for sin; it should be so far from damping the lightsomeness of thy spirit, that it ought to open unto thee a well-spring of purest joy. For the penitent melting of our affections, and kindly mourning over Him, whom we have pierced with our sins, argues infallibly, and sweetly assures the presence and sanctifying power of the holy Spirit. And what greater comfort, or sweeter delight, then that which ariseth from a well-grounded evidence, that the Fountain of all comfort dwells in our souls? Such tears as burst out of a heart oppressed with grief for sin, are like an April shower, which though it wet a little, yet it begets a great deal of sweetness in the herbs, flowers, and fruits of the earth. As even in laughing the heart of the wicked is sorrowful: so contrarily even in such mourning, the heart of the true penitent is lightsome and comfortable. For habitual joy may not only consist with actual sorrow, and contrarily: but also even actual joy with actual sorrow. This is no strange thing in other cases; when we see a good man persecuted for a good cause, stand to it nobly; we grieve for his troubles, but rejoice in his resolution and undauntedness. As we ought then to grieve bitterly for our sins; so let us rejoice immeasurably for such ingenuous grieving. Let us lament heartily over him, whom we have wounded with our abominable lusts; but let us also be infinitely glad at the very heart root; that they are all pardoned by the pouring out of his blood. Not the most exquisite quintessence and extraction of all manner of Music; Sets, or Consorts; vocal or instrumental; can possibly convey so delicious a touch and relish to the outward ear of a man; as a certificate brought from the Throne of mercy by the blessed Spirit sealed with Christ's blood, to the bruised heart and grieved soul of a humble sinner, in the very depth of his sorrow. 6. If thou be troubled with temptations, and exercised even with variety of them, hear the holy Ghost: Count it all joy when ye fall into

diverse temptations. To let other particulars pass. From the very foulest and most grisly suggestions of Satan; thou mayst collect this common glorious comfort: That thou art none of his. For as he is wont to keep unconverted men in as merry a mood, and fair a calm of outward contentment, and inward security, as he can possibly; retiring and reserving his most fiery darts and hideous temptations, until he have them at some dead lift, and unavoidable strait: so all that are broke out of his hellish prison, by the help of the holy Ghost, he ordinarily pursues with deadly rage, and all the powers of darkness. He hunts them in his fittest seasons like a Partridge in the Mountains, with troubles without, and terrors within. The less peace thou hast therefore from him, the more pleasure mayst thou take in thine escape out of his clutches. The more restlessly he follows thee with the fury and variety of his temptations; the more sweetly and securely, if thou wilt give way to the counsel of the Prophets, and the work of faith; mayst thou repose thy wearied soul upon the comfortable assurance of being certainly God's.

5. Everyone that hath part in Christ's death, is bound in conscience, and bidden by the blessed Spirit to lead a most merry life, even to keep a Feast; a spiritual Holyday, as it were, from all servile terrors, slavish sadness, uncomfortable dejections of spirit: For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast, 1 Cor. 5:7.

The sweetness and excellency of this Feast, is notably set out and amplified by 1. the beautiful garments we put on and wear, when we are admitted unto it: 2. The matter, and magnificent provision: 3. The music: 4. The frank and bountiful entertainment and plenty: 5. The extraordinary pomp and princeliness.

1. For the first, meditate joyfully upon that rich attire, and those Royal attributes, glorifying and crowning Christ's blessed Spouse, with most admirable and ravishing beauty, Cant. 6:10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the Moon, pure as the Sun, terrible as an army with Banners? And know, that all the essential glory and fairness which is to be found in the whole Church, the Woman clothed with the Sun; as that of justification and sanctification, &c. belongs to every member thereof, to every faithful Christian.

[As the morning.] 1. The morning springs out of the greatest darkness; the night is most dark, as they say, a little before day: the illuminated soul arises out of the most darksome and damned grave of ignorance and sin. 2. The beauty of the morning is principally seen in her ruddiness: The soul that is newly delivered out of the horror of Egyptian darkness, and hands of the hellish Pharaoh, is all ruddy with passing thorough the red Sea of Christ's blood; that is the ground upon which all its beauty and blessedness is built. 2. The glory of the morning after its first peeping in the East, spreads fairer and fairer in all beauty and brightness, until the mid-day, and full illustration of the World: Grace in the soul, after the first plantation, grows stronger and stronger, shines fairer and fairer, until it set in the bottomless Ocean of endless Glory. See Prov. 4:18.

[Fair as the Moon] 1. The Moon receives all her light and luster from the Sun: all the graces, holiness, inherent righteousness, shining in a sanctified soul, are the image and impressions of the Sun of righteousness. 2. The Moon hath some spots in her face; but yet is a very beautiful creature by her borrowed light. The Christian is somewhat black with the remnants of original corruption, and by reason of his unavoidable frailties and imperfections; but yet comely as the curtains of Solomon, by the glory of

his new creation and gracious beams that shine upon his soul from the face of Christ. 3. The further the Moon is removed from the Sun; the fairer she is, and fuller of light: The more an humble soul, upon sight of that holy Majesty and purest eye, ten thousand times brighter than the Sun, which cannot look on iniquity; doth retire with lowliest thoughts into himself, to abhor himself in dust and ashes, as most vile, and far worthier to be thrown into the lowest dungeon of the kingdom of darkness, then to be honored with the love and light of his countenance; is more beautiful and amiable in the eyes of God.

[Sure as the Sun] The Moon shadows out inherent fairness; the Sun resembles and represents our imputed purity: So that this Royal Robe, the Sun of righteousness, the unspotted Justice of Jesus Christ, doth glorify the soul: 1. With an entire unstained beauty: our inherent holiness hath some spots and stains of imperfection like the Moon; but that imputed for our justification, is much more spotless and orient then the Sun. 2. Universally: We are washed as it were, from top to toe in the blood of Christ, and covered wholly with his perfect righteousness. 3. Constantly: The exercise of spiritual graces and sense of inward comfort, may sometimes ebb and wane for a time; but the Robe of Christ's Royal Justice once put on by the hand of Faith, is sure and the same forever.

[Terrible as an army with banners.] Besides this rich and royal attire; all this abundance of spiritual fairness and beauty; we are to put on also, lest hellish Harpies, that I may so speak, snatch away our delicious and divine dainties, that glistening Armor, thick set with heavenly Pearls, described, Ephes. 6. The glorious splendor whereof, is able to dazzle the devils eyes, to daunt his courage, and drive him out of the field. For he well knows it to be tried, and of proof, worn by our Captain Christ Jesus, who foiled him by

the sword of the Spirit, in that great combat in the Wilderness, Matth. 4. And it is that, by which the weakest Christians shall shortly, by the blessing of the God of Peace, bruise Satan under their feet.

The sum is; The heavenly attire of a sanctified soul, is far fairer and more amiable than the exquisite concurrence of all earthly beauties and visible glory. Were the light of all the stars above collected into Suns (which Astronomers say would make many) and added unto that great bright Body, the Prince of all the lamps in heaven; nay, if besides, there were an accession of all the orient splendor of all the Pearls and Jewels, of all the Crystall and glistening things in this lower world; and all compacted into one beautiful body, it would be but as a lump of darkness, to the glory and fairness of a sanctified soul. For the beauty and amiableness of a holy soul, inflames the heart and affections of the Son of God, with an extraordinary pang of spiritual fervent love, Cant. 4:9, whereas not all the glory of the world, though represented to his eye with the fairest luster, and in the most refined form, could move him ever a whit, Matth, 4:8-10. Plato was wont to say, if moral virtues could be seen with the outward eye; they would stir up in the heart extraordinary flames of admiration and love: what unspeakable ravishments then would Christian graces enkindle, were they visible to the carnal eyes? They would be able to make Persecutors, Professors; to turn even Drunkards into Puritans, as they call them; the most sensual Epicure, into a mortified Saint.

For the second: Let thy spiritual appetite seed merrily upon that sweetest place, Isa. 25:6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts, &c. Here is provided, as we may see, a magnificent and glorious feast, composed all of marrow and fatness, of most refined and purified wines; which shadow unto us, spiritual delicacies, those golden dainties, digged out of the rich mine of

the mystery of Christ, by the hand of Faith, in the Word, Sacraments, Prayer, Communion of Saints, solemn humiliations, sweet Soliloquies, solitary conferences with our God, feeling forethought of infinite joys thorough eternity, &c. Every circumstance breathes out nothing but sweetness.

[In this mountain.] It is dressed in Mount Zion, The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth, The glory of all Lands; which represents unto us, by way of shadow and type, the overflowing glory of the Christian Church; the very Heaven of all human societies; our only Sun in this inferior world; which though so much maligned, yet were it removed, there would be a little hell upon earth; and nothing left, but a dark Midnight of villainy and horror, for incarnate Devils to domineer in.

[A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.] Hereby is intimated the matter of the Feast, and Royal provision, amplified with extraordinary. Emphasis of words, elegancy of phrase, and iteration of the same sense, with variety of expression; which also argues its excellency. It is not enough to have said, of fat things, but there is added, of fat things full of marrow, and so proportionably of the wines; to intimate the most exquisite refined flower of all delicacies and dainties. The marrow of the fatness; as if a man should say, the spirit of the quintessence, the Diamond of the Ring, the sparkle of the Diamond, &c. And yet all this comes infinitely short of what the holy Ghost would shadow and show unto us by the most sumptuous materials of earthly Feasts. But above all, that which makes the Feast most matchless, is the Feast-maker; Jehovah, is the founder and furnisher of it: The maker of heaven and earth, makes it. The Poets describing men of most ambitious appetites after choicest dainties, say, that they rob all the Elements, to

please their palates. The Master of this Feast, the ever-blessed Jehovah, tells us of his store and treasures this way, Psal. 50:10,11. Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. But all these being but only matter of corporal food, are yet nothing to the spiritual sweetness of this heavenly Banquet. The secret and sacred delight of those divine dainties intended here by the holy Ghost, being unspeakable and glorious, doth infinitely transcend the possibility of all creatures to contribute, and the capacity of the largest natural understanding to conceive. So must be construed, as a worthy Divine says truly, that Text, 1 Cor. 2. Not of the joys of heaven, which here the spiritual man himself cannot tell what they shall be; but of the Gospels joy, of the Wine and Fatlings ready prepared, and now revealed to the Believer by the Spirit.

For the third. Hear the voice of sweetness and peace, Isa. 27:2. [Sing unto her: A Vineyard of red Wine. Sing] sounds nothing but joy, lightsomeness, and mirth: [Unto her] the sex of more amiableness, tenderness, and love. [A Vineyard] Vineyards, Orchards, Gardens, and such enclosed Plots, are, as it were, the flowers, stars, and Paradises of the earth. [Of Wine] as though the Vine-trees of this Enclosure brought not forth the grosser and uncrushed Grapes; but more immediately, the refined and pure blood of the Grape. [Red] The most generous sparkling delicious wine. A Vineyard is, as it were, the Diamond of the Ring; wine, the sparkle; red, the splendor of the sparkle: all excellencies, sweetness's, transcendencies; where God opens and expresses his heart and love to his Church, or any of his Chosen.

For the fourth. Let thy faith peruse with enlarged Meditations, those precious passages of gracious invitation and bountiful entertainment, Matth. 22:3,4, Isa. 55:1,2, Prov. 9:2,3, Cant. 2:3,4. Thou shalt suck and be satisfied

even with the breasts of consolations. Thy dearest and most glorious Mother, which is clothed with the Sun, treads upon the Moon, and wears on her head a Crown of twelve Stars; shall sweetly and tenderly bear thee upon her sides, and handle thee upon her knees, Isa. 66:11,12.

For the fifth. It is compared to a wedding Feast, and that of a Kings son; which is wont to be honored and crowned with height and variety of all magnificence and Majesty; joy and triumph, mirth and music. When a humbled soul is first made sure to the Son of God; the joyful harmony of all good hearts that hear of it, and the triumphant Hallelujahs of the blessed Angels in heaven, concur in consort, as it were, of congratulation, for so happy a match; in gladness and joy for so holy a change. This Feast begins at thy first betrothing; when thou receiving a Ring, as it were, beset with five precious stones: 1. Righteousness. 2. Judgment. 3. Loving kindness. 4. Mercies. 5. Faithfulness. It is afterward continued with many gracious passages of love and sweetest entertainments on both sides, even in this life; as appears in Solomon's Spiritual Love-song. It shall at last be crowned with an everlasting Jubilee, and pleasures more then the Stars of the firmament in number; when the Lamb receives his wife into his nearest and dearest embracement's; even into full possession of the most blessed, never-ending Kingdom of heaven; bought for her, full dearly, with his own hearts blood. Then, our Feast of grace ends in the endless fruition of Glory. How merry then ought we to be in the meantime, who are admitted and enrighted to this gracious and glorious Feast? Of expressing which to the life, the finest fare and most exquisite delicacies of all earthly feasts, come as far short, as the dull earth comes short of the glistening heaven; a gross mortal body of the preciousness of an ever-living soul: An inch of time, of the length of eternity. For corporal dainties fat a frail body for a span of time,

with earthly food, accompanied with a little poor vanishing delight of sense: But spiritual food fills an immortal soul with heavenly Manna, out of the mystery of Christ, attended with purest joy, and sincerest pleasures through all eternity.

6. As thou doest honor God's Justice, in trembling at his threats, and throwing thyself into the dust, as extremely vile, and fuel for hell under his mighty hand, and the piercing Majesty of his pure Word; representing clearly unto thy conscience, and pressing terribly upon it, the heinousness of all thy lusts, iniquities, abominable provocations of the eyes of his glory and divine indignation flaming against them: so when thou findest and feelest thy heart truly wounded by the sword of the Spirit, with remorse and sorrow for thy sins, weary with the heavy weight and burden of them, possessed with sincere hatred and loathing of every evil way; thou oughtest, and are bound in conscience, and by the commandment of the holy Ghost, to glorify God's truth in his promises of mercy, by throwing thyself into the blessed arms, and bleeding embracement's of the Lord Jesus dying upon the Cross; in whom they are all, yea, and Amen, with much assurance and peace; with unspeakable and glorious joy. And the rather, because the special season and only opportunity of thy magnifying and honoring the sweet influence of God's dearest mercies, tender-heartedness, and truth upon humble souls, through the precious promises of life, is in this life. In the world to come they shall all be accomplished upon thee to the utmost, and crowned with a clear vision and full fruition of that ever-blessed and most glorious Majesty. Then faith forever expires; and we see face to face.

These things being so, and most sure; let every true-hearted Nathanael be heartily entreated, nay, justly charged in the name of Jesus Christ, by the blessed Spirit, the fountain of all comfort; as he will answer it at the

glorious Throne of Mercy, erected in heaven upon purpose to make him everlastingly merry, that he henceforth most resolutely and forever cast out of his conscience, sprinkled with the Blood of the Lamb, and out of the Kingdom of Christ, overflowing with Peace and Joy, now comfortably established in his soul, those intruding usurpers Tyrants; only natural Lord's over natural men: I mean, horrors of guiltiness, false fears, slavish terrors, damps and drooping's; all uncomfortable pensiveness, dejections, and fear. And leaving such Harpies as these, and heart-eaters, only to the grumbling and guilty consciences of all those that hate to be reformed, and Satan's slaves, as their proper furies; let him with an holy violence against the devils cruel assaults and contradictions of his own distrustful heart, and with a cheerful spirit, lay hold upon his just inheritance and everlasting portion, purchased for him by the bitter and painful sufferings of the Son of God; even floods and fresh successions of sweetest joys, shed and showered down continually from the Throne of Grace upon his upright heart, in great abundance; if he will but only vouchsafe to open the door by the hand of faith, that the blessed beams of such lightsomeness and comfort, shining from the face of Christ, may come in. Let his soul, full fairly arrayed with its heavenly robes, to which, the beauty of the morning, brightness of the Moon, and glory of the Sun are but a shadow; and listening sweetly to that melodious Song, composed all of Peace and Joy, Pleasures and Pardon of sin, which the mercy of God makes in the ear of its faith; fall to, and fill itself at the Wedding Feast of the Kings Son, with those ever-springing rivers of spiritual refreshing, out of the bottomless depth of God's free love revealed in the mystery of Christ, by the ministry of the Word and Sacramental grace; as with marrow and fatness: Let it suck abundantly, and be satisfied with the breasts of everlasting consolations. And since he is

incorporated into Jesus Christ, and upon all assays hath the wings of faith in a readiness, to outsoar the height of all human miseries: let him forever stand like Mount Zion, inexpugnable, and unshaken with the most furious incursions of the floods and tempests of all worldly troubles, pressures, and persecutions. Let all those monstrous and most abhorred injections, filthy temptations, and fiery darts, pointed with the very malice of hell, ordinarily offered to the imagination of the best, be resolutely repelled by the shield of faith, and retorted as dung upon the Tempters face. Let all ungodly oppositions from man or devil, or fearful distrust be but as so many proud and swelling waves, dashing against a mighty Rock; which the more boisterously they beat upon it, the more are they broken, and turned into a vain foam and froth.

But to descend with thee more punctually to some particulars: Tell me truly, thou which hast given thy name to Christ in truth; what it is that troubles thee? What is it that still detains thine heavy heart, in the chains and fetters of horror and sadness; and locks it up so long from the entrance and entertainment of spiritual lightsomeness and joy? And if I be not able to confront and confound it, by some well-grounded counter-comfort and Antidote, out of the Oracle of truth; if I be not able to discover it to be a self-created cross; and to dissolve it into an imaginary and groundless fancy, by the light of the Word; then walk heavily still. Only believe the Prophets, and thou shalt prosper. Thou must then be contented to be counseled by the faithful Physicians of thy soul; who can show unto man his uprightness, and are instructed unto the kingdom of heaven; especially fetching all their prescriptions, receipts, and counterpoisons, out of the rich Treasury of the Book of Life:

Thou must learn;

1. To put a difference between nullity of grace, and imperfection of grace. Many good souls desire sincerely that their hearts were broken in pieces, and bled at the root, for their many and heinous sins; grieving much, that they can grieve no more: They hunger and thirst for Christ's righteousness, more than for the wealth of the whole world: They groan mightily in spirit for God's favor, pardon of sin, power over their corruptions, ability to pray better, &c. But yet because they feel not that measure of sensible smart and anguish of heart in lamenting their former life, as they desire; because they have not their wished joy and peace in believing; because they cannot now pray as fervently and feelingly as they, perhaps, were formerly wont; not with that freedom and heartiness as they would: in a word, because they are yet but smoking flax, and bruised reeds, not full shining lamps, and strong Pillars in the House of God; they will needs have all to be naught. Whereby they (I will not say belie the Spirit) but most unworthily deny, and in their conceits nullify his already wonderful glorious work upon their souls; to their, I know not how great spiritual hurt and hindrance. For such intolerable unthankfulness may be justly punished, and paid home with longer detainment, upon the Rack of distrustful slavish fear, and under the bondage of Legal terrors. It is a special point then of spiritual wisdom, and of singular consequence for the souls quiet and welfare; to discern weakness of grace from want of grace. Christ Jesus declaring in his heavenly Sermon who are blessed, doth not instance in the perfections, excellencies, and heights of Christianity; though all that are true of heart, sincerely pray for, and press after them: but in the least and lowest degrees; lest the smoking flax should be quenched, and bruised reeds be broken. He doeth not say; Blessed are the strong in Faith; the full assured: Blessed are those that take on for their sins, as for their only son, and for their first

borne: but, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: Blessed are the poor in spirit, &c.

2. Not always to make sense and feeling the Touchstone for the truth of thy spiritual state. A man in a swoon or a sleep feels not his life, and yet is a living man. It is one thing to have grace, another to feel grace. One thing the life of faith, another the life of sense.

3. Not to disgrace thy own graces, by casting thine eye too dejectedly upon other Christians perfections and precedencies. Let it not fare with thee in this case, as it doth with one gazing too much upon the Sun; who looking downwards again, can see just nothing, whereas before he clearly discerned all colors about him. Look upon them for imitation and quickening, not for slavish dejection and self-blinding.

4. To acknowledge and expect, that heavenly graces, as Faith, &c. while they inhabit these earthly houses, ebb and flow, wax and wane, faint and flourish; by reason of the combat between the flesh and the Spirit. So that if a man should tell me; that he hath ever prayed alike, without temptation, or damps, without any sense at any time of deadness or spiritual distempers; that he hath ever believed alike, without those doubts and scruples, that faintness and fear, of which most Christians so much complain; I durst confidently reply, that then he never either prayed acceptably, or believed savingly. The Fathers fitly resemble the state of the Church to the variable condition of the Moon; which sometimes shines more gloriously, sometimes not so: It is so also with every true member thereof, in respect of the exercise of grace, comfort in holy duties, sense of God's favor, spiritual feeling.

5. To believe the Spirit of Truth, the Word of God, and voice of Christ, before the father of lies, dictates of natural distrust, and suggestions of flesh

and blood. To which, methinks, thou shouldest be easily persuaded, and then all the mists of thy spiritual miseries would be quickly dispersed. It is a mighty work, if not a great miracle, to get any softness at all, or true remorse for sin, into the heart of a man; it is naturally so stony and impatient of grief; and the devil such a stirrer against it, so that the most are mere strangers unto it; yet for all that, when this penitent sorrow is once sincerely on foot in an afflicted soul; so endlessly and on every side are we pressed with the policies of Hell; it is too often too forward to feed upon tears still, and still too willful in refusing to be comforted. Satan then will be ready to say; Thou seest now, thy conscience being enlightened, thy sins are so horrible and heinous, that they are too heavy a burden for thee to bear; there is no way with thee, but to sink into horror and despair. But what saith Christ? Nay now is the season: Come unto me thus weary and heavy laden with thy sin, and I will refresh thee. Here now if thou wilt believe the sweet voice of Christ Jesus, rather than the murdering sophistry of Satan; if in good manners thou wilt come when thou art called; and not retire in a sinful and cruel modesty; thou shalt be presently lightened. Yea but, saith the Tempter, thy heart hath been so strangely hardened and soaked in sin heretofore; now such a hellish cloud of darkness hath seized upon it; that there is no hope nor possibility. But what saith the Word? Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning. It is he alone that can most easily change the dismal midnight of thy present spiritual misery, into the glorious midday of sweetest peace, and lightsomeness of heart. Yea but, saith he further, thou hast lien long upon the Rock of guilty horror; had much counsel, and been under the hands of many spiritual physicians; and yet no comfort comes. And what then? Hear what the Spirit of truth tells us: Since the beginning of the world, men have

not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God besides thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Isa. 64:4. Waiting patiently for the Lord's coming to comfort us, either in temporal or spiritual distresses; is a right pleasing and acceptable duty, and service unto God, which he is wont to crown with multiplied and overflowing refreshings, when he comes. See Isa. 40:31. Nay and shouldest thou die in this state of waiting, if thy heart in the meantime sincerely hate all sin; heartily thirst for the mercy of God in Christ; and resolve truly upon new universal obedience for the time to come; thou shalt be certainly saved; because the Holy Ghost saith, Isa. 30:18. Blessed are all they that wait for him.

6. That defects, distractions, failings in our spiritual exercises, and undertakings groaned under, grieved for, and striven against, by an upright heart; are so far from nullifying grace, that they should not bereave us of peace of conscience, or interrupt our sweet communion and comfortable walking with our God.

7. Not to confine, undervalue, and extenuate the mercies of God, promises of life, the holy Spirits saving work upon thy soul; and the present graces thou possessest in truth, &c.

These cautions premised, let us come to the examining and answering of some complaints and counterpleas against entertainment of comfort, which are wont to arise in troubled consciences, out of ignorance, and misconceit of the merciful ways of God, and the mystery of his free love through Christ: and do thou conceive, that proportionable sovereign Antidotes and counter-comforts may be collected also in abundance out of God's blessed Book, against the rest, or any reply whatsoever.

And to begin with the first cries of a Christian in the pangs of his New birth.

I. A poor soul having wallowed long in vanity of villainies and vanities; of lust and licentiousness; is now by divine blessing at this or the other Sermon struck thorough by the Sword of the Spirit with penitent remorse; and his heart broken into pieces, by the hammer of the Law. In this depth of heaviest distress, and bleeding case; he casts his eyes upon Jesus Christ lifted up in the Ministry as an Antitype to the brazen Serpent, for his comfortable binding up, and everlasting cure. Those Messengers of God, who are able to declare unto Man his uprightness, assure him in the Word of life and truth, and charge him in His name who was anointed by the Lord for that purpose, and appointed by the Father of mercies to comfort all Mourners in Zion; that now being truly cast down under God's mighty hand, thirsting for the blood of Christ, and sincerely resolving upon a new course for the time to come; He would turn his legal terrors, into Evangelical weeping, joy; put on beauty for ashes, the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness; That he might be called a Tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. Oh no, says he, out of the deep sense of his bottomless vileness, The news is too good to be true, to wit, that now the blessed Son of God, and all the precious, rich purchases of his invaluable passion should belong unto me, the sinfullest wretch that the earth bears, who have desperately spent my days and strength so long in the furious service of Satan, and mine own sensual lusts, &c. whereupon he refuses comfort, and chooses rather to sink again and languish under the horrors of guiltiness and fear. Whereas he should incomparably more honor and please the God of all comfort, by trusting his mercy, sealing to his truth; then by unseasonable suspecting his justice and power.

Here then he woefully fails and forgets himself in a distrustful underprizing God's incomprehensible greatness, Almighty mercy, unlimited

liberality and freeness of his love. He is in this case, not so much to consider, what is fit for him to receive, as convenient for the ability and bounty of so great and good a God, as the mighty Lord of Heaven and earth to give; who, as I told you before upon other occasion, doth all things like Himself. If he build, he makes a world. If he be angry with the world, he sends a flood over the face of the whole earth. If he goes out with the Armies of the Saints, he makes the Sun stand still, the Stars to fight, the Seas to swallow up the most dreadful Armadoes. If he love; the precious hearts blood of his own Son is not too dear. If he deliver any man, He pulls him out of the hand of the Prince of darkness; and frees him from everlasting flames. If any become his Favorite through Christ's mediation, He will make him a King, give him a Paradise, and set a Crown of eternity upon his head. Earthly Princes at their pleasures ennoble those they love, with Dukedoms, Marquesdoms, Earledoms. What then, do you think, shall be done unto the man, whom the King of Heaven desires, and delights to honor? Let us then, I say, in such cases, consider not so much what is fit for us silly worms to receive; as for so great a God to bestow. If we can once bring hearts bruised and broken with the burden of our sins, bleeding and weeping unto his Mercy-seat; He will think all the meritorious sufferings of his Son; all the promises in his Book; all the comforts of his Spirit; all the pleasures in his Kingdom little enough for us. If we look upon ourselves, sinful wretches, we might justly fear the extremist torments, fiercest flames, and lowest dungeon in hell, infinitely rather than expect a Kingdom. But He loves us freely, Hos. 14:4. It is his pleasure to give us a Kingdom: Fear not, little flock, saith Christ; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom, Luk. 12:32. If it be the good pleasure of the King of Kings, to bestow a Kingdom upon a truly humbled soul, which he makes in the

meantime his Royal Throne here upon Earth, Isa. 57:15, what can Man or Devil, or any distrustful heart say against it? And why shouldest thou, being such a one, be so unmannerly and unthankful, nay, so unnecessarily cruel to thine own heavy heart, as not to open the everlasting door of thy soul by the key of Faith, to let the King of glory knocking with his hand of mercy, come in, and crown it with grace and glory, with comfort and everlasting peace?

II. But alas, says he, my sins are more then any man's. Now when I am searching into the sink of them, I can find neither bank nor bottom. Unnumbered swarms of gross impieties and iniquities thorough my whole life; of abominable impurities and pollutions, which have continually defiled my mind, heart and affections, armed with several stings of terror, do so restlessly press upon my wounded conscience, and oppress it; that I cannot, I dare not think upon, or look towards any comfort.

Let them be what they are, and add thereunto all the sins which have, are, and shall be committed by all the sons and daughters of Adam from the Creation, to the end of the World; excepting sin against the holy Ghost; and yet in an heart truly humbled under them, heartily hating them all, coming with a sincere spiritual hunger at Christ's Call to be disburdened of them; they can make no more resistance against the mercies of God, then a little spark of fire against the mighty Sea, thrown into the midst of it; nay, infinitely less. For all these sins would still be finite both in nature and number; but God's mercies are every way infinite. Now between that which is finite, and that which is infinite, there is no proportion, and so no possibility of resistance. Whence it is, that the Prophet inviting his people to repentance, Isa. 55:7, by assuring them of God's sweet, merciful and gracious disposition, lest any too fearful and dejected spirit undervaluing

God's mercy, should think thus within itself: Be it so: yet alas, my sins are so many, and such a son of Belial have I been, and so endlessly provoked the glory of his pure eye, that I can expect no mercy: the pollutions of my youth have been so prodigious and infectious, that I have no face to press unto his Throne of Grace; &c. God himself doth there purposely prevent the objection, and speaking to our capacity, which cannot comprehend infinity, replies to this sense: Oh say not so! Stay all such despairful thoughts; do not cast the incomprehensibleness of my mercy, in the narrow mold of thy finite shallow conceit: do not so unworthily abridge and confine the unlimited and boundless compassion of the mighty Lord of Heaven and Earth: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways: For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts then your thoughts. Many a bruised reed would not exchange the comfort, which the weakest faith may extract out of this sweetest place, for all the Kingdoms of the earth. For he saith not, that his ways and thoughts of knowledge and wisdom; but his ways and thoughts of mercy, are as far above ours, as the Heavens are above the Earth: Indeed, as himself is above man, which is, infinitely. But take notice by the way, that the mercies of God do exercise this infinite irresistible power only in truly humbled believing souls; heartily hating, and sincerely set against all sin. I say so, lest any impenitent should pervert this precious point, or trample upon this Pearl. For as in such a soul no sins either for number or notoriousness, can possibly withstand, or stand before God's infinite mercies: so not one drop of all those infinite mercies belongs unto any that goes on willingly and delightfully, hating to be reformed in any one known sin, or that he might know, and willfully forbears to be informed. As the invaluable blood of Christ turns the very scarlet sins of the truly broken

believing heart into whitest snow; so it will never wash away the least sinful stain, from the proud heart of any unhumbl'd Pharisee. Let none therefore that goes on still in his trespasses, take up any vain confidence, or mis-grounded conclusion of false comfort from hence, by misconceiving thus: Is it so, that the infiniteness of God's mercy cannot be resisted by the greatness, or multitude of sins, being ever finite both in their number and nature? How is it possible then that I should miss of those infinite mercies? Why may not I comfortably hope, that my sins also shall be swallowed up in that bottomless Sea? I will tell thee why. As the power of God, though it be infinite, yet is limited by his will: so the mercies of God, though they be infinite, are regulated by his truth. He is able to make millions of Worlds more, but yet we see, his Will was but to create one. His mercies transcend with immeasurable distance, the height of Heaven, and depth of Hell, and are indeed, as Himself, infinite: but his Truth hath told us, that none shall have part in them, but those alone who repent and believe. God's Truth revealed in his Word, must ever confine the current of his compassions, and is the touchstone to try and qualify those, to whom his mercies belong. See then what kind of people are partakers of God's infinite mercies, by the testimony of that Word of Truth, by which we must be judged at the last Day, Prov. 28:13, Luke 4:18, Isa. 61:1-3, Psal. 15, Ezek. 18:21, Psal. 147:3, Isa. 55:7, Psal. 34:18. Solomon saith in the cited place; He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy. How then can he expect any mercy, who takes them not to heart, but lies in them still?

III. Of the pardonableness of my other sins, saith another, I could be reasonably well persuaded; but alas, there is one above all the rest, which now upon discovery and remorse, I find to be full of rank and hellish poison; of such a deep and damnable die; to have struck so desperately in

the days of my lewdness, at the very face of God himself; and far deepelier into the heart of Jesus Christ, then the spear that pierced him, bleeding upon the Cross; and thereupon at this present, stares in the eye of my newly awaked and wounded conscience, with such horror and grisliness, that I fear me, divine justice will think it fitter, to have this most loathsome, inexpiable stain, rather at length fired out of my soul with everlasting flames; (if it were possible that eternal fire could expiate the sinful stains of any impenitent damned soul) then to be fairly washed away in the meantime with His blood, whom I so cruelly and cursedly pierced with it. Oh! This is it that lies now upon my heart like a mountain of Lead, far heavier than Heaven and Earth, and enchains it with inexplicable terror to the dust and place of Dragons. This alone stings desperately; keeps me from Christ, and cuts me off from all hope of Heaven. I am afraid, my willful wallowing in it heretofore, hath so reprobated my mind, seared my conscience, and hardened my heart, that I shall never be able to repent with any hope of pardon.

And why so? Is this sin of thine greater, then Manasseh's familiarity with wicked spirits? Then Paul's drinking up the blood of Saints? Then any of theirs in that black Bill, 1 Cor. 6:10,11, who notwithstanding were afterward upon repentance washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God? Then Eves transgression, who opened the floodgate to all the sins which shall be committed from the Creation to the end of the World, and to all those torments which shall flame in Hell thorough all eternity? Then that horrible sin of killing Christ Jesus? And yet the murderers of that Just and holy One, upon their true compunction of heart, were saved by that precious blood, which they had cruelly spilled as water upon the ground. But be it what it will, a scarlet sin,

a crimson sin, a crying sin; and add unto it Satan's malicious aggravations, and all that horror, which the dejectedness of thy present afflicted spirit, and darkness of thy melancholic imagination can put upon it; yet Paul's precious Antidote, Rom. 5:20, holds triumphantly Sovereign as well against the heinousness of any one sin, as the confluence of many, Where sin abounded, grace over-abounded. It is indeed a very heavy case, and to be deplored even with tears of blood, that thou shouldest ever have so highly dishonored thy gracious God, with such an horrible sin in the days of thy vanity, and thou oughtest rather choose to be torn in pieces with wild Horses, then commit it again; yet if thy heart now truly wounded with horror and hate of it, will but cleave to the truth and tender-heartedness of Jesus Christ in his promises, and fall into his blessed and bleeding arms stretched out most lovingly to ease and refresh thee; as the heinousness of it hath abounded heretofore; His grace will now abound to the same proportion; and much more: Nay, I will show thee a Pearl. In this case, by accident, God's mercies shall be extraordinarily honored, in pardoning such a prodigious provocation; because they are thereby, as it were, put into it, and their dearness, sweetness and infiniteness improved to the greater height and excellency; and the blood of Christ made, as it were, more orient and illustrious; and the honor and preciousness of it advanced, by washing away such a heinous hellish spot. If we bring broken believing hearts towards his Mercy-seat; it is the Lord's Name to forgive all sorts of offenses, iniquity, transgression and sin, Exod. 34:7. It is His Covenant to sprinkle clean water upon us, that we may be clean, and to cleanse us from all our filthiness, and from all our Idols, Ezek. 36:25, even from Idolatry, the highest villainy against the Majesty of Heaven: So that a Papist, upon repentance may be saved. It is His promise not only to pardon ordinary sins,

but those also which be as scarlet, and red like crimson, Isa. 1:18. It is his free compassion to cast all our sins into the depths of the sea, Mich. 7:19. Now the sea, by reason of his vastness, can drown as well Mountains as Molehills: the boundless Ocean of God's mercies can swallow up our mightiest sins much more. It is his merciful power, to blot out our sins as a cloud, Isa. 44:22. Now the strength of the Summers Sun is able to scatter the thickest Fog, as well as the thinnest Mist; nay, to drive away the darkest midnight: the irresistible heat of God's free love shining thorough the Sun of Righteousness upon a penitent soul, to dissolve to nothing the desperatest work of darkness, and most horrible sin far more easily. But this mystery of mercy, and miracle of God's free love, is a Jewel only for truly humbled souls, and the sealed Fountain. Let no stranger to the life of godliness meddle with it. Let no Swine trample it under his feet.

FINIS.